



## Goodbye Grandma

‘There’s still something you’ve left out,’ Mr Kranky said.

‘I can’t think what it could be,’ George said.

‘Give it up,’ Mrs Kranky said. ‘Pack it in. You’ll never get it right.’

Mr Kranky looked very forlorn.

George looked pretty fed up, too. He was still kneeling on the ground with the spoon in one hand and the cup full of medicine in the other. The ridiculous tiny brown hen was walking slowly away.

At that point, Grandma came striding into the

yard. From her enormous height, she glared down at the three people below her and she shouted, 'What's going on around here? Why hasn't anyone brought me my morning cup of tea? It's bad enough having to sleep in the yard with the rats and mice but I'll be blowed if I'm going to starve as well! No tea! No eggs and bacon! No buttered toast!'

'I'm sorry, Mother,' Mrs Kranky said. 'We've been terribly busy. I'll get you something right away.'

'Let George get it, the lazy little brute!' Grandma shouted.

Just then, the old woman spotted the cup in George's hand. She bent down and peered into it. She saw that it was full of brown liquid. It looked very much like tea. 'Ho-ho!' she cried. 'Ha-ha! So that's your little game, is it! You look after yourself all right, don't you! You make quite sure *you've* got a nice cup of morning tea! But you didn't think to bring one to your poor old Grandma! I always knew you were a selfish pig!'



'No, Grandma,' George said. 'This isn't ...'

‘Don’t lie to me, boy!’ the enormous old hag shouted. ‘Pass it up here this minute!’

‘No!’ cried Mrs Kranky. ‘No, Mother, don’t! That’s not for you!’

‘Now *you’re* against me, too!’ shouted Grandma. ‘My own daughter trying to stop me having my breakfast! Trying to starve me out!’

Mr Kranky looked up at the horrid old woman and he smiled sweetly. ‘Of course it’s for you, Grandma,’ he said. ‘You take it and drink it while it’s nice and hot.’

‘Don’t think I won’t,’ Grandma said, bending down from her great height and reaching out a huge horny hand for the cup. ‘Hand it over, George.’

‘No, no, Grandma!’ George cried out, pulling the cup away. ‘You mustn’t! You’re not to have it!’

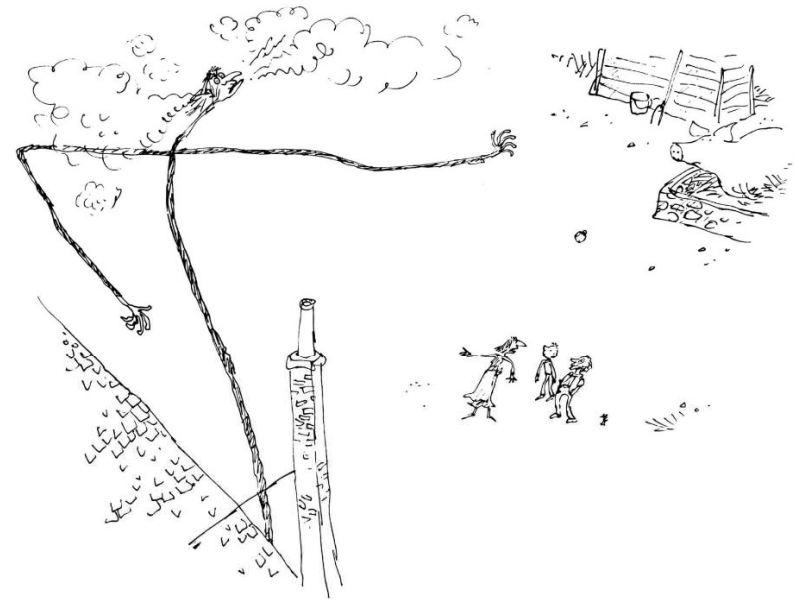
‘Give it to me, boy!’ yelled Grandma.

‘Don’t!’ cried Mrs Kranky. ‘That’s George’s Marvellous ...’

‘Everything’s George’s round here!’ shouted Grandma. ‘George’s this, George’s that! I’m fed up with it!’

She snatched the cup out of little George’s hand and carried it high up out of reach.

‘Drink it up, Grandma,’ Mr Kranky said, grinning hugely. ‘Lovely tea.’



‘No!’ the other two cried. ‘No, no, no!’

But it was too late. The ancient beanpole had already put the cup to her lips, and in one gulp she swallowed everything that was in it.

‘Mother!’ wailed Mrs Kranky. ‘You’ve just drunk fifty doses of George’s Marvellous Medicine Number Four and look what one tiny spoonful did to that little old brown hen!’

But Grandma didn’t even hear her. Great clouds



of steam were already pouring out of her mouth and she was beginning to whistle.

