

Blowing Grandad's Own Trumpet

A My Grandad story by Bill Lennox

My Grandad likes to Fix things. Last week he made his vacuum cleaner go. It went Bang! and lots of black smoke came out of the hose, but Grandad Fixed it.

Another day he Fixed the big wooden table on his deck. Some of the wood had gone rotten but Grandad made it nearly good as new.

And he Fixed my bike when the pedal fell off. He said I was lucky I didn't break something when I fell off.

"But that pedal won't break again," he said. "When I Fix things they stay Fixed!"

Sometimes I look round Grandad's house and count up the things he's Fixed. One day I counted seventeen things.

"Hey, Grandad," I said. "Do you know you've Fixed seventeen things in your house? Plus my bike pedal."

"Really?" he said. "How do you know that? You must have a great memory."

"No, I just look at things and I can see where you Fixed them. I counted seventeen things. There's the wooden table, the vacuum cleaner, the mirror in your bedroom, the blind in the lounge, the green jar for flowers, the letter box that fell off the fence, the door handle in the bathroom ..."

Grandad went a bit red in the face.

"Ah yes, that's right," he said. "I always Fix things so you can tell they've been Fixed. That way, every time I look at things, I remember I Fixed them and that makes me feel good."

That sounded like a good idea.

"Why do you always Fix things, Grandad?" I said. "Mum and Dad just throw things away when they break. Then they buy new ones. They say it's easier than Fixing them. And quicker too."

"Must be in my blood," he said.

I don't know what that means. I thought blood just had blood in it.

"Anyway, it's a good thing to do," he said. "I don't want to Blow My Own Trumpet, but there's too much waste in this world. We shouldn't use up The Earth's Resources making new things when we can make old things last a bit longer."

I started asking what The Earth's Resources are, but Grandad went down to his garden shed to Fix his shovel.

I was wondering where he kept his Own Trumpet. So I went down to the basement and looked through Grandad's shelves. I found some funny things. There were old boots with zips up the sides, a red jacket with writing on the pocket, a silver cup like you get for winning races, and a chocolate box tied shut with a ribbon.

Then I found a black box with a silver lock, but it wasn't locked. Inside was a Trumpet. I took it out and blew into it but nothing happened. I hid it behind my back and went down to the garden. Grandad had just put a new handle on his shovel.

"There you go," he said. "Good as new. I've had that same shovel for twenty years. It's had three new blades and six new handles - it's as good as new!" He laughed and laughed but I didn't know what the joke was.

"Grandad," I said. "You know how you said you don't Blow Your Own Trumpet?"

"Yes, that's right", he said. "Far better for other people to say when you've done well."

"OK ..." I said. I didn't know what he was talking about. "But about the Trumpet - if you don't want to Blow Your Own Trumpet, can I blow it for you?" And I showed him the Trumpet.

Grandad laughed and laughed again.

"Blow me down! My old Trumpet. Well you can try," he said. "Fact is, I was hopeless at blowing that Trumpet. That's why it's been in the basement for years and years."

So I had another go at blowing into the Trumpet. This time I blew even harder, but nothing happened.

"It must be broken," I said. "You can Fix it, Grandad?"

"I don't think it's broken. There's a trick to it," said Grandad. "When you blow a trumpet, you don't blow into it. You sort of spit into it."

That sounded a bit yuck but I tried. Still nothing happened, except I got wet fingers.

"Maybe *spit* was the wrong word," said Grandad. "You sort of blow a raspberry."

That sounded even sillier to me, but then Grandad squeezed his lips together and showed me how.

"That sounds like a fart, Grandad!" I said.

"Well, with a Trumpet you have to fart to make beautiful music," he said, and he roared with laughter again.

So I made a farting noise into Grandad's Trumpet and it worked! The Trumpet made a big beautiful blasting sound.

After that, Grandad left his Own Trumpet in the sunroom so I could play it whenever I came round. I played it when Grandad was out in the garden or washing his car or having serious talks with Mum and Dad in the kitchen.

Grandad heard me sometimes and said things like: "I hear your farting has improved no end."

But he didn't know that I was getting ready to surprise him. I was teaching myself to play *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. It was easy enough at the start but the bits in the middle were hard.

When it was my birthday we had a party at Grandad's. I decided that was the time to surprise him.

For my present Grandad gave me a harmonica. "You can play that without farting," he said.

Then I said: "I've got a surprise for you too, Grandad." And I got the Trumpet from the sunroom and played *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. It didn't sound quite right but everyone was pleased. They clapped and said it was very good and Grandad cheered.

Then he said: "Well, I've got *another* surprise. Mind if I borrow My Own Trumpet? I've been practising too ..."

Then Grandad played *Happy Birthday*, just for me. Everyone clapped and I cheered, and I nearly cried too.

"So, Grandad ... you can Blow Your Own Trumpet after all!"

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