

A Li'lbit
Stories of my Life

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Going to Grandma's House

Going to Grandma's house was a long way out in the country. It seemed like forever before we ever got there. Once you left town there was nothing for miles except for an occasional farmhouse now and then. There were mostly vineyards out in that area. As you came off the highway there was a little old bar and mini store on the corner. It was pretty run down but there were always a few cars around it. After you passed it there was nothing but vineyards or small gardens but mostly just vineyards. It was still a long way after we got on that road that took us to Grandma's.

As you turned off the paved road to enter the driveway to Grandma's you were on a dirt road. It was bumpy and had two ditches for the tires to drive in. The dirt was hardpan and was like powder when real dry but also very hard almost like rock. In the wintertime it was real muddy and slippery and full of puddles, so the car always got full of mud splatters and the tires were covered with mud.

On each side of the driveway there was vineyard for as far as you could see, and when you are little it seems like forever. In the summertime you could see bunches of grapes on the vines. In the wintertime the vines were bare. In the fall they were pruned after the crops were in and the vines were wrapped around the wire for then to grow.

Once you got to the house the ground in the yard was still dirt but was leveled somewhat and there was plenty of room for several cars to park if necessary. Off to the right there was the chicken coop and the pen for the pig. And there was just grass and weeds all around them. On the other side by the house there was a grape arbor with some really rough cement. It seemed like there were more rocks showing than cement but it helped to keep some of the dirt from going into the house. There was a sink out there with the old fashion water pump and there was an old table and some chairs to sit on in the summer.

Out past the arbor to the back of the property there was one barn that had hay in it. There was a window up high that had doors that were hanging open. Mom said when she was a kid she used to get up there to pitch hay out the window for the cow. It was old and gray looking and kinda saggy and the boards were warped. There was another barn off to the right of it and it was also old and gray and warped boards. There was hay on the floor to help keep it clean and not so dusty; it also helped to keep the dampness down. In there were big cages with rabbits in them. There were a lot of rabbits. They were all different colors and they all looked so soft and furry. I was always fascinated by watching them twitch their little noses. The only thing I didn't like in there is that it was dark. So I didn't like to be in there unless my parents or my grandma were there.

And then there was the other little building just to the right of the rabbit barn. It was small and had a big door. The old boards on it were like the ones on the other two barns. This building was much smaller of course. And the roof was sorta peaked in the middle. When you opened the door you had to step up into the building. There was a bench with two holes cut out and the fragrance was not too pleasing. My sister

and I looked at each other and then asked mom "What is this?" Well it was the outhouse of course. It was the outside bathroom and sure not like what we had at home.

To go into the house there were some wood stairs that lead up to the door of the back porch. It was a screened porch and I don't really remember much what was in there. I do remember that eventually they put in a bathroom. Then you went thru the door to a very large kitchen. The kitchen seemed to be the main room where everyone seemed to collect. There was a big table in the middle of the room. It always had a large bowl of fruit in the center of the table and a colorful tablecloth on it. On the left side of the kitchen there was an old wood stove that grandma cooked on. They also used it to warm the house. Then there was a sink and counter space. To do dishes they had to pump the water from outside and carry it inside. The water was heated on the stove. Over the sink there was a good size window that looked out across the vineyard and the driveway.

The kitchen was the place to be when grandma was cooking. I remember the mouth watering smells of food cooking in that kitchen. There was spaghetti sauce and veggies of some type and then there was

always rabbit being fried up. The waiting and anticipation of getting to sit down at the table to eat was sometimes almost unbearable.

There was a small living room on the other side of the kitchen and there was a piano in there. Then off to the right were a couple of bedrooms. I don't remember much about them except that there was a bed and neat dressers in them that had marble tops and mirrors. At times now when I think of them it kind of looked like a king's chair with arms and a tall back. And there was a big white porcelain chamber pot that was used at night in grandpa and grandma's bedroom. It was white enamel with blue trim on the lid. The whole house had bare wood floors and in the kitchen was linoleum. The floors were dark wood and maybe they were painted. I don't really remember.

One day when we were spending the day with grandma my sister and I went outside to play. We used to have so much fun just running around looking at the animals and then we would play house and pretend that we were cooking up meals with our little dish set. We would go pick some weeds and tear them up in little pieces to fit on the little plates. It was so much fun.

After awhile we decided we needed to go to the outhouse together. We didn't like

using it but we had no choice. I was always afraid of spiders and bugs and just knew there must be a million of them in there just waiting for me. So we went in together. I hurried up and got out fast. My little sister started to scream that there was a wasp in there and she was scared. I opened the door and saw the wasp and then spotted a whitish cone-like thing up in the corner. So I took the broom that was standing in the corner and tried to sweep the thing down. Well I was too small and not strong enough to sweep it down and out of there. All I did was make it worse. The screaming that we both did then was loud enough to cause my mom and grandma to come running to see what was wrong. We both got checked for any stings and we had none thank God. But then I got a scolding for messing with the wasp nest. Needless to say I never have messed with a wasp nest or any other kind of nest since then.



