

GRAND DAUGHTERS



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Grand Daughters.

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IT IS THE PLACE WHERE WE LEARN THE
LIFE LESSON.

IT IS THE PLACE WHERE WE HEAR THE
LIFE STORY.

IT IS THE PLACE WHERE WE SHARE THE
LIFE.

TO MOTHER MAHAMAYA

Preface

The primary goal of the current educational system is to mould a productive citizen and caring family member who is equipped with knowledge and skills. The main responsibility of the school is to identify and recognize children's talents, as well as to sharpen their skills to meet the needs of the nation and the world. Our Alma Mater is constantly guiding and assisting children who are creative. This project has been an ongoing process at our school for many years, particularly in terms of writing books. Many skilled and enthusiastic young writers participated in this exercise for years, producing novice writers to field of literature. We regard this as a great victory and a national need at this hour. To continue this effort, we adopted digital technologies and an e-book project this year. I am confident that this unique event provided youngsters with valuable experience and challenges that will benefit them in the future. The Ministry of Education has hailed the project as an important step toward motivating young authors in schools. As principal of Mahamaya Girls' College, I am grateful to all of the students throughout the country who contributed to this endeavor. I commend and applaud all of the young authors of these-books for their perseverance and devotion in this difficult task. I would like to thank our school management committee, employees, parents, for me students, administrators, and teachers from other schools who encouraged students to take part in this worthwhile effort. I'd also like to thank Mr. Senevirathne Mahalekam for his tremendous support and assistance in initiating this project

Ms Shashikala Senadheera
Principal
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Chapter 1

I was a girl, who lived happily with my mom, dad, granny and my twin sis. Before introducing me I want to tell you something about my happy family.

My mom; Alice Herston, was a happy woman with kind blue eyes. She was the kindest and best mom.

Charles Herston, my dad was a busy businessman and a silent man who did his work effectively.

Mary Elisabeth was my dad's mother and my sweet granny. She was a beautiful old lady with grey eyes and completely white hair.

Then I want to tell something about my sis Jane. She was my twin and my best friend. She had blue eyes and golden hair. Jane liked to stay freely with her mysterious world which was full of impossible things.

Now it's time for me. I am Ann and I am as same as Jean. As you already knew I stayed with my family, in a big house located near the river Thames. I was only fifteen years old.

Jane and I were like friends. Two of us were same from our look and even it was hard for our parents to call from our names! But there was a one who did not miss us and it was my granny. She could separately tell about two of us.

I must say something about my house which was built two or three centuries ago. Herston castle was located on a top of a little mountain in a beautiful village. It was really an old house with a lot of secrets hidden behind. Even if you are familiar with the house I guarantee that you will lost your way in those long and dark corridors. This house was belonged to my ancestors and we had heard about those ones who did grate contribution towards the country. The most of the stories told by granny were based on our old house and the surrounding of it. I have heard about the different different stories said by the villagers about the 'Herston

castle'. From all those stories, my conclusion was that there were some dark secrets held by our Herston castle. Let's talk them later.

Jane and I were same from out but not from ideas. She was like dad, calm and silent but her head was filled with the mysterious things. Sometimes her ideas were too heavy to believe. Jane read a lot of books and most of her time was spent at the old, huge library where the dusty books were placed. She was almost a bookworm.

I was the one at home who made the most of the noise. I wasn't like Jane and I was more noisy, I always in a haste and I lived in my own world. I liked to be in our large garden which was taken care by our gardener Mr. Scott while Jane was exploring the secrets of our dark habitat. I liked to pay a visit to the near by village and to listen the music of the river. All said that I was like mom but I knew that I cannot be kind as her. I wanted to be like my granny who was very direct and confident.

Chapter 2

Our father wasn't at home most of the time but we had mom and granny. And also there were the workers of our house; I don't like to call them as servants because they all did a grate job. Mrs. Doran, the chief maid had worked for our family since sixty years and was a very pleasant old lady with a warm smile.

