

ONCE UPON A TIME

By Mike Harris

“Once Upon a Time” is not always way back in antiquity, it can take place right in the middle of the twenty-first century. This story is about a little girl who was lucky enough to have two grandpas who both loved her very much. However the grandpas were very different, one was soft and cuddly, the other was hard – there was not a soft spot anywhere – and as you guessed, even his nature was hard. When hard grandpa tried to hold his granddaughter she could not find anyplace soft to lean against and soon got off his lap and went to soft grandpa, curled up, and very soon, especially in the evening, was shortly off in dreamland. Even when hard grandpa padded his lap with pillows he could not compete with soft gramps.

Hard grandpa had his own advantages, especially once school started, he would teach games and, without the child realizing it, she was learning to add, subtract, and multiply. Numbers became fun. But hard gramps did not lose often on purpose, only when he saw his granddaughter making a really smart move. So it went, soft grandpa had another advantage, he lived in the same town as his granddaughter, the other grandpa only visited for three months in the summer.

Time marches on and soft grandpa passes on, hard grandpa lives forever. Hard grandpa somehow just does not know how to bond. The years pass, granddaughter gets through elementary school. Gets into high school and has become a very pretty teenager, and gets by socially and academically without really trying, making “just so” grades. College on the horizon she asks for the same as her brother, she wants to choose her school and is refused. Because mom better understands her daughter she gets her way and goes to the college of her choice, with the understanding, no above average grades, back to state college. Faced with a string attached she made the grades. Upon graduation and a poor employment market, and much to the surprise of hard grandpa, she took a job in a foreign country, a one year contract. Back in the U.S.A. with a job in Montana. The next year a better job in a bigger city, the following year a move with the same employer to a branch office in Denver, a vote of confidence in her ability. During the Christmas holidays while sitting around with family I asked "What do you really want?" Without stopping to taking an extra breath her reply, "I want to be rich and famous."

You know what? I am giving three to one odds that she makes it. Place your bets!