

Granny,

I'd heard a lot of stories about this little old lady and her granddaughter who were supposedly to be living alone on the moors but I'd never actually seen them for myself. For some years people had reported seeing them but every time they tried to approach them they would turn around and hurry off in the opposite direction, consequently nobody had ever spoken to them and I was beginning to think that it was just part of the local folklore rather like the Loch Ness Monster or the Yeti of Nepal.

Well one evening after school Ernie, my best friend, and I were talking and trying to work out what we could do over the summer holidays which were starting in a week's time. Ernie and I had grown up together virtually from birth, our parents were also friends, and we just automatically did everything together. In fact, we almost had to, we lived in a fairly small village on the edge of Dartmoor and there wasn't a lot of choice when it came to choosing a best friend, I suppose really we were as close as two boys of 15 could ever be without actually being brothers.

Then we came up with the brilliant idea of trying to find the old lady and the little girl on the moors, the only problem seemed to be our parents and how we could convince them that we would be ok camped out on the moors for a week by ourselves. We decided it would be safer not to mention the true purpose of our expedition but rather just say we were fancied going camping. This actually proved to be easier than we had imagined, there was very little resistance only a few conditions. Basically, we had to stay together always, camp close to where we would be dropped off and always ensure that where ever we went we could see the road, pretty easy we thought.

So school broke up the following Friday and we spent the whole of Saturday sorting out what we were going to take with us, clothes, washing stuff, cooking stuff, our tent and sleeping bags and finally some food, we were so excited that we didn't even think about the need to eat, thankfully mums always do. Then we packed everything either into our rucksacks and we were ready to venture forth into the unknown.

Sunday morning I woke up without being called, to the surprise of my parents, I went down stairs expecting to see my breakfast on the table as usual but no, it wasn't there. Then mum said "blimey, you're up early, what's happened?" she didn't wait for an answer "well your breakfast isn't ready yet, so you've got just enough time to go back upstairs and get washed and dressed while I cook it."

So, I did as I was told, I always knew when it's best to do what mum said and I wasn't going to give her any excuse for changing her mind about us going camping.

Ernie's dad arrived to pick me up as arranged and we went through the long goodbyes all over again while mum repeated everything she'd said about ten times before.

We drove for about half an hour and Ernie's dad stopped and said, "Ok boys here you are, out you get". But we thought that this wasn't far enough, so we kept asking if we could go a bit further, then, maybe just a little bit further. Of course, he relented and drove for about another thirty minutes which we thought would be far enough for our adventure. We

arranged to be picked up in six days at the very spot where we were being dropped, we unloaded the car, Ernies' dad turned the car around and off he drove, and we set off onto the moor to look for a good campsite.

We walked for about twenty minutes and tried to find a nice flat piece of ground, far enough from the road to be private but close enough for us to be able see it, just as promised. Finding a spot wasn't as easy as thought, there was plenty of grass but it was covered with rocks so before we could do anything we had to clear, as best we could, an area big enough for our camp beds, we needed a bit of comfort after all. We quickly pitched the tent; we'd had enough practice at this at weekends whenever we were allowed to sleep in the garden. We then lit a small fire, made a cup of tea to have with our sandwiches and cakes that mum had packed for us and settled down for the night.

By the time we got into our sleeping bags we were both really tired but somehow we couldn't get to sleep, maybe it was the adrenaline rushing about inside us or maybe the fact that as soon as one of us said 'goodnight' the other one thought of something else to say. We lay there, each of us with our torches by our side listening to the multitude of noises outside the tent, both too scared to venture out to answer the call of nature. At one point we were convinced there were wolves roaming about but then we thought that only happened to Sherlock Holmes so they must be only foxes but even that didn't lessen our fear.

I'm not sure who awoke first but suddenly it was a race to see who could get their trousers on and get out of the tent first. We had a quick walk around the campsite looking for signs of wild animals but there was nothing apart from what Ernie assured me were rabbits' droppings and there was a lot of them but definitely no wolves or even foxes' footprints.

