

Great Grandma's Love Letters

By

Charlton Metcalf

Contact:

612-508-3774

Charlton.Metcalf@gmail.com

ACT 1

Grace a woman in her early forties wearing a poinsettia printed dress, spins into the living room cradling a shoebox. She glides past the couch and a coffee table blanketed with Santa figurines. Setting the box on the bed of Santa's, Grace admires the bright twinkling Christmas tree in the corner, She then hand plays in one motion all the stockings pinned to the fireplace mantle behind her.

GRACE

Let's go it's time!

HARPER (O.S.)

Mom we talked about this I'm to old.

GRACE

And I recall the conversation ended in no. Come on it's romantic.

LEVI (O.S.)

Her last date stood her up at one of her friends wedding, this might be a big 'ol trigger that I'd love to watch.

HARPER (O.S.)

What about you last week? Asking a senior out? How did that go for you?

GRACE

You kids get in here now.

HARPER

(walking in)

I'm seventeen!

Harper drag limps herself to the back of the couch slouching and leans to one side.

GRACE

(hands on hips)

Lets go Levi, Harpers already in here.

LEVI (O.S.)

She's a lemming.

HARPER

Better than being an Orange Julius breast feeding gawker.

GRACE

What?

HARPER

Oh I heard all about it. Gawker Julius.

Levi struts in and pushes Harper over behind
the couch.

GRACE

We'll talk about this later.

HARPER

(getting up)

Julius pusher.

LEVI

Better than being soup.

GRACE

Soup?

LEVI

(laughing)

Because she's not quite as thick as stew.

HARPER

Mom?

GRACE

Levi just go get your brother.

I just got in here.

LEVI

Go.

GRACE

Yeah go.

HARPER

He's building a Lego bust of Great Grandma Betty.

LEVI

It's called an effigy genius Julius.

HARPER

It's called creepy to me.

LEVI

He's grieving in his own way.

GRACE

Well it's looking a bit like you.

LEVI

Just go get your brother now please.

GRACE

OK, OK.

LEVI

Levi mopes out of the living room.

GRACE

Noah! It's time, get in here right now.

NOAH (O.S.)

That's OK I'm getting ready to watch a game.

GRACE

You've already watched two. ON Christmas day.

NOAH

I don't make the schedule.

GRACE

Father of the year hall of fame people will be here in an hour.

HARPER

Hey he gave me twenty dollars to go to Dave and Busters last weekend?

GRACE

That was to get rid of you not out of love. And stop hanging around older boys, you don't want a belly full of stew.

HARPER

I know what I'm doing.

GRACE

Keep the spoon in the drawer. Noah lets go!

NOAH (O.S.)

We just scored.

GRACE

And you never will again.

HARPER

Mom, gross.

GRACE

And Don't forget my mother.

NOAH (O.S.)

She's Loving the football.

GRACE

And Do Not make those race car sound when you wheel her in.

NOAH (O.S.)

She loves those.

GRACE

Timmy!

TIMMY (O.S.)

Almost done Mom, putting the head on.

GRACE

Hurry and bring your brother.

DING DONG ITY DONG, DING DONG ITY DONG.

GRACE

Levi get the door.

LEVI (O.S.)

Have Timmy get it.

GRACE

Not while he's holding Betty's head.

DING DONG ITY DONG.

GRACE

Levi now!, Noah!

NOAH (O.S.)

Vroom vroom, vroom vroom.

GRACE

You said you were gonna fix that doorbell, Anne's at the door.

DING DONG ITY DONG.

HARPER

I'll get it.

GRACE

Thank You. At least somebody's listening to me! Levi Timmy!

Harper opens the door and it's a delivery man.

HARPER

Mom!

GRACE

I'm standing right here.

Noah Grand Prix's Granny Emma into the living room.

NOAH

Vroom vroom, vroom vroom, Vroom vroom vroom.

GRACE

Noah, pit stop.

Noah parks Granny Emma by the couch.

HARPER

He's got a box Mom.

GRACE

I see that. How can we help you?

DELIVERY MAN

Hi Mam. Uh, delivery for Betty, uh delivery is Betty.

GRACE

You mean these are her ashes? On Christmas day?

DELIVERY MAN

Can't get behind Mam. It's our busy season. The baby Jesus was born and we all keep dying, I blame the eggnog.

GRACE

Take the box Harper.