Spending the Weekend with Grandma

I was about 14 or 15 years old when I got to spend a weekend with my Grandma. I was so excited when mom asked me if I would like to go, that Grandma wanted my sister and I to take turns staying for the weekend. What a treat! I couldn't wait to go.

Grandma was so fun to be with. She was full of energy and always bubbly and enthusiastic about everything. She loved her flower garden out in front of her house. She had just about every kind of flower you could imagine. Her yard was full of all colors and it looked just like a rainbow without the rain and it was always there rain or shine. She did all the work of taking care of it herself. She did a little every day to keep it looking neat. She made little furloughs to water them so she didn't have to stand out there and water all day everyday.

The back yard was just as pretty. She had all kinds of veggies and fruit trees. The trees were all around the outside of the yard like a fence. There were apricots,

peaches, plums, apples and cherries. In the garden she had carrots, parsley, green peppers, radishes, onions, and even horse beans. The plants were so green and the leaves were shiny like they had been polished to a rich shine.

She and I would sit together and she would tell me stories about my mom when she was a little girl and about herself when she was growing up, one time she told me how she met my grandpa, and then we would watch her favorite television shows.

She showed me how to crochet and I learned how to make a hot pad. I was so excited to learn how to make something so pretty and it turned out neat. Grandma was always crocheting something for someone. She loved making doilies and then giving them away to family, friends and even her neighbors.

For breakfast we would have a thick slice of her fruitcake and she would make us a cup of coffee. Wow, what a treat. I didn't get that for breakfast at home.

After breakfast we would go outside and walk around the yard while she set the water in the furloughs. We would walk thru the garden and she would pick off the dead leaves or wilted flowers. Then we would go to the back yard and she would pick some veggies she wanted for our meals that day. She told me to pick the fruit I wanted, but whatever I picked I had to eat. That was no problem 'cause I loved fruit.

When we went back inside she would wash up the veggies and plan something for lunch and dinner. I would wash the fruit and put it in a bowl. We would eat a piece of fruit and then crochet again and watch something on television again till it was time for lunch.

I loved to watch her cook and the luscious smells of the food cooking would make my mouth water and I couldn't wait to eat. We would laugh and talk while we ate and then we would clear the table and do dishes together. And then we were back in the living room to crochet and watch television.

After dinner at night we would sit outside on the porch for a while and then go watch television and crochet and I would get to stay up later than I did at home. That was fun too.

It was so quiet and peaceful there. I really enjoyed myself and hated for the day to end. But there was still another day or at least a part of a day till Mom came to pick me up. It was always too short a time. I liked it out in the country, 'cause it was so quiet and you could really hear the birds outside singing in the daytime and at night you could hear the crickets and frogs. It was just so neat and so different than at home in the city. At home you could always hear the traffic and a siren now and then. You could hear the kids screaming and laughing outside as they skated by or rode their bicycles down the sidewalk. At Grandma's you didn't hear any of that. And at night the sky was so dark and the stars were so bright and seemed so close like you could reach out and grab one.

I couldn't wait for the next time I could go to Grandma's again.



Childhood Games and Imagination

It was so fun when we were little. One little girlfriend I had would get to come over sometimes after school to play with my sister and I. We would always seem to pretend that we were princesses in a big beautiful castle. We would describe our beautiful dresses in great detail. The dress would be soft and flowing in a pastel color, cinched up tight at the waist with full and frilly long sleeves, flowers in the hair and beautiful jewels at the neck and earrings and bracelets and rings. And even the glass slippers like Cinderella. After all, we had been invited to the Queen's Spring Festival! You could call it a "coming out party" just for the young people. And there would be dancing and all kinds of food and punch.

We would dance all over the yard like we were really at a great ballroom. We would describe what it looked like. We would even have a beau who was waiting for us there. I can still see all of it today just like it was yesterday and I loved that pretend event the most.

When Aunt Laura and Uncle Rocky came to visit with my cousins, who were

both boys, we would play war. We used the picnic table and benches that my daddy had built and that was our fort. The boys would pretend they had guns and use their hands to shoot at each other. My youngest cousin Vincent would cry when his brother Rocky shot him and then would tell him to drop to the ground 'cause he was wounded. My sister and I would of course be the nurses who nursed them back to good as new. We would get glasses of water and then pretend we had food to eat. We would spend hours playing this game.

