

The Family Treasure

When Emily was a very young child her great grandmother kept her entertained with numerous stories. Her favourites always involved treasure maps and hidden treasure. Emily would could go in search of the buried wooden box and its elaborate contents returning empty handed. One day shortly before she died when Emily was about 8 her great grandmother whispered in Emily's ear "you will find the family treasure when you are least expecting to but be careful what you do with it! "

Emily, who was an only child grew up with a very lively imagination. She often imagined finding the hidden treasure which would be worth a fortune and she imagined herself a very rich lady with a mansion and lots of expensive clothes.

Emily was lucky that her parents both worked; this meant they had little time to spend with her but they were what you would call 'comfortably off.' She very rarely wanted for anything other than a baby brother or sister but was resigned to the fact that this was unlikely to happen and instead made plenty of friends in the village and at school. She was a popular student and excelled in most classes.

When Emily had just turned 19, tragedy struck and both of her parents were killed in a car crash leaving her in the care of her maternal grandmother who she loved dearly. Emily was understandably heart broken by the death of her parents but with her grandmother's love and care she gradually began to deal with her grief and move on with her life. Her grandmother shared her mother's love for storytelling and would remember all the stories that Emily's great grandmother had told her. The stories were always entertaining, sometimes funny, sometimes sad but always engaging. Emily treasured the stories and the times she had spent with both of them.

One Sunday, Emily and her grandmother were going through all the stuff hidden up in the attic. It had taken them both quite a while to come to terms with clearing out her parent's possessions but needs must. Her grandmother had been staying with her but had decided she now needed to return to her own home and that Emily was capable of finding her own independence. Emily had managed to pass all of her GCSE s with flying colours and was hoping to go to university after deferring for a year to study English literature. They both sat up in the attic going through the boxes reminiscing. All the old photos brought them to either tears or laughter.

After a couple of hours Emily set her eyes on an old wooden box which was locked. 'Ah, finally, the families hidden treasure!' she exclaimed. Her grandmother laughed and from somewhere produced a big metal key. 'I think this box now belongs to you Emily.' Emily was intrigued, was this the treasure she had spent so many hours looking and digging up the garden for? Would it contain jewels? gold?

She slowly unlocked the key and dusted off the contents. Inside was a large leather covered book with some familiar writing on the first page. It was her great grandmother's writing. She opened the book carefully to find pages and pages of neatly written prose.

' These are your great grandmothers' stories'. explained her grandmother. Many of them were passed down to her through the generations by her grandmother and go back many years'

Emily cradled the book in her arms. She had felt a small pang of disappointment when she first opened the box, hoping for jewels or some expensive heirloom but realised that these treasures were worth far more. Her mother had also told her occasional stories when she had had the time and as she opened the book a few sheets of paper fell out which held her mother's handwriting. A tear trickled down Emily's cheek.

That evening Emily curled up in her favourite chair by the fireside and began to read the book. Some of the stories she remembered as a child, but others appeared new to her. All of them were wonderful, beautifully told and each had some hidden meaning.

Emily pondered on what to do with the stories. Should she just keep them and pass them on to any children if she had them or should she share them with others. She and her grandmother pondered on the problem for a few weeks. What if she didn't have any children? Who would then inherit the stories?

After much thought, Emily felt that the stories should be shared with other children. She approached the library and told them that during the school holidays she would like to entertain the children by telling them stories. The librarian thought it a great idea and gave her a slot every Wednesday afternoon. The stories became very popular and soon there was awaiting list of small children all eager to attend.

Emily started making up her own stories and soon realised that she too had inherited the gift passed down by her grandmother. She spent her evenings writing them down.

One day whilst she was just finishing the session with the children, she noticed a rather handsome man staring at her. He finally came over and introduced himself. ' Excuse me for staring' he ' I have been listening to your wonderful stories and wondered if you are thinking about publishing them? I work for a publishing house and am also a freelance agent looking for new writers to take under my wing.'

Emily was a bit taken back and was not sure how to respond. 'I will have to talk to my grandmother' she blurted out and then hurried off.

Emily's grandmother thought it was a great idea and loved the fact that the family treasure could now be shared with others. She had a however a precautionary warning.

'Promise me, however that you will retain the copy right and the family name. It is most important that our family treasures are kept within the family. There is a curse that goes back a long, long way that says whoever steals the stories will have bad Karma. Your mother who believed in the curse was very resistant to having them published even when the family fell into debt.'

Emily shivered at the thought but had a sensible head on her shoulders and on returning to the library the following week she bumped into the publishing agent again. He was delighted to see her and invited her out to dinner to discuss his proposed deal further.

After long discussions she finally agreed that he could be her agent as long as she kept the copy right on all of the stories and that the family book be published separately under her great grandmother's name and that all the profits were to go to a children's charity.

Well, reader I am sure you can guess the ending. Emily finally married her agent, became a very successful children's author in her own right and finally had the children she dreamed about to whom she handed down all the family stories.

Her family treasure may not have been gold and jewels but to her it was worth a fortune and gave her a flourishing and independent career.

Some years later her husband revealed that he had met her father once when he had approached him with a view to publishing a book of stories under his name. He had it turned out already sold a number of the stories to a magazine for a considerable sum of money in order to pay off a gambling debt. He had died shortly afterwards in the tragic crash which had killed both of her parents.