The moors this early in the morning looked even more barren and uninviting than they had the night before. The hills looked much steeper than we remembered them and even the road looked further than we had walked after we'd been dropped but that just added to our sense of adventure. Soon we were feeling quite hungry and so we decided to make a little fire and cook some breakfast, eggs and bacon being the order of the day. We thought about boiling some water for tea but that just seemed too much like hard work so we settled for a bottle of coke. As we sat there feeling really proud of ourselves we were convinced that that was the best eggs and bacon we had ever had, even better than mums.

Now we were ready to start our adventure in earnest. We packed a couple of jackets into a rucksack in case it got cold and then put the rest of the coke together with some cake and biscuits on top of them and set off up the hill and across the moor. Ernie then reminded us that we would need to find somewhere to buy some water and more coke and also some more food so we turned around and made our way towards the road. When we were close enough to see the road clearly we turned to the right so that we were walking parallel to the road but high enough up the hill so we could also keep an eye peeled for the subjects of our quest.

Luck was with us with regard to replenishing our supplies because we soon came across a group of maybe six or seven small and fairly quaint looking houses which had been built either side of the road. From where we were we could see their old slate roofs and their stone walls but not much more so we ventured closer and to our delight realised that one of

the houses was also the local shop. Once inside we were approached by a lady who couldn't have been friendlier or more interested in what we were doing. We explained that this was the first week of our summer holidays and that we had decided to camp on the moors for a while, we decided it was best not to mention the true nature of our trip. She then became even more excited about what we were doing and advised us of her opening times but made us promise that if we needed anything and the shop was closed we should knock on the door at the side because she only lived upstairs and would come down for us. We thanked her and promised to knock there if we needed to, then we loaded our drinks and food and sweets into our rucksacks, said good bye and made our way back to the moors.

We crossed the road and stood there looking at the dry stone wall that was about the same height as us, I thought we should take the chance and try to climb over, Ernie, for a change decided to be sensible, and so we walked along and passed through the gate, much safer but not as much fun I thought. The sky was somewhat over cast and there was a mist which hid the top of the hill from our view so there was only one way to go, up the hill.

As the day wore on then sun had started to break through the clouds, there was still a mist over the top of the hill but not at all as bad as it had been. Our tummies were starting to rumble a little so we decided to stop where we were and dive into our rucksack for some drinks and snacks which, due to our lack of knowledge regarding energy foods, were coke, cakes and biscuits.

As we sat there on a couple of large boulders that looked as though they had been placed there for the purpose, we felt quite content with our holiday thus far and had completely forgotten why we were there. We starting packing our stuff back into our rucksacks when Ernie called me "Dave" he said "look up the hill, I think I can see a couple of people coming down towards us, can you see".

I looked up "yes I can, who do you reckon it is".

They were still too far away to see them clearly but that didn't stop us from hopping if was them and that thought seemed to weld us to the spot while we wondered what to do next.

Then Ernie stood bolt upright and shouted "its them, it's the old lady and the girl, I'm sure it is".

With that we quickly finished our packing, threw our rucksacks over our shoulders and started up the hill in hoping to meet up with them but as we got close enough to confirm, yes it was an old lady and young girl, they also caught sight of us and we saw the women grab the girl by the arm and they quickly turned tail and hurried away from us much quicker than they had been walking earlier. We called after them and tried to reassure them that we meant no harm and only wanted to talk to them. They ignore our please but we were still able to catch up with them quite easily.

"Please stop, we only want to talk" I said "I'm David and this is Ernie my friend, we are on holiday here, won't you talk with us".

At that the women stopped and looked directly at me with a look appeared to be a mixture of anger and fear, "leave us alone" she screamed "we don't want to you, leave us alone and mind your own business".

Faced with that Ernie and me stopped in our tracks and didn't say another word and stayed motionless and watched them continue up the hill and eventually disappear over the top presumably back to where ever they lived.

Finally I had to say something, "Well" I said, "that went well, we'd better get back to the tent before it gets dark, I hope we can find it".

