

Title: Never Go Into The Attic

Soundtrack link: <https://youtu.be/88Zqy4nsYRk>

Copy:

“Never go into the attic.” Gran said. “Promise me you won’t. Promise.”

“I promise Gran.”

It had been five days since her funeral and the only room I hadn’t gone into was the attic she’d warned me away from all those years ago. I’d created horror stories of monsters and demons living in there since I was a child. But she was gone now, and I was older, and I had to clear it out.

I wavered before pushing open the door. What had she not wanted me to find?

It’s a surprisingly smaller room than I’d expected, with pale blue walls and the wooden beams of the ceiling showing.

The room is strangely empty except from a small table suspiciously positioned in the exact centre of the room. On the table sits a beautiful gilded chest, which reminds me of pirates and treasure hunting which I was obsessed with as a child. What could be inside? Slowly, I walk towards it. I’m overcome by the childish feeling that I’m being watched. I shouldn’t be in here. Gran is gone, should I not respect her wish to stay away from this place? Guilt begins to tumble around my stomach with my growing curiosity. I have been told to not come in here. To not look at this. But maybe it’s something that could make me feel closer to Gran. Something significant I could remember her by. I open the lid.

The first thing I reach for is a beautifully decorated hourglass. Strangely enough, it has no sand falling through it, but I still feel a patter of vibrations through the glass. I bring it up closer to my eye, there’s something moving in there, is that a-

I stumble backwards, losing my balance and falling to the ground while the hourglass smashes onto the floor, but, seemingly unbroken, rolls about a metre away from me.

I must be mistaken, my eyes must be playing tricks on me. My brain swims with excuses. It’s the grief, that’s what it is. I haven’t been dealing with it properly, haven’t been talking to people and now I’m hallucinating, seeing...

With shaking hands I reach for the glass.

A small man pounds on the walls of his glass prison. He’s about the size of my index finger, and he’s old, wearing a green cardigan and dark trousers. The only thing missing is his grandpa hat and he would look like – Wait. I almost drop him again. I couldn’t hear him before, the faintness of his voice had been drowned out by my tumultuous thoughts, but I actively strain to hear him now.

“Let me out! Help! Let me out!” Tiny fists pound against his cage.

I notice there's not even a scratch from where I dropped it before.

My eyes are wide as I stare at him, and my hands still shake.

"Who are you?" I ask, though I have a feeling I know the answer. Unbeknownst to Gran, mum used to keep a picture of her dad in her bedroom and every once in a while she would pick it up and sigh. I'd never met grandpa but had heard plenty of stories. He was a "cheating, lying man" and had made off with most of Gran's savings when mum was still a kid. Gran had managed to get her money back but Grandpa was never to be seen again. Except... a toothpick-sized, older version of the man in mum's photo now stood before me.

"Who are you?"

"You've got to help me! My ex-wife, she's crazy! She trapped me in here. I've been here for years! You've got to get me out."

Gran wasn't crazy, he didn't have the right to call her so, couldn't bad mouth her especially now that she was gone and I'd heard all the horrible stories of things he'd done.

I consider leaving him here for everything he is saying but I can't abandon him. And this just brings up the question of how he'd ended up this size, trapped in an hourglass. Did I know Gran at all? I felt sick.

"How do I get you out of there?"

"There's a letter in the chest, it holds the enchantment."

Tentatively I scoop up the other items in the chest; a dried purple flower and a wedding ring Gran had stopped wearing before I was born. I was to crush the papery flower in one hand while holding the symbolic key – the ring – in the other.

I had a bad feeling about this, I mean, what was I even doing? I wanted to know what was in the attic and now I'd entered a crazy world where Gran could make people tiny and trap them in hourglasses. I hesitate before continuing any further. Maybe I shouldn't release this man. Maybe he's locked in here for a reason. But I can't just walk away from this. I can't leave him here. I utter the words of the spell and my heart beats nervously in anticipation.

My ears pop, like they would on a plane, but this is worse than any feeling I've had before, it's accompanied by a splintering, screeching noise. Overcome by dizziness, I drop to my knees and squeeze my eyes shut. When I reopen them, I feel sick and not because my head is spinning. A giant stands over me and he is laughing. I bang on the walls of the prison I'd just freed him from.

"Let me out! You tricked me! Let me out!"

He raises the hourglass so we're at eye level and grins. Being so close to his teeth is terrifying.

"Thanks for the help!"

He doesn't even know who I am and I doubt he would care.

I kick and scream as he places me back in the chest and closes the lid. The hourglass trembles as he walks away.

I should have listened to Gran. Why did I open the chest?

I should never have come into the attic.