Granny's helper, Mrs. Dickson had stayed with her for twenty five years. She didn't seem to be a happy one but she was okay.

Sofia, our helper and our friend. Both Jane and I spent time together with Sofia. She was a girl, who was sixteen years old and whose parents had died long ago. She had black eyes with black hair. Sofia was the one who brought the latest news for me from the village which were heard by her from the folks.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott were also there by maintaining the garden and the surrounding area. Both of them had made the garden into a fairy garden. They lived in a little cottage located near our house. Louise and Emma were their children. Louise was a tall boy with brown hair and he was around seventeen or eighteen years old while his sister Emma was a nice girl in same age as us. Both of them were very friendly with us and Louise liked to talk more with Sofia. We didn't get that point until we became more younger.

There were some other workers also who had worked for the Herston family through the years. Old Mr. John was the driver of our horse cart. The cart was a big one and the best part were the horses. There were five horses in the stable and I liked the totally black horse and Jane called it as the Black Beauty. she told that

she had read it in a book. Dad said that it was the fastest horse in our area.

All of those ones lived in the western part of our house and we consumed the front and eastern part while the back zone was not seen a man for years. In Herston castle, there was the oldest architectural patterns and it was a brilliant creation. The old corridors, dangerous stairs, Mahogany cupboards, Brass lights and the best place was the living room located in the front yard.

There was a large sofa and the other ornaments hanged and placed here and there according to mom's ideas. I have to say that her ideas were more comfortable for an antique shop. But according to her and granny, it was nicely arranged. My mind was stolen by the pictures hanged in there, in every moment that I have entered. Actually they were the portraits of ancient Herstons. When I looked into them I felt a little proud and I was very much attracted to them for no reason. I can stare at them for hours because they were not only the Herstons but there were a lot of sceneries from our village.

Our village was based on the grape cultivation in order to produce wine. Dad's business was that. He bought the grape harvest from the villagers and produced the best grape wine in the big factory located in a corner of the village. He had managers in there and he had to look after the process of export. So he always stayed away from the village.

The grape cultivation was a job that should be done in great effort. The farmers had to concern about the pesticides and the weather. It wasn't an easy task and the best part of the year come then.

After the harvesting, the farmers start the festivals. Dad also

comes home. Then began the most awful event of the year. Immediately after harvesting the farmers sell the fresh and black colored grapes to the factory managers and the managers gather men and women to the process of production of wine. The farmers in the village were also engaged in that process. It was a complex project and I didn't have knowledge to understand it. But I've seen that wonderful process and it was like something producing for the heaven. Drying the black grapes and pulping them with huge rollers were the first steps and I'm not going to say more about it. It's up to you to find more about it.

I gave you some details about our countryside village and it's time for my story.

Oh! I forgot tell you about someone at our home. How do I forget about her?

It was our teacher Miss Cathy Megan, all knew as Miss Cathy. She was a real lady who dressed and stayed neatly. Miss Cathy had ocean blue eyes and a pointed nose which gave an extra beauty to her. She always tied her long and golden hair as a big bun behind her head. She was only twenty two years and loved by all. Miss Cathy loved the three of us; me Jane and Sofia. Here I want to say that Sofia also studied with us as our friend. Miss Cathy's home was near the river and her parents were also the farmers. Even though her house was there she lived with us.

Chapter 3

It was a rainy day, dark and wet. Rain was there for more than two weeks and it was always like that during April to June. The worst thing was it was just the start of April and there were more than two months to end that weather.

Anyway I was telling that it was a rainy day. Everywhere looked wet and the old cupboards had the smell of wet blankets. Even the bed was also wet. Our old house had many leakings and the situation got better!

In the evening we;mom, granny, Jane, Sofia, Miss Cathy and I were sitting by the big fire place in our living room when granny started a new story.

"As you knew already, this house was built by Mayford Herston who lived long long ago....." she started with her mischievous tone with a cup of dark colored tea cup in her hand. By the tone of her voice we took that it'll be another adventurous story committed by an ancient Herston.