When my best friend came over we would play jacks and hop scotch by the hour. We always had to see who could win the most games. We also would play house and we had little perfume bottles my Mom had given us to play with. Joyce always wanted to trade them for some paper or just wanted them. One day my Mom was standing by the kitchen window doing something and she heard Joyce say that if we didn't give her whatever it might be that she wanted she was going to pick up her things and go home. And we would get all

upset and beg her to stay. Well my Mom's voice came through the window very calm and quiet but firm and she told Joyce that if she really wanted to go home she could. But the things we had were ours and she wasn't going to take them away from us. She thought about it a little and then sat down and we played for the rest of the afternoon and no more squabbles. And she never did that again either.

In the wintertime at school we would love it when it rained. We all had raincoats and galoshes so we would put them on for recess and go out and run holding out our raincoats like we had wings. Our raincoats were like a cape so it made great wings. I liked to play like I was a bird and fly and fly. Sometimes we chased the boys and it was just a fun game.

I really used to love coloring books and crayons. I would spend hours coloring. Mom would surprise us with a new coloring book now and then.

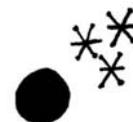
I also loved to cut out the paper dolls. I loved all their neat clothes. They were so neat and pretty. I would pretend that the paper doll was me and I had all these new clothes.

When I was a teenager in junior high, another best friend and I would always walk around school together and talk about

all kinds of things. We would have crushes on boys that didn't even know we were alive but we would find out their schedules and try to see how many times a day we could see them in the halls. Sometimes we would even get brave enough to say "Hi" to them.

When we were in high school we sort of did the same thing. At one time we even wrote each other love stories putting our heartthrob at the time in the story that we wrote.

It is funny now when I look back on all this. I was so fearful and afraid of everything. So I didn't have much fun in high school. I didn't like school either so it made life pretty miserable for me. It seemed like forever before I graduated. I had no idea what I was going to do or what I wanted to do. Just super excited to be out of school. It all seems like such a waste now. I think of things I could have done to change all that, but can't fix it now. Life has a way of leading you to where you need to go. And as you grow older and learn more about yourself you do find your way. Life gets better and life goes on.





My Name is Li'lbit

My name is Lil'bit and I have to tell you about my neat parents and how much I love them and they love me. They went to the Nevada Humane Society and picked me over all the other kittens that were there to be adopted. I was so excited and I couldn't wait to go home with them. The Nevada Humane Society kept me for a couple of days to get all the red tape taken care of and I had to be fixed, that's part of the deal. They also wanted to call the management where we lived to make sure it was okay for them to have me. I had to be kept inside for my own safety.

Finally mom came to pick me up and I got so excited that I made all kinds of noise and meowed my head off. The attendant put me in a carry box for my mom to take me home. They also gave her some food for me too. Soon as we got to the car Mom let me out of the box so I could see where I was. It

was fun checking out the car and looking out the windows.

When we got home she carried me to the house in the box and then let me out soon as we were safely inside. Wow look at this big room and windows to look out of. Mom had fixed me up a bed with my own afghan that she made just for me. She had me my own potty box too. I even had my own water dish and food dish on my own place mat. This is going to be so wonderful! My parents must really love me and want me. I am so very lucky.



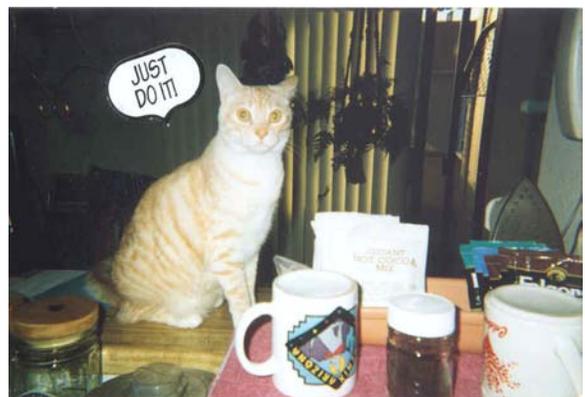
Once mom got everything in order she picked me up and held me in her lap and hugged me and kissed me and talked to me and petted me. I never got all this attention before. Every now and then she would take me over and show me my potty box so I would get familiar with it and make sure I knew what it was for. When she put me down on the floor it was soft and warm. But I would get scared if I couldn't see my mom. This place was so big. I would meow my head off and there she would come to my rescue. I would run to her and she would pick me up and hold me and talk to me and kiss me so I would feel safe and loved.

I told you in the beginning my name is Li'lbit, but mom calls me "baby cat," "munchkins" and "babykins," so I have a lot of names. But that's okay; I know when she is talking to me.

Mom gave me some little yarn balls to play with and that were so fun till I almost hung myself one day, and Mom was gone to work. Thank God my Dad was home and heard me making some small meows and came to check on me. He took me in his gentle hands and untangled the yarn from around my neck. All my yarn balls disappeared after that. But then I found a big rubber band and that was fun to bat around. Dad would pick it up and shoot it across the

room and I would go get it and bring it back to him and he would shoot it across the room again. It was so fun that he would do it till one of us got tired and quit.