HARPER

You take the box, I'm just a kid.

Noah walks up.

NOAH

I'll take the box. I'll put her in the urn.

GRACE

Not on Christmas day you won't.

NOAH

Fine I'll just sit her here on the Mantle. Right next to Timmy's stocking.

HARPER

(come hither)

So do you deliver in this neighborhood often?

GRACE

Harper, shut the door.

HARPER

By for now. . I was thinking--

GRACE

Harper!

Timmy comes sprinting into the living room.

TIMMY

Look everyone. I'm done.

Timmy stumbles and Betty's Lego head goes flying off of the bust stand right out the still wide open front door.

Auntie Anne strolls in the door holding Betty's Lego head.

AUNTIE ANNE

This is way to lifelike, way to.

TIMMY

Pretty good huh?

HARPER

(shutting the door still peaking out)

Auntie Anne!, Did you see that walking?

AUNTIE ANNE

Seen it bent over playing pool Friday before it bought me one drink short of taking me home.

TIMMY

Maybe I should put a different gemstone in the earrings.

GRACE

Anne please stop.

AUNTIE ANNE

And everyone always asks me, why is Grace your favorite sister?

GRACE

Sunshine and rainbows to you too...

GRANNY EMMA

I saw it.

Harper gives Granny Emma a high five.

HARPER

Alright Granny.

Auntie Anne holds out Bettys Lego head in front of her and waves it like it's going to bite her.

AUNTIE ANNE

Could someone please take this before I ask if she's been eating enough.

NOAH

I'll take it.

TIMMY

Dad we have to display it. It's special.

HARPER

It is special.

NOAH

Here I'll put it right here on the mantle on full display watching over everyone.

Noah sets Betty's head down rocking on her box of ashes.

You need the bust.

TIMMY

Timmy!

HARPER

Harper, enough.

GRACE

I should go to my room right?

HARPER

And you'll never come out.

GRACE

I'll show you the escape routes.

AUNTIE ANNE

Timmy sets the bust part in the fireplace.

TIMMY

Great Grandma Betty looks super up there.

Harper walks back and forth behind the couch.

HARPER
(looking up at the mantle)

The eyes follow me like a zombie.

GRACE

Levi lets go, Auntie Anne is here.

Timmy drags Harper and Auntie Anne over to Bettys Lego head, pointing out every laugh line detail.

LEVI (O.S.)

We just scored!

Noah starts to march out.

Noah kneels down by Emma's wheelchair with his arm around her, she hands him the earbud and he puts it in his ear, stretching the cord to it's max.

Grace Hefts into the Living room carrying a big box

TIMMY

Yeah!

HARPER

Oh no, no, no.

GRACE

Oh yes, everyone put theirs on it's ugly Christmas sweater time.

HARPER

I'm not singing any Christmas carols.

AUNTIE ANNE

Oh come on, OH Canada!

Grace drops the box on the floor with a thump s

Levi Immediately digs in looking and yanks out a sweater and tosses it to Harper.

AUNTIE ANNE

Lets see?

Harper pulls her arms through and on revealing lights surrounding the outline of an angel.

HARPER

See, still fits Mom.

Harper fiddles with the front and the light turn on and start flashing around the angel.

AUNTIE ANNE

Such an angel.

Everyone puts theirs on. Noah a “Reindeer in Shades”, Levi “Mrs. Clause in a bikini”. Auntie Anne “Santa riding a unicorn”, Grace “Noel” And Timmy in one with a picture of Santa that says “Ask Mom If I’m Real”

AUNTIE ANNE

I haven’t been a Unicorn for twenty years.

GRACE

Thirty.

TIMMY

I’m still putting out the cookies and milk, just in case.

LEVI

Not if Harper eats them first.

Harper slugs Levi in the arm.

GRACE

Noah help Mom with hers would you.

Grace throws a sweater over to Noah hitting him in the noggin.

Granny Emma yanks her arms up over her head.

GRANNY EMMA

Touch down, other team.

NOAH

Figures, I stopped watching.

Noah pulls it over her head and looks away as he pulls it over her breast.

NOAH

There, looks good.

GRACE

He would not approve.

The sweater Sequin beams with a picture of
Jesus with a reindeer headband.

GRANNY EMMA

My other one had him pushing a baby carriage.

HARPER

I'm wearing that one to prom.