"It was a wonderful era in England and from his contribution towards the country he won the favour of the king....." she continued. Now it was sure that she wanted to tell about his glory and the ancestral history. "Now I'm going to tell you about something important and very sarcastic story about him. You may have heard about it before but not the true story. Villagers beat around the bush and hide the true story. But she told me the true story about Fredrick Herston."

"Fredrick Herston was another Herston who control the herston estate under his arm.His word was the final saying. People obeyed

him and respect him. He was a nice man and he got the control of the estate in very young age. It was saying that his father was a cruel man who thought that he owns the life of the people."

"The other corner of the village, there was a beautiful girl in her eighteens. Her name was Fiona and she was the most beautiful lady in the whole estate. Many men were expecting to marry this little, farmer's daughter."Granny was inside the story.

"Their faiths were to be together....."

"Whose faith?" I asked in lazy manner.

"Ohh stupidee! their means Fedrick's and Fiona's" replied Jane.

"Don't you want to listen?" asked mom.

"I want" said Jane, who was in a grate interest.

"Then just listen to your granny."

"Please continue granny" said the honest Jane.

"Yes dear, what was I saying?" asked granny.

"You were saying that their faiths....."

"Ohh...yes. I was.... then their faiths were to be together."

"One day when young Fredrick was going for a stroll with his favourite black horse, he saw her. She was picking the strawberries at the hills. Fredrick thought that she was like a portrait drawn by a grate artist. Fiona looked at him and gave a

warm smile which can even melt an ice block. Young man went to her but she didn't know that he was the heir of Herston. Fredrick was also a handsome man. They talked for a moment. Fedrick got to know about her but he carefully slipped from introducing him. Just because then she will start to be afraid of him. Then they came through the forest together and they took their own paths at the village." Granny's eyes were twinkling like stars.

"Even they had to be apart that day, either of them didn't stop thinking about each other. There was a special attraction between them. The other day also Fedrick went to the strawberry hills and his guess was correct because she was there. Like this they met for days, they talked, smiled and at the end of the strawberry season both of them were in love....." A thunder disturbed her story.

"But there is one thing.....they had not confessed their love to either of them.Fedrick thought that he should be the first one to do it, but he had a fear that his father might not allow him to marry the farmer's daughter. But it happened as their faiths were to be. Fredrick's father had arranged a marriage for him from a powerful family. Our poor Fredrick was nearly going to die. He thought that he should tell Fiona about it but didn't have the courage. He was afraid of his father who can do something to Fiona if he got to know about it. The whole village was talking about the marriage of the Herston . But poor girl didn't know that her lover was the Hreston. She went to the hills for no reason but for her surprise he was there."

"Fredrick was like, that he saw an angel but the tears were in his eyes. He came across the wind to her and hugged her tightly. Fiona didn't know about his problem and she was very surprised about his unfamiliar reaction."

"Oh! my dear, what can I say?" Fredrick was nearly going to cry.

"What had happened Fred?" Fiona asked him.

"Didn't you know about the marriage?" Now he was surprised.

"What marriage?"

"The marriage at the Herston castle! my marriage!" he shouted.

"I heard. But what it has to do with you Fred? I don't understand." but she did. Fredrick remembered that he was careful enough not to tell her about his reputation. He became more helpless. But Fiona understood.

"So, don't tell me that you are that heir of Herston."

"But I am. Now Fiona tell me what should I do?"

"How can I know? You better marry that lucky girl" she was upset but pretended as not.

"I better marry her! but what if I say that I'm in love with someone else?" Now Fiona was really pale because she thought that he was in love with another girl.

"It's up to you Fred. If you really love her more than money you should marry that girl for the sake of both. "

"Then Fiona, will you marry me?"

"Ahhh.....what did you say? I marry you!"
Yes my dear, I'm in love with you"

"Do you know what you're saying ? "

"Ya I know it better than anyone in the world. Now tell me don't you love me?"