Dad picks me up and carries me around the house and talks to me too, especially when Mom is gone and it is just him and me at home. I crawl up in his lap and I sleep next to him when he goes to bed. One thing I have learned too is I just about always have my own way. I have trained my parents well. I hear them say sometimes that I run the show around here. I am so glad that they learned that. It just makes life easier for me. I get to sleep everywhere and anywhere I want to. I curl up on the bed when Mom and Dad go to bed. Usually Dad and I sleep on each side of her, kinda like she is the middle part of a sandwich. Poor Mom has to be a contortionist to get out of bed during the night. I usually stay put so she knows where I am. Then she has to figure out how to get back in bed.



I don't like company when they come over. I usually run and hide in the bedroom, either under the bed or in the closet if the doors are open.

Sometimes I know I make my Mom upset, because she has this little water fountain on the table in her workroom. I always drink the water out of it and she has to fill it every day. She scolds me and tells me to drink out of my own water dish. As soon as she is out of sight and I am thirsty I go get myself a drink. This is my house too ya know!

Anyway, no matter what happens around here we all love each other and we have fun and we are all a very happy family. And now I need a nap!



A Spiritual Experience

From the time I was a little girl I would lay in bed at night and start thinking about death. I can't tell you how that thought got started but it was a terrible and frightening fear that I couldn't seem to shake.

I would lay in bed in the dark and wonder what it would be like to not see the sun and the clouds and the sky or to see and hear the birds sing, or watch our dog sleep and play, to watch the neighbor's little black Scotty bark at the mailman every day and run back and forth from one side of the house to the other when anyone walked by on the sidewalk.

As I got older I didn't find myself thinking about it as much. There were too many other things going on. But when I did get into a trap of thinking about it I still would have that same terrifying feeling and wished I could get over it.

As an adult I took some classes on universal law and other types of self help ideas, but the lady that was the instructor of the universal law was the one that struck me

the most. Thru her classes I learned so much that it was mind boggling for me. I was so excited I couldn't get enough of it. I called her "The Miracle Lady." She was very instrumental in the changing of my life. What I learned from her is more than I could ever put into words. Life took on a whole new meaning for me. I was determined to make some big changes in how I thought and how I approached life from then on. It didn't come overnight, but I was determined I would make a better life for myself.

At Thanksgiving that year my oldest son wanted me to visit them in Washington. So I hopped a plane and flew to Tacoma, Washington. I had a wonderful time and we laughed a lot and had a great time. They wanted me to play hooky and not return for another couple of days, but I had to get back to work.

On the flight home I was sitting by a window looking out into the night sky and all the lights twinkling down in the cities as we flew over them. It was beautiful. I was remembering some of the discussions we

had had in class, and how we all have guardian angels that look out for us and protect us. And I had visions of how it must seem to them floating out there in the spirit world.

As we were heading into Reno they told us we were going to experience some heavy winds going in so to please return to our seats and put them in the upright position for landing. While we were being instructed to do so we did a big drop in the air and the plane was twisting and rolling from side to side and things were falling off the shelves in the attendants' stations. The captain told them to fasten up in their seats also. At first I got so scared and I thought "Well, this is it." The young girl sitting next to me looked at me and we held hands and just sat there holding on.

As I looked out over the city and I could see the town below I thought, "I wonder if this is how it looks from the other side." At the same time I had a vision of Jesus standing over the plane with his hands held at his sides slightly extended out away from his body directed at the plane and the bright rays of white light shining from overhead and his halo was the brightest gold. All of a sudden the fear left and I found myself looking out the window again and thought, "This is what I will be able to

see when I am on the other side, all the twinkling colors of lights, the wind and the clouds." And it seemed that the plane eased back into the steady smooth ride and we had a safe landing.

When I arrived at home I was so grateful to be on the ground and safe. I heard about the terrible windstorm that had been going on in Reno and all the damage that it did. At my apartment complex there had been some extensive damage too. However, my apartment was still intact. This was also the time when Pricilla Ford ran over all those people on the sidewalks in downtown Reno.

My fear of death is no longer there and I am grateful for that. Once in a while I think of death, but only when I think of all the things I still want to do and I pray that I have enough time left to do them all.



My name is Gloria Lee. I just retired last year after working over 30 years. I love being retired because I get to do all the things I couldn't do during my working years. I have considered writing for years but didn't really know how. When a friend told me about Lifescapes I decided to come see what it was about. I have been so excited about it ever since, that I can't wait for classes and the neat workshops they have to learn more about writing and presenting a nice end result. Also my brain is in high gear. I can think of a million little stories to tell about. And have gotten some new ideas just since going to classes. It is also fun to meet new people and the instructors are fantastic too.

