

The Tale of a Creepy Grandma - Charlotte Carter

My mind turns to why I'm doing this. Sophie. I need to socialise. Plus, it's the weekend now so going to friend's houses is a must do. And I just like being with Sophie. But why did I turn down my Mum's offer to drive me there? I think of it now, sitting in soft car seats, conditioned air blasting our faces, light conversation filling our ears and leaving our mouths. I would be at Sophie's by now.

I focus on the stretch of road ahead of me. A minivan drives past me. It's covered in graffiti – not so nice words mixed in random colours and art. The van stops about 50 metres in front of me. I keep walking. The van starts reversing toward me. Still, I keep walking. It stops right next to me.

"Hello, my dear," an elderly woman's voice reaches me from the driver's seat of the van.

Without thinking, I turn towards her. She is wearing ripped jeans and a tie died t-shirt.

Tattoos cover her arms and what I can see of her neck and chest. Her hair is frizzy and grey, giving her a crazed look. It hangs over her face and shoulders hiding some of her face. Her mouth is smiling in a way that might be calming if her eyes weren't so cold, hard and greedy. They slide over me as if she's a lion looking at fresh meat. The minivan's dashboard and passenger seats are covered with rubbish from takeaway food. An air freshener hangs from the dirty mirror in the shape of a skull. In my opinion, the air freshener wasn't doing much good – the minivan stank of beer.

"Uh, hi," I say. Just be polite, I think. Keep walking, how hard can that be?

"Do you know Matilda?" she said. "I'm her Grandma."

I have never heard of anyone called Matilda that lives on this lane. "No, I don't know Matilda." I said, sounding much calmer than I felt.

"Well, anyway, do you want a lift? You look very tired. And I have lollies!" Matilda's Grandma sounded very nice and welcoming and I was so exhausted I almost went with her until I noticed something peeking out behind an empty beer bottle. A knife! My heart stopped beating for what seemed like forever. My mind struggled to think – only processing that I needed to do something, or I was going to die a very painful death.

"Ummm... sweetie? Are you still with me?" Grandma suddenly realised the knife was exposed and hid it under more piles of rubbish. I tried to look away from her before she caught me looking but it was too late. "Oh, don't worry about that, dear. I only use it for cutting vegetables!" she said, beckoning me forwards. Creepy. I shook myself.

"No thanks. I'm good," I squeaked.

"Oh, come on! I'm not going to hurt you," Grandma started to clear a space for me to sit and reached over and opened the door. "Really. I mean no harm."

"No, I'm OK. I'm almost there anyway." And I was. I could see the driveway that led to the safety of Sophie's place.

"But I have lollies." She whispered and grinned evilly. "You stay there, I'll go and get them for you!" She got out of the van and proceeded to walk around the front of it. Right towards me, knife in hand. I lost it – I couldn't just stand there and act normal anymore.

"Sorry!" I croaked and ran away. My chest screamed as I sprinted to the driveway. I heard the minivan crank up and roar toward me. Sophie's Labrador and German shepherd, Buster and Ali were barking loudly, as they usually would when they saw me (or anyone for that matter) walking past their territory, but this time, it's different. This time I know they can sense my fear.

I kept running and running and running until the graffiti covered minivan drove past me and out of sight. I doubled over heaving big gulps of air, air that seemed to taste so much sweeter. My knees were trembling as a big sense of relief washed over me and the adrenaline ceased to course through my veins. I don't remember walking up Sophie's driveway, only being

greeted in the kitchen by smiles that turned into concerned looks as Sophie and her parents saw the expression on my face. I have never been so happy to walk into Sophie's house!