By the time we did eventually get back we were both completely shattered. We felt as though we had been walking over the moors all which with hindsight we probably had.

Neither of us felt like cooking but we knew that we had to eat to keep our strength so we just got on with it. We again settled on bacon and eggs but this time we opened a tin of beans and had a few slices of bread and butter to make it feel like a bigger meal. After we had eaten we very quickly settled down for the night having decide to leave the washing up for the morning, where's mum when you need her?

The next morning we both woke up really early to the sound of birds singing, the mist on the hills had totally disappeared and we knew we were in for a really nice day. This news was especially welcome because we had forgotten that we had to wash up yesterday's dishes before we could even think about cooking breakfast.

This morning we had a change of breakfast, sausages in place of the bacon, and of course eggs, tinned tomatoes and toast, we were going to stick to bread and butter but as our cooking skills were improving we thought we'd give it a go. Bread, held over the fire with long sick pushed through the bread to support it seemed to work fine. This, we thought, was our best meal so far.

For a while we sat where we were letting our breakfast go down but really just being lazy, when we noticed a figure on the hill side walking towards us.

As we could see only one person we thought it obvious that it wasn't the old lady and the girl so we didn't bother to get up and waited to see if they would come and speak to us but as the figure got closer it became clear that it was the young girl and she was heading straight for us with a huge smile on her face which was a total change to the look on her face that we had seen the day before. As she got still closer the smile grew even larger which in turn caused Ernie and me to smile even more than her, and then we heard her voice for the first time, "when I came out of the house this morning I could smell something cooking so I thought I would try to find out what it but then I saw that it was you so I thought I'd come over to see you".

"well" I said "we're sorry but we've eaten everything, otherwise you could have had some, but if you like you can come tomorrow morning and we can cook a bit more, its only sausages and eggs is that ok. Why don't you sit down and talk with us for a while or have you got to get back home".

She still had the same broad smile on her face as she nodded and sat down on the grass opposite us. She was quite a nice looking girl with huge bright eyes that from where I sat looked light blue or perhaps grey, her hair was long and light brown and was tied back neatly into a pony tail. She looked a little younger than us, possibly only 13 or 14 but she was almost as tall as we were. She was also quite nicely dressed which was not at all what

we had expected to see, we had vision that people living and hiding on the moors you would dress like a tramp but we couldn't have been more wrong.

Initially we all just sat there smiling at each other and nobody quite knowing what to say next. My mind was too full of questions, what was her name, where did she live, was the old lady her grandmother, but where should I start, I was worried that if I started firing questions at her I would just frighten her too much and she would just disappear back to the moors and we would never see her again.

Eventually I had to break the silence, "I'm David" I said, "and this is my friend Ernie, What's your name".

"Yes I remember you, my names Carol" she replied, "where do you live", then with a look around our camp site she said "do you live here?"

"No" said Ernie, with possibly a bit too much of a mocking laugh in his voice which was luckily went completely unnoticed, "We live a few miles off the moors in a little place called Lower Nant, where do you live?"

"Oh I live just over the next" she said while pointing up the hill we were sitting on, "with me granny, she looks after me and I help her".

"How about your mother" I asked.

"My mother dies when I was born so I never knew her" she replied "now there's just me and granny but we're ok, we look after each other so it's good."

The look on her face betrayed her and you could see sadness welling up inside her, she was on her feet again and said "I have to go now as granny will be wondering where I am, I'm not usually gone the this long, but I'll see you tomorrow like you said" with that she was off running slowly up the hill and we left watching her until she disappeared from view at the top.

The rest of the day was pretty much an anti-climax, there was nothing to do. We had planned this adventure to look for the old lady and the girl and we had found them but all this really did was to give us more worries. Amongst them was the question about do we tell anybody or do we keep quiet, if the granny had wanted anybody to know she would have surely let people know herself, who were we to poke our noses in. However our immediate thoughts revolved around tomorrow's breakfast, everything else could wait.

