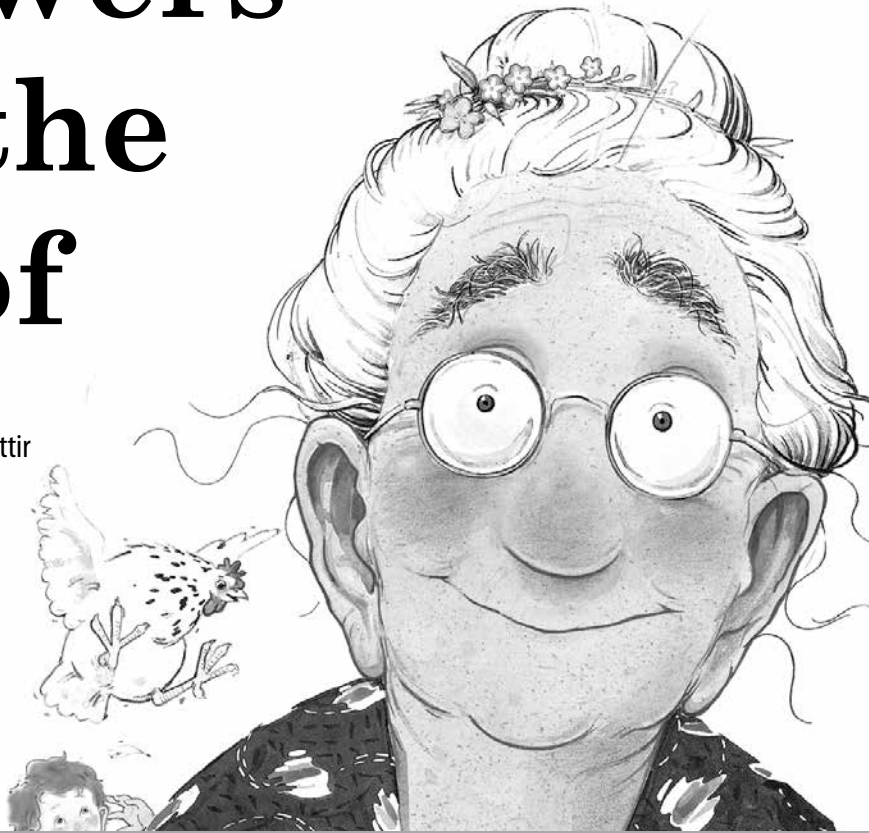


Flowers on the Roof

by Ingibjörg Sigurdardóttir



Shall I tell you about a granny I know? She's a really strange old lady, and so full of life! Her real name is Gunnjona, but I call her Granny Gunn. Before she moved into our block of flats she lived in the country. Her farmhouse was just like a doll's house. It had tiny little windows and the roof was covered with grass. And there were flowers growing on the roof too!

Granny Gunn had lived all on her own in the farmhouse but she was never lonely because she had many animals to play with: a cow, seven hens, two sheep and a cat.

One day Granny Gunn became ill.

“You aren’t seriously ill, but you should move into town,” the doctor had said. “It’s not very wise to live here all alone. Your cow can’t call me if you break your leg out in the yard!”

“I can look after myself!” Granny Gunn answered. But then she thought that maybe it would be fun to live in town.

“All right!” she said suddenly. “I’ll move to town.”

Soon she had sold her farm and bought an apartment in our block of flats.

But what was she going to do about the animals? She couldn’t take them to town with her, could she? Luckily, the people on the next farm kindly said that they would look after them. It was still very difficult for Granny Gunn to say goodbye to her animal friends. She was so sad that in the end she decided to take her cat, Robert, with her.



Granny Gunn packed all her things into a van and was soon on her way to her new home. She was very excited and really looking forward to seeing the town.

I was very excited, too! I couldn’t wait to see who was going to move into the apartment opposite ours. Perhaps it would be another little boy for me to play with. But it was Granny Gunn. Still, at least she had a cat.

Granny Gunn wasn't too happy when she looked around her new flat.

"This is just dreadful!" she said. "The walls are all smooth and white. And just look at those windows! They're far too big!" She became very quiet.

"I'm off back home!" she said, and turned to leave.

Then she suddenly gave a little scream. Robert the cat had jumped out of the window!

"Don't worry," I said quickly. "He's only jumped out onto the balcony. Look."

Granny Gunn rushed past me onto the balcony. But when she got there, she forgot all about Robert. The balcony was huge, and she could see the mountains far away and even a bit of the sea. Granny Gunn crouched down so that she couldn't see any of the rooftops—only the mountains and the sky. Granny Gunn decided to stay after all.

But the next day when I went around to help her unpack, she still looked very unhappy.

"Are you upset because all your animals are so far away?" I asked her.

"I do rather miss them," she sighed.

"Then why don't you go and fetch them?" I asked.

Granny Gunn winked at me and gave me a funny grin.

There was no one at home when I came to visit her the next day. Granny Gunn had taken the bus out into the country.

