

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

The Olden Days

by Sue Hitchcock

“Mummy, tell me again about the olden days.”

“Again, must I?”

“Please.”

“Well, in the olden days people lived to be very old. When you grew up, you didn’t have just a mother and a father, but their mothers and fathers were alive too – not always, of course, but quite often. So that meant you had two grandmothers and two grandfathers. My grandmothers and one of my grandfathers were still alive, when I grew up.”

“Did they have grey hair and really wrinkly skin?”

“A bit, but mostly, because they were old, they felt tired quite a lot and so you could talk to them and they’d tell you how it was for them, when they were young – how different it was – how it was before the Internet. They used to write letters to each other on paper and they had a system for getting a letter anywhere in the world.”

“They had a Government organisation called the Post Office. They would take the letter to the local office and pay for a stamp, which was a little square of paper to stick on the letter, to show the delivery had been paid for. They had red boxes of metal in the street with a slot to put the letter in.

“Then a man called the postman would come and unlock the door in the box and take the letters back to a place where they were sorted out, into those for foreign countries and those for places in Britain. That’s how our grandparents sent us our birthday cards.”

“It’s my birthday next week. Do you think I could have a birthday card?”

“Of course, but there aren’t any postmen now and you don’t even have any grandparents any more since Daddy’s mother got Covid last year.”

“Pamela has still got a grandmother. Do you think Pamela could come to my party with her granny?”

“Pamela’s not big enough yet, but we could ask her granny to come.”

“You could pay her, then she would come.”