We spent the rest of the day just messing around the campsite and apart from popping down to the shop after lunch that was it. Boredom even drove us to an early night but turned out to be a waste of time because we spent ages just lying there in bed in total darkness talking about what we would say and do the next morning when Carol came down to breakfast.

The next morning we didn't even wait for the dawn chorus to wake us, we were up at first light and trying our best to get washed and dressed as quickly as possible just in case our guest arrived early, we even combed our hair for the first time since we left home. We even spent a couple of minutes making sure the campsite and our tent looked tidy.

Ernie cooked the breakfast, exactly the same as yesterday in the hope that the smell would be as good as the day before, the only difference being that there was a lot more. I spent most of the time look up the hill hoping to Carol but as time passed we eventually concluded that she had either changed her mind or forgotten, whatever the reason for her not being with us we were both totally devastated so we set about eating by ourselves almost in total silence. The food by then was cold, the sausages were ok but the eggs were awful and as I looked at what was left uneaten I was reminded of little food we had left for the rest of the week. We had spent so much of our money that we were likely to be quite hungry by the end of the week and the time to return home arrives.

We wondered around our camp site not doing anything in particular but constantly checking the hills to see Carol was on her way but the hills were quite bare apart from a few rabbits or hares and a the occasional large birds hovering high in the sky presumably looking for their next meal. The birds actually became the focus of our attention for a while as we discussed what they might be. Ernie thought that they were eagles, I said buzzards but neither of really had any idea and we soon became bored with them and returned to doing nothing at all. We toyed with the idea of going for a walk but then decided it was better to stay where we were just in case carol did decide to pay us a visit.

At about midday, or 'High noon' as we called it, we decided to have something to eat. Neither of us fancied cooking so we used the rest of the cold sausages left over from breakfast to make sandwiched smothered in brown sauce and washed down with coke. At least while we were eating our minds were free of worrying about Carol or at least we thought they were but then we saw somebody coming down the hill quite fast and in our direction. We both stood up almost immediately then realised it was Carol and she was running as if chased by someone, or something, but there was nobody behind her. As she got closer we went to meet her and saw that she were very distressed and crying loudly. We caught her up but she was trying so hard to talk whilst crying uncontrollably and nothing she said was clear. We tried desperately to calm her down to no avail but she was trying to pull us up the hill from where she had just come. Obviously something bad had happened and we found ourselves following her up the hill still unaware of what we were being lead to.

We had enormous trouble trying to keep up with her but the gap between us was increasing with every stride but luckily as carol reached the top of the hill she stopped just long enough for us to catcher up but to our dismay all we could see on the other side was a second, but thankfully much smaller hill and nothing else. Carols crying had eased a little so I took the chance to ask again what had happened and she explained that her granny had had a fall in the yard outside the house and couldn't get up and she wasn't strong enough to lift her.

Carol lead off again but this time we found more energy from somewhere possibly fuelled by the knowledge of her granny lie somewhere needing our help and we were able to keep up with her. We made the top of the second hill fairly quickly and from there we had a good view of the valley below and there, not more than a couple of hundred yards in front of us we could see a small house which we instinctively knew was where we would meet granny for the second time.

The house itself looked no more than a big shed that you might find in a farm yard. In front of the house was the remains of a wicket fence running around it and between the fence

and the house there was a yard with piles of wood and rubbish spread all over the place. To one side of one of these piles I could see what like an old chicken shed but it appeared to be empty and the roof had at some time fallen in. The house looked so small that you could not imagine that there was more than one room inside. It had a front door and possibly only one small window to the side. As we got closer I was able to take in more of the yard and it was in such a mess but then as I looked around I could see what I took to be a pile of old cloths quite close to the house and then I saw it move and realised it was the grandmother still lying on the floor and unable to get up on her feet and in desperate need of our help.

