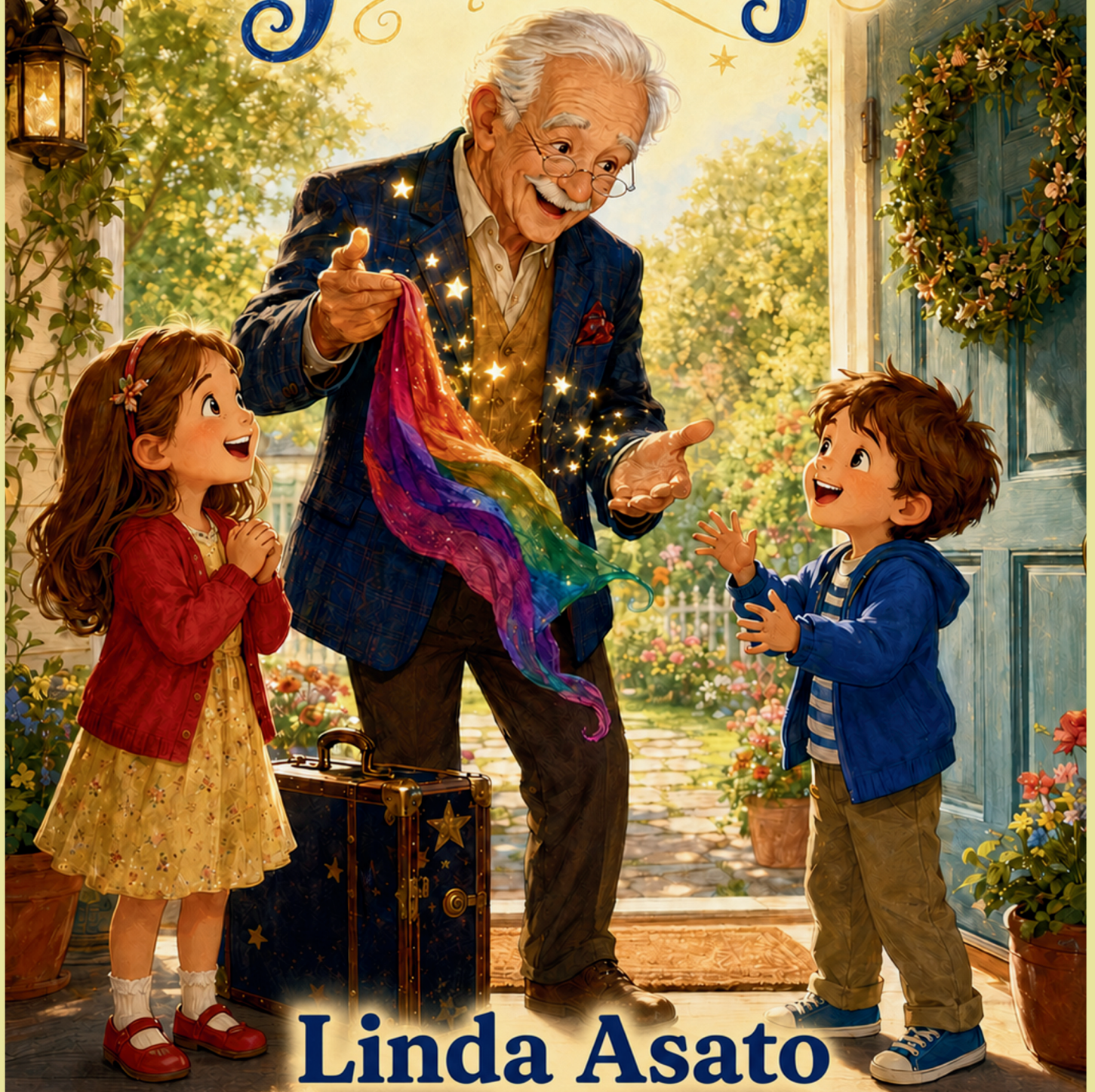


The Magic of Grandpa



Linda Asato

“Grandpa is coming!” Mom announced one morning.

Sophie nearly dropped her cereal spoon.

“Grandpa?” cried Max. “Our Grandpa?”

They had not seen him for a very long time. Grandpa lived far away, and although they sometimes talked to him on the telephone, it was not the same as having him there.