LEVI

You should wear the one she's got on, aren't you going stag.

Harper rares back a fist.

HARPER

This ones gonna leave a mark.

Grace sits down on the couch and pats the two
cushions on either side of her.

GRACE

Noah, Anne.

Noah and Anne take a seat, sinking back on the
couch.

Harper and Levi baby punch each other standing
behind them.

AUNTIE ANNE

Where did you find the letters?

HARPER

In a frying pan.

GRACE

In an rusty cast iron skillet in the bottom of her closet wrapped in an old V-E Day
Newspaper.

LEVI

What's V-E Day?

HARPER

Victory in Europe genius Julius.

TIMMY

So my Great Grandpa died in that right?

GRANNY EMMA

Yes Timmy, he was part of the greatest generation. I'll bet he would have loved your Lego head.

AUNTIE ANNE

He was so young was he killed in action.

TIMMY

He must have been pretty brave?

GRACE

He was. One of the bravest.

NOAH

I heard he was hit with the very first German V2 rocket, right in the heart, splato?

GRACE

Noah!

TIMMY

Wow. I wonder if it hurt bad?

GRACE

I'm sure it was over quick and he felt no pain.

AUNTIE ANNE

Or they gave him good drugs.

GRANNY EMMA

I heard a different story. At the end of the war every soldier got a medal called the Victory Medal, in combat or not. When his commander was pinning it on he got pricked.

HARPER

My nametag at the mall does that, I hate it.

GRANNY EMMA

And he suffered an infection from it, got gangrene and passed away.

LEVI

Well that hurt.

NOAH

Not quick either.

GRACE

Enough you two--

TIMMY

It's OK Mom, it proolly hurt.

GRANNY EMMA

He was in college at Dartmouth before, he married your Great Granma Betty and joined the marines after pearl harbor.

GRACE

And these letters are the letters he wrote and mailed back missing her.

HARPER

Dartmouth is Ivy League.

AUNTIE ANNE

Nice catch, go get 'em Betty.

GRACE

I know, I started to read one of the letters, very sophisticated.

NOAH

Horrible football team... I think all their teams really. Even rowing.

GRACE

\So romantic, the Elizabethan era.

AUNTIE ANNE

The modern one with cars, planes and escalators.

Grace reaches under the Santa covered coffee table and lifts up two tall candles.

GRACE

I thought we would all read the letters by candlelight.

HARPER

They had electricity and electric lights back then.

NOAH

No TV much though.

LEVI

How could any one live a life, stranded in black and white.

TIMMY

Yeah no cartoon network either.

LEVI

Or video games.

AUNTIE ANNE

Life's not worth living without my phone and candy crush.

TIMMY

How would kids play.

HARPER

I think a hoop and a stick.

GRANNY EMMA

For me it's the microwave I'd miss.

GRACE

The CANDLELIGHT to set the romantic mood of the letters.

AUNTIE ANNE

I'm allergic to smoke.

GRACE
You're allergic to smoke,? right.

TIMMY
I am to.

NOAH
I'm gonna need the light on to read.

LEVI
Me too.

HARPER
You can't read.

GRACE
Yes Noah you need the light on to do a lot of things. For once can we.--

AUNTIE ANNE
Roasted.

GRANNY EMMA
How bout we do both, my eyes aren't what the used to be either.

GRACE
Fine, whatever. Anne you have a light?

AUNTIE ANNE
I uh...

GRACE
You probably have five, come on.

AUNTIE ANNE
No?...

GRANNY EMMA
Wanna borrow mine?

GRACE
You don't smoke cigarettes?

GRANNY EMMA

Oh Never, past a week on them the buzz is gone.

LEVI

The more you know.

HARPER

No.

GRANNY EMMA

I was a hippie dear.

TIMMY

What's a hippie.

NOAH

Long hair. Flowers.

TIMMY

That sounds fun.

GRANNY EMMA

Free love, Hendrix at sunup.

LEVI

He was cool.

AUNTIE ANNE

And a whole lot of getting high.

TIMMY

(pointing with pride)

Like great Grandma Betty's head?

Timmy takes a game device out of his pocket
and starts playing.

GRANNY EMMA

I do love getting high.

GRACE

Right, you're pulling my leg, that's impossible, nice joke, Ha, Ha.

AUNTIE ANNE

Who do you think my dealer is?