The three of us all got to the old lady at the same time and Carol immediately started trying to lift her but luckily Ernie was able to calm her down and took charge of checking granny to see what was wrong with her while I explained things to Carol that we shouldn't move her. Both Ernie and I had had some first aid training at school and with the scouts and we were well aware of the need to remain calm and make the patient as comfortable as possible without moving them any more than necessary. After a quick look at her we could see that her right leg was at a funny angle from the knee and was obviously broken or worse but otherwise she seemed ok but was obviously in a lot of pain and was very distressed. There was, thankfully, no bleeding so we decided it was best to attempt to make her as comfortable as possible where she was and to call for an ambulance as quickly as possible and as Ernie was better qualified than me at first aid I said I'd go for the ambulance and he could wait with granny. At that point the old lady started shouting 'no, no doctors, no ambulance' and even though we tried to explain the urgency of her needing proper help she became even more anxious. Carol then got some blankets and pillows from the house and I left her and Ernie trying to calm the old lady down a little and keep her warm, I knew I had to ignore her calls for no medical help.

We knew we had a mobile phone back at our camp, our parents had insisted we take it for emergencies only and this was an emergency. Somehow I managed to get back to the camp so much quicker than I remembered the outward journey taking. I found the phone and switched it on, we had also been told to keep it switched off to save the battery and only switch it on when we need to. The signal at the camp was poor so I walked toward the road to see if it would improve and as I began to climb over the stone wall separating the field from the road the signal really improved so there I stayed to make the call. I decided to call Ernie's dad as it was he who provided the phone and He knew exactly where we were. I explained to him in as much detail as I could what had happened at the house and He told me to stay where I was and he would call for the ambulance and then either he or the ambulance people would call me back.

After what seemed like ages, although it was probably only a couple of minutes, the phone rang and it was Ernie's dad. He said that the ambulance was on its way and he is also coming over and that I should wait by the road for the ambulance so that I can take them to the house he also told me to make sure I answer the phone if it rings again in case it's the medics, he said 'see you soon' and ended the call. Then, before I had time to take a proper breath the phone rang again, this time they said they were the Emergency Services and they asked me to repeat everything I had said to Ernie's dad, and they also told me to wait by the road.

Ernie's dad arrived ahead of the ambulance and immediately started firing questions at me none of which I heard because I was too busy trying to explain again what we had discovered and all about Carol and her grandmother. Eventually he calmed down and allowed, he put his hands on my shoulders and said 'slowly, just tell me where is Ernie and who is Carol, but speak slowly'.

I then explained everything from our first meeting them on the moor through to Carol running into our camp site to tell us her Grandmother needed help and the explaining how the granny didn't want us to call anybody and how scared she looked and finally to us finding the old lady on the ground.

Just as I had finished and as if on cue the ambulance arrived and thankfully Ernie's dad did the explaining. I did my best to tell them it was going to be a long walk to the old lady point to the first hill and explaining that she was over the next hill which was not quite so far as the first one. They loaded up their bags and we all set off at a brisk pace towards the house.

When we got the house Carol and her grandmother appeared to be quite worried at seeing a man and a woman in green uniforms but the lady medic explained that they were medics and that they were only there to help the old lady.

With that they quickly calmed down and the medics got on with their job but after only a brief examination the male medics came over to us and said the old lady needed hospital treatment but because of where we were they would have to call in the air ambulance. There followed much heated discussion between the lady medic, Carol and her grandmother but somehow she managed to persuade them that that was the only option to them if the old lady's leg was to be fixed.

It was about an hour later that we hear the faint sound of what we assumed was the helicopter during which time the medics spent the whole time talking to the old lady and her granddaughter constantly reassuring them that everything was for the best and that eventually they could both return to their home. It was also nice for us to see the look of fear gradually turn into smiles on both their faces however as the helicopter came into sight the old lady's face suddenly wore a concerned expression. She explained she had never been in an aeroplane let alone a helicopter but again she was calmly reassured and now ready to accept whatever she had to do.