Fiona was shedding tears."I love you,I love you Fred more than anything in the world"

"I knew that.... I knew that " Fred was going crazy. " But you know the condition"

"That's what I'm afraid also. Now only I got you but ohh faith! how cruel you are. I'm going to loss you." Tears were endless

"Don't loss your hopes soon. I must do something. I won't marry anyone else except you. I am going to tell them, yes I have to tell them.

“To whom you’re going to tell ?”

“Obviously my parents”

“Oh Fred! do you think that your dad will bless us from his whole heart? Will he allow you to marry a poor village girl like me? You know, all of us know his temper...”

“Then what should we do? I can’t afford to lose you. I... I....”

“Fred! who is that ?”

“Who?”

“That person. I saw someone behind that oak. Who was looking at us?”Fiona was rather afraid.

Fredrick went and searched. but couldn't find anyone. " There's no one. May be it was the wind."

"No ! I saw someone"

" It's okay Fiona but that's not our problem. I must hurry now, farther said that he wants to meet me. Fiona, my dear I'll be back tomorrow. I'll do something. Don't worry" Fredrick went away sadly. " I love you"

Fiona was sad and afraid also .She went quietly home with a heart full of happiness and sorrow. Fredrick also went home. When he get into the house he met his mother. She came running to him and her face was pale as ivory.

" Ohh! Fred, where have you been now? Your father went mad when he heard about it" she said, not said she shouted.

"Wait, mother what's going on?" Fredrick did not has much time his father came in. He was looking more terrible than ever. Fedrick learned that something was not right.....

"You shameless child! are you meeting girls while your marriage is confirming? is this how you are being grateful for raising you for these years?" his father roared. He was really angry. Fredrick understood the situation but still don't know how it happened.

"Who says that I am meeting girls in private?"

" Who says? Carter had seen your lovely meet, not only seen he heard it also. He said that she was the daughter of that old Harrison. Don't you have any shame ?" old man has no conscience. " You have to do what is compatible to you. You will

marry as I said and you can't meet that girl otherwise don't call me father again." he went angrily. Fredrick and mother was only there. They both looked pale.

" Now you ought to tell me what's going on, please Fred" mother was nearly crying. So Fredrick told the whole story . " Why father is very cruel? why can't he understand what is love?"

" Fred father won't change his mind, you know him. So don't do anything against him."

" Mother can't you also understand me ? How can I marry one without even knowing her? And I'm already in love with Fiona. I won't marry anyone else except her."

"Oh! Fred what should I do ?"

Next day Fredrick wanted to meet Fiona terribly so he went but unfortunately they were caught by father's men. It was not same as the past day but father was strange. No threats , no shoutings. A week passed, making Fredrick a home prisoner. He didn't get any news from village or from Fiona. After another week his rehabilitating period was over and he was released by father. Soon Fredrick went to Fiona's house but she wasn't there. Only her parents were there but they did not seem to be happy to see Fredrick.

"Where is Fiona ? I want to see her. Ask her to come. please...."

"This is not her house anymore. You can look for her at Megan's house sir."

"Why should I do that. Why is she at Megan's house ?" Fredrick was going crazy.

“ Because it is her house now. Don’t you know sir?” replied Fiona’s father bitterly.

“What are you talking about? How could it be her house?”

“Ohh sir.... she married him last Thursday!”

“What ?? howhow could that..... no...no you are lying to me. She won’t do it ...she won’t do it!”

“Believe it or not, it’s the truth sir. Now you better go. Don’t cause us any more trouble, please” said Fiona’s mother almost crying.

Fredrick went mad and could not analyze the situation. He straitly went to find Fiona. It was true, she was there at her husband’s house. Fredrick went to her but she went away from him. She kindly explained that she had to marry him without any choice. Magen had given some money to her father and he could not be able to settle it, so she had to do it further she said that they can still be good friends.

“I will pay the debt I will. please don’t do this to me” Fredrick was being more and more crazy.

“Ohh Fredrick why is this? you can have a happy marriage with that lucky lady. Then only I am happy. Please forget me I beg you. Now go home. Don’t do any stupid things. If you do I will be stupid as you! remember.