GRANNY EMMA

Snitch.

Grace leans back on the couch looking at the ceiling holding the two candles.

HARPER

No way?

NOAH

She does eat all the chips when she's over.

LEVI

Can you buy beer to?

TIMMY

Why did you give up long hair? I wanna be a hippie.

GRACE

Can I please just borrow someone's lighter, you got one Timmy?

TIMMY

(not looking up)

Uh...

HARPER

Here take mine.

GRACE

You're grounded.

Grace snatches the lighter out of Harpers hand.

LEVI

Ha!

Hey!

HARPER

Glad I'm not.

AUNTIE ANNE

I'm too old to be grounded.

GRANNY EMMA

No you're not.

GRACE

Grace leans forward, wiggles the candle stands in-between the Santa's on the coffee table and flames up the candles.

Harper pokes Timmy in the side.

TIMMY

I did find the lighter on the playground and gave it to Harper. For safe keeping

HARPER

See.

GRACE

Still grounded. You too Mom. Buy your own chips.

GRANNY EMMA

Levi just give me the money first.

AUNTIE ANNE

She's true old school, has to have the money upfront for the goods.

GRACE

Everyone's Grounded!

NOAH

Hey, what did I do.

GRACE

It's what you didn't do, and never do.

Noah leans over side-eyed to Granny Emma.

NOAH

Score?

GRANNY EMMA

We lost in overtime.

LEVI

Damn.

NOAH

We'll get 'em next year son.

GRACE

Can we please just read these letters and enjoy the magic of love.

TIMMY

I wanna read the first one?

GRACE

Fine, I don't care who's reading.

HARPER

We're going to read them all?

LEVI

I can't read remember.

AUNTIE ANNE

That's a heaped box, lots of love in there, I've got a date in an hour.

HARPER

Tinder to the rescue.

AUNTIE ANNE

Not Tinder.

HARPER

Oh come on, we've dated the same man off of there.

GRANNY EMMA

I might be a Great Grandma?

GRACE

No, no. Why would you have a date in an hour when you knew we were gonna read these letters?

HARPER

It's the modern love letter Mom.

AUNTIE ANNE

It's when he was ready.

NOAH

Well you're always ready.

GRACE

Noah.

AUNTIE ANNE

Sorry?

GRACE

So you have to leave in a half hour?

AUNTIE ANNE

No still an hour, they're picking me up here.

GRACE

That makes me feel safer.

LEVI

They're?

HARPER

Is it Joyce and James?

AUNTIE ANNE

(flustered)

Sorry her, I mean him.

GRACE

You really should teach Sunday school.

GRANNY EMMA

Relax.

GRACE

I'm never identifying your body.

NOAH

How about we just read one letter now... And... And the rest... How a bout one every year. A new family tradition.

HARPER

That sounds great.

LEVI

Super idea.

TIMMY

(glancing up from his game)

I'm still reading.

GRANNY EMMA

Should we start it this year with no buildup--

Grace shoots up off of the couch.

GRACE

Stop it! LOOK AT THIS FAMILY!! Cancel all tinder trois, football games, baseball games, any kind of game, daylight deals, midnight runs, Lego pyro races, WE are going to enjoy the love and grandeur of Great Grandma Betty's love letters. We have a hell of a lot to learn about love from these and WE are going to sit here and read every lovely syllable and experience the WHOLE GODDAMN BOX!

(pause)

NOAH

Well now you're grounded.

GRACE

Serious here.

TIMMY

Maybe we should all just sing Christmas carols instead.

HARPER

(quietly)

Please No...

GRACE

The sooner we have this fun as a family the sooner it's over with.

Timmy pockets his game.

AUNTIE ANNE

I'll text my date and see if they mind.

Grace frumps back down on the couch.

She takes the first letter at the top of the open shoe box and tautens it with a snap and hands it to Timmy.

Timmy dashes and stands straight on the other Side of Santa land coffee table staring down at the letter.

GRACE

Now just read your best dear.

NOAH

It's OK, no ones mad, this is fun see.

GRANNY EMMA

Nice smile Timmy.

GRACE

Go ahead.

TIMMY

(smiling big and fake)

Is everyone ready?

LEVI

Go TIMAY!

HARPER

The siege of Christmas begins.

GRACE

Read...

TIMMY

Uh hem... "My sweet darling girl."