The helicopter was able to land in a field just outside the yard and no more than 40 or 50 yards from the house. One man emerged and ran over to speak to the medics then a second man came got down and walked over carrying what looked like a light weight, fold up stretcher. The four uniforms then worked as a team and managed to get the patient onto the stretcher without her making a sound which really surprised me because her leg looked as if it should have been causing her a lot of pain but then I think she was trying as hard as she could to be brave for her granddaughters' sake. As they lifted her she called out for Carol and asked if she could travel with her but unfortunately there wasn't room so Ernie's dad said he would take her directly to the hospital so she could be with her. This she accepted also and once she was strapped into the helicopter it took off and we started our walk back to the camp and the car. Carol, who was obviously worried about her granny,

gradually increased her pace until she was actually running down the hill with the rest of us trying very hard to keep up with her.

Ernie's dad drove directly to the hospital as promised and on the way I phoned my mother and explained everything to her at great length, she sounded ok but I'm guessing she was both confused and at the same time worried in case we had got ourselves into some kind of trouble. We arrived at the hospital a while after the ambulance and having found somewhere to park made our way to the 'accident and emergency department' which was situated to the right of the main building. Inside we found the check-in desk and Ernie's dad asked about the elderly lady who had just been admitted, at this point we had no idea what her name was. We were told that she was in 'recovery' and that a doctor was with her. We then asked if we could go in to see her and explained that Carol, who was standing just behind us, was the lady's granddaughter but we were told we would have to wait until the doctor had finished his examination and we should go to the waiting room where the doctor would come and speak with us later.

We were shown to a small room but as we entered Carol stopped us and made us all promise not to leave her alone, obviously we explained that we had no intention of doing anything like that until we knew both her and her grandmother were taken care of. Inside the room there were a number of simple plastic upholstered easy chairs, quite unlike the hard plastic chairs of the main waiting room, which gave us the feeling that we were in for a long wait.

After a while, probably only about half an hour, there was a knock on the door and in walked a youngish man of about twenty-five, dressed in an open necked white shirt, jeans and blue deck shoes. He looked around and then walked over to Ernie's dad.

"Hello" he said "I'm doctor Wolfsan, I've just examined Mrs Rowley and she has a particularly bad dislocation of her left knee, I've sent her for an x-ray and I will need to have a close look at that before I decide exactly what we will do to rectify the problem and get Mrs Rowley back on her feet. I'll come back and speak with you again once I have more news."

Ernie's dad then rose from his seat "this is Carol" he said to the doctor pointing to where Carol was sitting "is it possible she can see her grandmother yet" he asked.

"Not just yet" doctor Wolfsan replied but this time he addressed Carol directly, "I'll let you know when you can go in to see your grandmother but only after we make sure she is comfortable".

As the doctor turned to leave us I looked across at Carol and noticed that she looked very confused, she was sitting down, resting both her elbows onto a small table and cupping her chin in her hands. "Carol is that your name then" I said "Carol Rowley".

She sat up right and looked directly at me, "I don't know" she said "I've only ever been called Carol and my granny was always just Granny, I've never heard the name Rowley, why did the doctor call her Mrs Riley".

A nurse that had been standing just behind the doctor overheard Carol and immediately walked over to her and put her arm around her shoulder, bent down to her level and spoke

quite quietly to her. "Carol", she said "that's the name your granny gave me when I asked for her name, she said she was Mrs Ann Rowley and that she lived at Denby Cottage, Lower Nant, is that where you live?"

At this point Ernie's dad, being, the only adult in our group and clearly understanding the situation stepped forward and said "look none of this matter too much now, let's just concentrate on getting Granny back on her feet" by then he was standing in front of Carol and smiling at her, a smile which she quickly returned "all we need to do is to make sure that you and your granny are both looked after and the other stuff we can look at later"

Assured by Ernie's dad Carol sat down again and looked slightly happier than she had a few moments earlier. Ernie and I were totally lost by this time and just sat there looking at each other and smiling whenever Carol looked our way, then Ernie's dad spoke again. "Boys" he said "I saw some drinks machines as we came in and I'm sure we could all do with a drink and maybe a snack don't you, Carol, would you like a cold drink" After a nod of the head from Carol he beckoned to me and we both left the room and walked towards the front reception area. On the way he spoke again "David" he said "that name, Ann Rowley, rings a bell with me, I don't know why but when we get the drinks you can take them back and I'll phone home and see what I can find out, don't say anything other than I'm phoning home when you get there, Ok"

I went back with three cans of drink and told Carol and Ernie exactly what I'd been told to say and then sat down wondering what exactly to expect next. Carol remained quiet and just nodded or smiled when either Ernie or I said anything.