Fredrick was too sick for a long period but at the end he had to obey his father and marry the proposed girl.....

Chapter 4

“ Ohh ! only that, I thought they would marry at the end as in the stories” cried Jane.

When granny finished the story we all were expecting a ending as Jane mentioned.

“It is not always same as in the stories when it comes to reality. You have to understand that Jane” said granny.

We all separated then to mind our own business.

At night when I was lying on my bed, I was thinking about the story granny said and It made me a little uncomfortable, I didn't know why but like it has something to do with me.

“May be it was because I was a Herston too” I thought. So I tried to sleep a bit but I couldn't. There was something.

The glow in granny's eyes! I got it.

Few seconds later, I was running to granny's chamber. I knocked the door.

“Gran..... are you sleeping?”

“No, Ann. come inside”

She was at the mirror combing her beautiful white hair.

“Can I do it?”I asked.

“Yes, for sure.”

I took her hair brush and combed her hair. I liked her white hair since I was a child and as I knew it was the most beautiful hair in the estate many years ago. My dad also got that hair but unfortunately Jane and I got my mom's golden hair. It was not an unfortunate at all. Golden hair matched our blue eyes.

I combed that silky thing for while silently and tied it as she usually do.

“Still you look beautiful” I said to her. She was like an old mother queen in stories.

“Thank you dear,..... Ann do you have something in your mind which troubles you?”

“Hmm.....Not at all. but..... I.... the story....”

“What story are you talking about?”

“About Fiona and Fredrick....”

“Yes, what is it?”

“What it has to do with you, gran?” I asked directly what was in my mind. “I saw an unfamiliar glow in your eyes”

“I thought that you will ask me soon..” she said with an another strange expression. “ Would you like to hear the rest of the story?”

“Sure. I came for it. please tell me.”

“Hmm..... The things, about the debt which Fiona said to Fredrick while their last meeting were not true. It was all because old

Herston had threaten them telling that it will be a problem for them to live in the village and it will not good for their lives, if Fiona meet Fredrick again. The poor family had no option because they did not have much wealth to leave and they had to protect their lives.”

“Megan was a man who loved Fiona for a long time and the marriage was arranged and they kept the story within themselves and made the story about the debt.”

“Fiona was married, she had a daughter same as her and a grand daughter who loved her more than anything in the world.”

“On the other side Fredrick was more sad and sinked in sorrow also married a girl and had grand childrens too.”

“The granddaughter of Fiona visited Fiona often to this village and it all became to an end. The girl got the sad news telling that Fiona was lying dying. She came as soon as possible and went near Fiona’s bed. Fiona asked everybody to move away that she has something to talk with her little girl. She told the story of her to the girl and at last said that “ now you are seventeen and will get married soon. I beg you to marry a one who loves you and a one you love.” she died.

One year later, The girl visited her grandmother’s grave and It was clean as someone is taking care of it. She cried for minutes. She missed her very much. Then she heard a sound of someone who was coming near so she stood up . It was a man who was coming near with a bouquet of flowers. The man came and he was not more than twenty five, looked like a gentleman with blue eyes. He placed the flowers and turned to the girl, she was confused. who is taking care of her granny’s tomb?

The man smiled and asked “what are you doing here?”

“I..I came to see my grandmother’s grave, so may I ask you who you are?”

“Ohh! then you are the granddaughter of her.”

“Sure I am.”

“I’m George. George Herston” he said.

They were walking back and the girl introduced her. “ how do you know my grand mother?”

“When my grand father was very old she told me about Fiona and asked me to visit her tomb often.”

“Ohh.... I liked to see Fredrick Herston”

“I’m sorry but you can’t see him, he died six months ago”

“Aa... I’m sorry”

“You don’t have to worry. I’m glad to meet you. Grand father told me their story and how fate disturbed them.”

“I guarantee that you had not heard the true story which I heard from grandmother while she was dying.”

“Then what is it, would you like to share it with me?”

“Sure. now there’s nothing to hide since both of them had gone.”