“When will he get here?” Sophie asked.

“This afternoon,” Mom replied. “And he will be staying for Grandparents Day.”

Sophie and Max looked at each other and grinned.

Their magical grandpa was coming!



“Do you remember when Grandpa pulled a silver coin from behind my ear?” Max asked.

Sophie laughed. “And when he made a bright red scarf appear from his empty hand?”

They remembered Grandpa as he had looked years ago—tall and lively, with black hair and a mischievous smile.

“I wonder if he can still do magic,” Max said.

“I hope so,” Sophie replied.

The memories seemed almost real to them, even then.



That afternoon, Sophie and Max watched eagerly from the window. At last, a car pulled into the driveway.

“Grandpa’s here!” Max shouted.

They hurried outside, but then stopped.

Grandpa’s hair was white now, and there were wrinkles around his eyes. He walked slowly toward them, leaning on a cane.

For a moment, Sophie and Max were quiet. Grandpa looked much older than they remembered.

Then he smiled his familiar, mischievous smile.

“Well,” he said, “aren’t you two going to hug an old magician?”



Later, Sophie and Max went into the playroom to talk.

“Grandpa seems different,” Max whispered.
“He walks so slowly now.”

“And he looks much older,” Sophie said. “Do you think he can still do his magic tricks?”

Max frowned. “Maybe he has forgotten how.”

For a moment, neither of them spoke.
Then Sophie remembered Grandpa’s familiar, mischievous smile.

“He may look different,” she said, “but I think our magical grandpa is still in there.”

Just then, they heard Grandpa call from the other room.

“Has anyone seen my missing rabbit?”



Sophie and Max hurried into the living room. Grandpa stood beside his dark magician's suitcase, looking very serious.

"I seem to have lost my rabbit," he said. "Perhaps he is hiding nearby."

Grandpa slowly lifted his hat and showed them the empty inside. Then he placed it on Max's head.

"Is he in there?" Grandpa asked.

Sophie peeked under the hat. "No rabbit!"

Grandpa tapped the hat three times with his cane. "Wiggle your ears, Max," he said.

Max wiggled his ears—and suddenly, two long white rabbit ears popped out of the top of the hat!

Sophie burst into laughter. Max laughed so hard that the hat nearly fell off.

Grandpa gave them his familiar mischievous smile. Their magical grandpa had not changed at all.



During his visit, Grandpa performed one trick after another.

He made a red scarf disappear into his fist. He pulled a shiny coin from Sophie's ear. He even made a spoon seem to bend in Max's hand.

"Teach us a trick, Grandpa!" the children begged.

Grandpa smiled. "Every magician must begin with something simple."

He placed a coin in Sophie's hand and showed her how to pretend to move it into her other hand while secretly keeping it hidden.

Sophie practiced until she could make the coin disappear.

Then she tried the trick on Max.

"Where did it go?" Max cried.

Sophie opened her empty hand and grinned.

Grandpa clapped proudly. "Very good! The magic is in making people believe—and in practicing until they do."



On Grandparents Day, Sophie and Max invited the whole family into the living room.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Max announced, “welcome to our magic show!”

Grandpa sat beside them in his blue checked jacket and top hat, looking very grand.

Sophie made a coin disappear. Max pulled a long red scarf from an empty box. Then Grandpa waved his cane—and a shower of colorful paper stars fluttered through the air.

Everyone clapped and laughed.

Sophie and Max took a bow with Grandpa between them.

They had never felt so proud. They were not just watching Grandpa’s magic anymore.

Now they were part of it.



That evening, Sophie and Max sat beside Grandpa on the sofa.

“You still have all your magic,” Max said.

Grandpa smiled. “Some magic never disappears.”

Sophie gave him a big hug. “Your tricks are wonderful, Grandpa—but they aren’t your greatest magic.”

“They aren’t?” Grandpa asked, raising his eyebrows.

“No,” Sophie said. “Your greatest magic is the way you make everyone happy.”

Max wrapped his arms around Grandpa too. “And the love you bring wherever you go.”

Grandpa held them close, his eyes shining.

He had grown older, and he moved a little more slowly—but the love, laughter, and joy he brought with him were as strong as ever.

That was the true magic of Grandpa.