I later found out that when Ernie's dad had spoken to his wife she said that Ann Rowley worked part-time at the post office but she wasn't an elderly lady she was in fact a fairly young woman. She also promised to pop into the post office to see if she was there and if so she would speak with her to see if she could shed any light on who Carol actually was. Ernie's mum also told us that when she asked the woman if she knew who Carol was her expression changed immediately and she had to sit down, her face appeared drained of blood and her eyes and mouth were wide open, then the questions started, Where is she? Is my mother with her? How do you know about Carol, is she ok? Then she stood up abruptly and the tears flowed in torrents. Ernie's mum explained that Carol was well but her granny had had a little accident but she was also ok. The lady then asked if she could see them and Ernie's mum said of course and offered to take her to the hospital, an offer the woman jumped at and she made directly for the shop door with Ernie's mum in quick pursuit.

On the drive to the hospital young Ann explained that Carol was her daughter and that she was only fifteen and still at school when she was born. For much of the pregnancy she wasn't even aware that she was pregnant but by the time that she'd become aware the boy had long since disappeared, she thinks he went to London or abroad somewhere.

She didn't want to be a fifteen year-old mother but she was too far with the pregnancy and her mother said she would help and everything would be ok, they would cope together but then when the baby was born she found it impossible to accept that now she wasn't a child anymore and she had a baby of her own to look after. She wanted to put the baby up for adoption but her mother said no, she couldn't and that she would look after the baby on her own so that she could finish her school.

So she carried on going to school but used to walk home really slowly because seeing the baby brought back ever thing that had happened and she used to get very upset every night. Then one night she came home from school and her mother said that that somebody had been to see the baby and her but because she wasn't there they said they would come back on another day when they were all there to talk to. She said they were both really worried and her mother thought they might take the baby away and they would never see her again.

The next day she went to school but couldn't go into lessons and just sat in the playground all day until it was time to go home however that night she raced home because as the day wore on she became more and more worried about losing the baby and for the first time she realised that she had feelings for the child but when she arrived home the house was empty, her mother and the baby were both out and she assumed they were still out shopping because she was home early.

But they never came home that night and so in the morning she went to school as usual and again rushed home but the house was still empty. She didn't know what to do so she just carried on as normal, looking after herself, going to school and each afternoon rushing home hopping to see them both but they never returned home.

Eventually she left school and did some little jobs in the village to earn some money until she finally got the job at the post office. Nobody else ever visited the house or asked where the baby or her mother was but she knew her mother wouldn't hurt the baby. She also said her mother always called the baby Carol but she was never christened.

She finished off by saying that sometimes she could still see the baby lying in her little basket on the table. The rest of the journey was spent in silence.

Ernie's dad was soon back with us in the waiting room and trying his best to keep our spirits up and then eventually the doctor returned and told us that the news was good even though grannies' dislocation was particularly bad and there was also some ligament damage. She had had a small operation to re-set the knee and that she would be wearing a cast for a while. He also said she could go home but would have a problem with walking and so would need some looking after for a while. He left saying a nurse would pop in later to let us know we could go in and see granny.

As I sat there in the waiting room the gravity of what had happened began to hit me and all I could think of was who was going to look after Carol, who was still quite a young girl, and her grandmother who would probably, if not surely, need even more looking after and where would they live, they obviously couldn't go back to that shack on the moors. Just then Ernie's dad's phone buzzed telling him he had a message which he read and quickly rose to his feet. He then told us he had to go out but would only be a couple of minutes and he left the room, Ernie and I just looked at each other and wondered what was going on.