“Then I invite you to visit the castle and have a cup of tea or may be a lunch.”

“Now?”

“Yes, my mother will be pleased to see you. she is very kind.”

“It’s my honor to be invited.... but....I’ll come another day as I have to hurry. Again thank you and It’s my pleasure to meet you.”

“Oh! I’ll be happy if you can visit again. Then I think we can meet on this coming weekend, can you?”

“Sure, only if it won’t be a headache for you”

“How can it be? Only my mother is at home since my father went before grand father and she will be happy to see a girl like you.”

“I hope so. till then goodbye!”

“Goodbye! I’ll wait for you. Don’t forget your promise or I’ll come find you.”

They separated at the beginning of the village as their grandparents separated years ago but to meet each again.

As they decided both met again and The lady of Herston welcomed her warmly. From the first step to the castle she was attracted to there

Chapter 5

“..... and as you thought it became her home forever.”Granny smiled from tears.

“In the end she lived happily and had a son and that son was married and has two little girls named as Ann and Jane.”

“I thought that it has to do something with you gran. I love you ...I love you.” I shouted “ but why did you end the story like that earlier?”

“Because I wanted to know who will come to me first.”

“I’m sure that Jane won’t mind this and I am not going to tell her. I want to keep a secret like Fiona.”

“Oh my dear, I pray for you not to be like her.”

“But it is interesting to keep secrets.”

Chapter 6

That night.... I can remember it as a real dream, when I got to know about Fiona I wished that I could be like her. To keep a painful secret within the heart all the time, it is not an easy task. Anyway I wanted to be like her badly. Then I was only fifteen.... now five more years have been added. Still I wanted to hide such a pain as her.

Now Jane is a writer. How much has she developed through the years? She says that I also should start to write something. How can she underestimate me as her ? To write something. I know me better than her. I'm not interested in those stuffs.

Hm.....But I started to write. Nothing comes to my mind, so I wrote about my granny and her granny and I will be writing.....

Chapter 7

It was a beautiful morning. I woke up from a dream. I saw that I'm visiting the tomb of Fiona. There was a man standing near it...he came towards me. Then.. I...I.. I just woke up. I didn't visit her tomb for few months. I went there once a month for five years.

The feeling of that dream didn't leave me all morning. At the breakfast I was thinking about it. I didn't hear any words that others were talking. No one noticed me.... but

“Ann... come here my dear” granny asked me. Yes, she was still there looking good.

“What is it gran?”

“What's your problem dear. you seems not to well. what's bothering you?”

She always noticed me. From that night we became more closer. Everyday we talked a lot. For the past five years she was my listener and my strength.

“I saw a dream. It's not much but it troubles me.”

“What is it about?”

“I... I saw Fiona's grave and there was a man standing there. he came near me.”

“I told you not to visit that place again. You were going there as it was a park. What is there to see that much?”

“I didn’t go there for few months.”

“Just forget it. Now it is the time to think about yourself and leave Fiona behind. It is my fault to tell you about her. You should think about you.”

“What to think about me?”

“You know what I mean. Now you are already twenty and you should....”

“Oh! I know it. I know it . but I’m not in a hurry!

But already I had decided to visit there one last time.

So I went there with a bunch of white flowers. For my surprise the tomb was clean as someone took care of it every day.

What did that mean?

,

It’s not the end.....

THANK YOU

Afterword

As modern technology permeates the social and economic arenas, students tend to distance themselves from the creative process, relying more and more on technological tools. To reduce this risk and help aspiring young writers produce their own books, I sought and presented a research proposal to the Ministry of Education in 2014. It was a fantastic opportunity for children to showcase their enthusiasm and knowledge. The students of Mahamaya Girls' College achieved a record for the most books written, paving the way for a new level of innovation. The e-book project will enable the students to reach international readers, and I am confident that they have gained new experiences and challenges that will enable them to face the future with resolve. I wish all of the young writers the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Senevirathna Mahalekm
Founder of Books Publishing
Project Among School Children
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