That night I woke up to hear a strange cackling sound coming up the stairs. What could it be? Of course! The hens! They must have been too frightened to go in the lift!

The next morning, I helped Granny Gunn feed the hens.

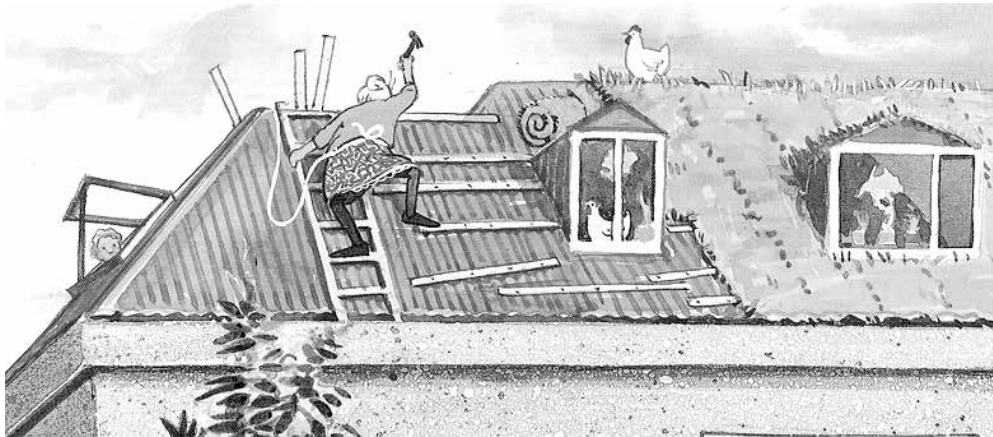


“I feel as if I’m back home,” she said. “The hens are cackling all around me, and if I squint, I can easily imagine that the mountains I see are those near my farm. All that’s missing is the smell of earth and grass.” Suddenly she opened her eyes wide and sat up. Granny Gunn had clearly thought of something new.

“Well now,” she said. “Don’t you think it would be rather nice to have some grass on the roof? I think we’ll have to go to town tomorrow!”

And that’s exactly what we did.

When we got home, Granny Gunn carried the pieces of turf up onto the roof. She laid them out carefully, and fixed them so that they wouldn’t fall off.



Granny Gunn is much happier now. She’s made a bit of countryside here in the town. She’s now as fond of her rooftop garden as she had been of her old farm. And there are flowers growing on the roof once more.

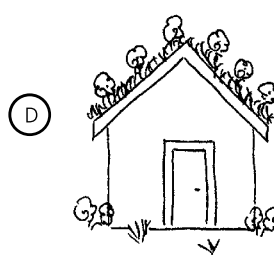
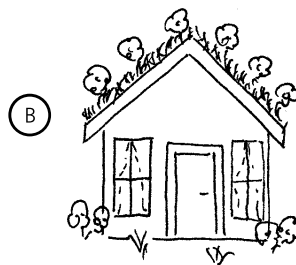
Granny Gunn is not like anyone else I know. She can do anything! There’s only one thing that bothers her now. How is she going to get the cow into the lift?!

Questions Flowers on the Roof

1. Who is telling the story?

- (A) a granny
- (B) a child
- (C) a doctor
- (D) a farmer

2. Which of these is most like Granny Gunn's farmhouse?



3. Why did the doctor think that Granny Gunn should move to town?

- (A) because she was lonely without her friends
- (B) so she could live with her relatives
- (C) because she could not take care of her animals
- (D) in case she needed someone to look after her

4. Who offered to look after Granny Gunn's animals when she moved to town?

- ☐ (A) the people on the next farm
- ☐ (B) the doctor
- ☐ (C) Granny Gunn's family
- ☐ (D) Robert

5. Granny Gunn did not like the walls and windows in her new flat. Why else was she unhappy?


- ☐ (A) She was ill.
- ☐ (B) She missed her cat.
- ☐ (C) She did not like the balcony.
- ☐ (D) She felt homesick.

6. Why did Granny Gunn scream when the cat jumped out of the window?



7. When Granny Gunn was on the balcony, she crouched down so that she could not see any of the rooftops—only the mountains and the sky. Why did she do this?



8. Find the part of the story by this picture of Granny Gunn:  . Why did Granny Gunn wink and grin at the little boy?



9. Write **two** ways in which Granny Gunn made her new flat feel like home.



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10. At the end of the story, how did Granny Gunn feel about her new home?



11. The last line in the story is: 'How is she going to get the cow into the lift?'

Why does the story finish with this question?

- (A) to add a joke to the story
- (B) to explain the moral of the story
- (C) to make the story believable
- (D) to help the reader understand what happened

12. What were the little boy's feelings about Granny Gunn when she first moved in and at the end of the story? Use what you have read to describe each feeling and explain why his feelings changed.



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13. Which of the following might you learn from this story?
- Ⓐ Old people will never be happy if they change where they live.
 - Ⓑ You can make a new place feel like home if you bring familiar things with you.
 - Ⓒ You can get used to living with animals, even though they are noisy.
 - Ⓓ Children and old people do not make good friends.