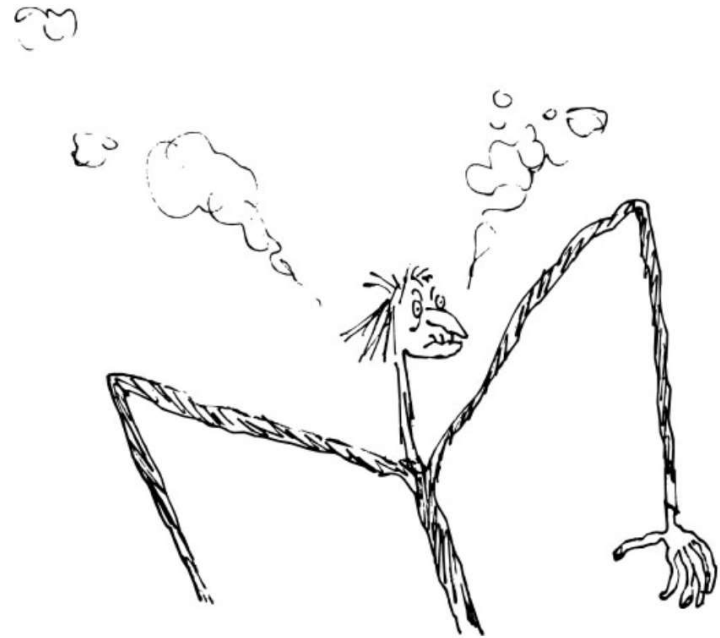
‘This is going to be interesting,’ Mr Kranky, said, still grinning.

‘Now you’ve done it!’ cried Mrs Kranky, glaring at her husband. ‘You’ve cooked the old girl’s goose!’

‘I didn’t do anything,’ Mr Kranky said.

‘Oh, yes you did! You told her to drink it!’

A tremendous hissing sound was coming from above their heads. Steam was shooting out of Grandma’s mouth and nose and ears and whistling as it came.



‘She’ll feel better after she’s let off a bit of steam,’ Mr Kranky said.

‘She’s going to blow up!’ Mrs Kranky wailed. ‘Her boiler’s going to burst!’

‘Stand clear,’ Mr Kranky said.

George was quite alarmed. He stood up and ran back a few paces. The jets of white steam kept squirting out of the skinny old hag’s head, and the whistling was so high and shrill it hurt the ears.

‘Call the fire-brigade!’ cried Mrs Kranky. ‘Call the police! Man the hose-pipes!’

‘Too late,’ said Mr Kranky, looking pleased.

‘Grandma!’ shrieked Mrs Kranky. ‘Mother! Run to the drinking-trough and put your head under the water!’

But even as she spoke, the whistling suddenly stopped and the steam disappeared. That was when Grandma began to get smaller. She had started off with her head as high as the roof of the house, but now she was coming down fast.

‘Watch this, George!’ Mr Kranky shouted, hopping around the yard and flapping his arms.

‘Watch what happens when someone’s had fifty spoonfuls instead of one!’

Very soon, Grandma was back to normal height.

‘Stop!’ cried Mrs Kranky. ‘That’s just right.’



But she didn’t stop. Smaller and smaller she got ... down and down she went. In another half minute she was no bigger than a bottle of lemonade.



‘How d’you feel, Mother?’ asked Mrs Kranky anxiously.

Grandma’s tiny face still bore the same foul and furious expression it had always had. Her eyes, no bigger now than little keyholes, were blazing with anger. ‘How do I *feel*?’ she yelled. ‘How d’you *think* I feel? How would *you* feel if you’d been a glorious giant a minute ago and suddenly you’re a miserable midget?’

‘She’s still going!’ shouted Mr Kranky gleefully. ‘She’s still getting smaller!’

And by golly, she was.



When she was no bigger than a cigarette, Mrs Kranky made a grab for her. She held her in her hands and she cried, ‘How do I stop her getting smaller still?’

‘You can’t,’ said Mr Kranky. ‘She’s had fifty times the right amount.’

‘I *must* stop her!’ Mrs Kranky wailed. ‘I can hardly see her as it is!’

‘Catch hold of each end and pull,’ Mr Kranky said.

By then, Grandma was the size of a matchstick and still shrinking fast.



A moment later, she was no bigger than a pin ...



Then a pumpkin seed ...



Then ...



Then ...



‘Where is she?’ cried Mrs Kranky. ‘I’ve lost her!’

‘Hooray,’ said Mr Kranky.

‘She’s gone! She’s disappeared completely!’  
cried Mrs Kranky.

‘That’s what happens to you if you’re grumpy

and bad-tempered,’ said Mr Kranky. ‘Great medicine of yours, George.’

George didn’t know what to think.

For a few minutes, Mrs Kranky kept wandering round with a puzzled look on her face, saying, ‘Mother, where are you? Where’ve you gone? Where’ve you got to? How can I find you?’ But she calmed down quite quickly. And by lunchtime, she was saying, ‘Ah well, I suppose it’s all for the best, really. She was a bit of a nuisance around the house, wasn’t she?’





‘Yes,’ Mr Kranky said. ‘She most certainly was.’  
George didn’t say a word. He felt quite trembly. He knew something tremendous had taken place that morning. For a few brief moments he had touched with the very tips of his fingers the edge of a magic world.

