

Summoned by Eden S.

The hospital is cold and dark. Waiting is torture. I've been sitting in a waiting room for two days. My parents won't tell me anything, good or bad. Ever since Grandma had a heart attack, it's felt like *I'm* the one who had the heart attack. My breathing stops every time Grandma is brought up. My heart hurts so bad I can't eat, let alone walk.

Besides my books, Grandma is the closest thing I have to a friend. She reads to me every night and when she's done, she'll say "Charlotte, you are something special you know that?" and then I'll say, "Really Grandma?" In fact, I knew something was wrong when she didn't come to read to me. She told me reading to me is her favorite part of the day. So, I went and checked on her. I found her in her bedroom, on the ground, with my favorite book in hand. I called Mom as tears surfaced to my eyes. When Mom got to Grandma's bedroom, she didn't even see Grandma. Instead, she looked me in the eye and said, "Charlotte Smith, why is a 10-year old, such as yourself cr..."

"Look!" I said as I pointed at Grandma. I knew I wasn't ever supposed to interrupt my mom, but this was an emergency!

"Mother!" Mom cried when she saw Grandma. She never really showed her love for Grandma, besides giving her a place to live, but now I knew she loved her just as much as me. My mom and dad rushed her to the hospital and here I am, sitting in the blandly colored waiting room, waiting for my best friend to come back. Just as I was drifting off to sleep, I heard words. "Come say your goodbyes" was all I could make out.

In Grandma's hospital room, it was quiet. I watched Mom and Dad say their goodbyes. Grandma was sleeping so they were basically talking to themselves. Now, it was my turn. Everyone left me and Grandma alone in the yellow, windowless room. "Hi" I said. I know that's a stupid thing to say when your grandma is dying, but it was all I could think of. I knew she wasn't going to respond because she was sleeping so I was about to leave when I heard a wheeze. "Grandma?" I asked.

"Yup, that's me" she said in a raspy voice, a voice that was not hers.

"Grandma, you can't die!" I said in a pleading voice, even though I knew she couldn't help it.

"*I'm* not dying, my *body* is dying,"

"BEEEEEP," I heard the monitor connected to Grandma say.

"Excuse me, we are going to have to ask you to leave" said a nurse as other doctors and nurses whisked Grandma away. I slowly walked back from the hospital room to the waiting room. I thought about what Grandma had said. Was she telling me a secret message? Did she want me to do something?

It was late. I was asleep in my bed. *My bed!* It felt good. I was still thinking about what Grandma had said when I heard Mom's voice say, "Can I come in?"

"Door's open" I said. When Mom came in, I could tell she had been crying. Her eyes were a dotty, red mess. Her hair, which was usually in a tight ponytail, is now in a loose messy bun. She was wearing one of Dad's big, baggy Black Keys shirts with purple striped pajama pants.

"How are you doing?" Mom asked me.

"Ok I guess, how are you doing?"

"I'm fine" Mom answered.

Clearly, she was not. "I keep forgetting that she isn't coming to read to me" I said.

"Listen kiddo, we're going to have to make a lot of adjustments, we can't just bring her back"

"That's it!" I shouted.

"What's what?" Mom asked clearly confused.

"Never mind" I said, but boy did I have a great idea. The next day I woke up bright and early. Dad was already awake, brewing coffee. "Can I go to the library please?" I asked Dad.

"Sure," Dad said.

"Thanks!" I said cheerfully.

"You perked up fast!" Dad said.

"Yup! Ok, I'm going to go now" The library is close to my house, so I got there quickly. I went straight to the librarian and asked, "Where are the 'Bringing Back Paranormal' books?"

"To your left, sweetie" said Mrs. Hanino, my favorite librarian. I love her Italian accent. I went straight to the ghost books section. I found the right book, checked it out and walked out of the library. When I got home, I went straight to my room. I opened the book on my floor and read the table of contents.

"Bringing back your pet, talking with the dead, ah, here it is! Summoning your ancestors, page 125." I flipped to page 125 and there it was. All the instructions to summon Grandma!

“First, set up a table with all your ancestor's favorite things.” Easy enough. I put all Grandma’s favorite things on my nightstand. Books, peppermints, headbands, all her favorite stuff. “Next, put a picture of your ancestor on the table, along with their favorite things” There are so many good pictures of her, it’s hard to choose one. I decided on the one when she’s at the park. She is wearing her ‘Life is Good’ shirt and pearl earrings. “Lastly, chant the words ‘Summoned’ three times” I close my eyes and chant “Summoned, summoned, summoned.” A gust of wind comes in, but no Grandma. My heart broke.

I sat staring at the nightstand with all of Grandma’s favorite things. Surrounded by Grandma’s things made me feel happy. I felt like Grandma was still with me. I remember Grandma’s last words, “*I’m not dying, my body is dying.*” Even though I couldn’t see her, I knew she would be with me always.