True to his word within no time at all he was back but with him was Ernie's mum and another, younger, woman whom I had seen in the village but had never spoken to. "Carol, I've got somebody here to see you" he said.

At that point the younger woman's eyes were firmly fixed on Carol who in turn was looking at the woman with eyes that seemed full of questions, "Hello" the woman said "I'm Ann, Ann Rowley. I'm your mother and your granny is my mother." And then she stretched out

her arms towards Carol inviting her to come forward but she didn't move, and then she asked "have you come to take me away from granny".

"No" said the mother "I want you and granny to come back home with me and we can all be a family again, I can look after both of you and you can help me to look after granny so she gets better quickly"

"What does granny say about us all living together, will we go back to the moors" Carol asked.

"No, we have a nice house, where I was born and where you were born as well" Ann replied "The house is really warm and we'll all be together there"

This seemed to be exactly what Carol needed to hear and she immediately appeared to relax, a faint smile came to her face and without further she thought she ran forward and they both embraced in the centre of the waiting room with us all looking on. Then Carol began to sob loudly and her mother followed her almost immediately and there they stayed for what seemed like ages until they were all disturbed by the arrival of the nurse.

"hello" she said "Mrs Rowley is now fairly comfortable, she is still in a bit of pain as you'd expect but she has asked if she can see you all now, Can I suggest Carol and her um go in first and the rest follow them". With that the nurse led the way with carol holding firmly on to her mothers' hand following closely both with broad smiles covering their faces.

It was a good job that the nurse showed us the way to granny because the hospital was a maze of corridors but eventually we came to a door and the nurse stopped and looking at carol said "now don't be worried, your granny is in bed and there are some machine next to her and there are a couple of tubes going into he had and arm but she ok and she's looking forward to seeing you, are you ready".

Carol just nodded but the smile on her face was infectious and when the nurse opened the door even granny was smiling broadly. We all stayed just outside the door looking in and leaving the Rowleys to their first moment together for years. Carol rushed straight in and almost jumped on the bed but luckily Grannys' bad leg was the other side and there they were hugging each other as if they hadn't seen each other for ages then granny looked up and saw Ann "Ann" she said, is that you"

Ann just smiles and said "yes mum, it's me, how are you"

But granny just held out her arm and with that Ann went up to her mum and the three of them were locked in an embrace that no one wanted to break and all three of them was crying at the same time.

With that and not without the odd tear we closed the door and left them to go alone to go for another cup of coffee.

-----ooOoo-----

With the school holidays drawing to a close I asked my Mum if we could visit Carol and her family. My mother said that that was a very nice thing to do and we could make sure they

were all well and she suggested that we go that afternoon because she thought Carol's mother only worked in the Post Office in the morning. She also suggested we ask Ernie to go with us as he would probably also like to see them all again.

So I quickly rang Ernie and told him to come over for lunch and we could then go from here with my Mum and he jumped at the idea.

We set out at about 2 o'clock for the 20 minute walk to Carol's house. Ernie and I were both filled with excitement but were a little worried about how they would react to us just dropping in on them.

But we should not have worried, because as we approached the house Carol must have caught sight of us through the curtains and came running out of the house and charged up the path to meet us and gave all of us the biggest hugs you could imagine.

Then her mother came out and finally her grandmother somehow made her way to the gate supported by two awkward looking crutches that she was having a bit of trouble with, and all three of them had the widest smiles I'd seen on anybody for ages.

As it was such a lovely day we all sat in the garden with the adults on chairs and us three youngsters on cut-down logs.

Eventually, after a short period of everybody trying to speak at the same time, Carol's Mum, Ann, told us what had been happening over the previous weeks.

Grandma's leg was getting better and she could now get around with the use of sticks and crutches and they had been told that the cast would be removed in about 2 or 3 weeks time.

Ann herself had been given more work at the Post Office and now worked every morning, including Saturday, so they had a bit more money coming in and Carol was going to start school and had got a place in our school, so we would all be seeing more of each other. So, everybody was really happy, including Ernie and me.