GRACE

See that's what I'm talking about, true culture. What we all need around here.

TIMMY

I was reading?

GRACE

Sorry go ahead.

TIMMY

"The same close full moon shines on us both these nights."

HARPER

That's kinda nice.

GRACE

See if you get a nice boy.

TIMMY

Hello?

HARPER

Sorry.

TIMMY

"Starlight in your eyes a million years in the making."

LEVI

Oh brother, can I go? Australian rules football it better than--

NOAH

Levi this is for your mother, it's what she wants so we're going to give it to her

TIMMY

Thank you. "I paused on the sidewalk today with joy as I heard your voice in my head reading your latest letter."

Grace sighs.

TIMMY

"I hope my letters reach you with the same"... uh...

Timmy holds the letter out arms length so Grace can look.

GRACE

Exclamation, the writings like art.

GRANNY EMMA

Happy little trees.

GRACE

OK hon.

TIMMY

"Exclamation... Remember our promise to never read them in the light of day."

NOAH

(sarcastically)

So beautiful I might faint.

GRACE

(through gritted teeth)

Noah.

TIMMY

"Your fine nature and my longing has made me wild."

GRACE

The chivalry.

TIMMY

Mom!?

HARPER

Yeah Mom. Quit interrupting the culture.

LEVI

I might faint from boredom.

TIMMY

I'm not stopping this time , I mean it.

GRACE

Ok we're sorry, you're doing great.

TIMMY

“What the tickle of my finger does to you I am not ashamed.”

Granny Emma sits up in her wheelchair.

TIMMY

“Fat and stiff as you like it.”

NOAH

Uh?

GRACE

Wait!?

TIMMY

“I pulled myself off twice as I read you latest letter.”

GRACE

Ok, that's enough.

Levi spins around behind the couch and start to laugh.

Ding.

Auntie Anne looks at her phone.

AUNTIE ANNE

They don't mind waiting.

TIMMY

"I remember the last time you unbuttoned me--"

GRACE

No Timmy, stop.

Grace snaps her arm out for Timmy to hand her the letter.

TIMMY

I'm not Stopping! "Frigged until I spilled through your soft fingers?--"

HARPER

Tinder, Tinder, chicken dinner.!

GRANNY EMMA

Someone cover her bust on the mantle.

LEVI

(laughing)

Frigged?

AUNTIE ANNE

Go Betty go!

Grace jumps up from the couch reaching out and tries to yank the letter out of Timmy's hands but misses.

Timmy waves the letter up high.

GRACE

Timmy!

LEVI

I'm reading next.

AUNTIE ANNE

Oh no you're not, I am.

NOAH

Don't have to have the talk with Timmy now.

GRACE

Noah stop him.

Noah rocks up with a hump off of the couch.

Timmy backs up and swings to the opposite end of Santa land.

TIMMY

"As you gazed at me with your silent--"

Grace and Noah race around opposite end of the coffee table, but Timmy leaps over Santa land right in front of Granny Emma.

GRANNY EMMA

Keep that smile Timmy.

GRACE

Timmy! Give me that.

NOAH

Timmy...

TIMMY

"Angelic eyes."

HARPER

(laughing hysterically)

There's the culture I love.

Grace and Noah lunge around to the couch side of Santa land and just miss Timmy as he hurdles back over to the other side.

TIMMY
 “My sweet dirty little fuckbird!”

GRACE
 STOP!!!!!!!!!!

Timmy flings the letter high into the air, where it land on Great Grandma Bettys smiling Lego head.

TIMMY
 Is a fuckbird like a duck?

Grace falls back limp on the couch.

GRANNY EMMA
 Stay innocent little Timmy.

AUNTIE ANNE
 If it quacks like a duck and walks like a duck...

HARPER
 Who’s next to read?

DING DONG ITY DONG, DING DONG ITY DONG.

LEVI
 Now what??

AUNTIE ANNE
 They’re early.

HARPER
 Maybe they can read?

GRANNY EMMA
 I love this new tradition.

Betty’s Lego head suddenly dive bombs to the floor with a colossal crash. Bits of Betty head go bouncing and sliding every where.

Grace courtesy's up smiling from the couch.

GRACE

Deck the halls with boughs of holly

Fa la la la la, la la la la

'Tis the season to be jolly--

DING DONG ITY DONG, DING DONG ITY DONG.

THE END