

An illustration of a young boy with brown hair and a worried expression, looking up towards a window. He is holding a brown teddy bear. Behind him, an older woman with grey hair and glasses, presumably his grandmother, has her arms around him in a comforting embrace. The window in the background shows a dark night sky with jagged yellow lightning bolts. The overall background of the cover is a dark green color.

# All About a Boy Who Was Afraid of Thunder

(And How He Got Over It)

**Ann Marie Hannon**



**A "KIDS WITH WORRIES" BOOK**

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Paperback: 978-1-63767-168-9

eBook: 978-1-63767-169-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021918300

Grade K-4

Literary Fiction

A Kids with Worries Book™

The Second Story in the Grandma Annie Chronicles

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Ordering Information:



*BookTrail Agency*  
*8838 Sleepy Hollow Rd.*  
*Kansas City, MO 64114*

Printed in the United States of America

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# Chapter 1

## At Grandma's House



**S**omewhere on a little hill overlooking a tiny town there is a house where a lovely Grandma lady lives. She has many grandchildren all over the world because when she was younger, she and her husband had many children, and now those children have children. She is my Grandma Annie and I'm her eldest grandson. I've just driven up the little hill because I'm visiting her to say hello, and ask if there is anything she needs. I won't stay long, because she's already told me that she must visit another one of her grandchildren to help him with a worry.

You know what a worry is I'm sure.

All kids and even grownups have worries from time to time and Grandma Annie is glad to help anyone with a worry including her grandchildren. She even helped me with a worry a long time ago, but that's another story.

Right now, I'm stopping by just to say Hello and see if there is anything that she needs. Most of the time, when that happens, she just asks me back, "Is there anything that you need, honey?"

It makes me chuckle when that happens. You see, thanks to Grandma Annie, many, many worries I had as a kid were solved and stayed solved. That's why I still don't mind when she asks me if I need anything. I am always respectful and politely say, "I already have everything I need, Grandma, because you were there for me a long time ago."

I always love visiting Grandma Annie and I stop by as often as I can. Why, if it wasn't for my Grandma Annie, I sure would be lonely; and that's also another story.

Let's just knock on her front door, and see how she's doing. She has a new security camera device to see who is there. I like to knock three times, then ring the doorbell. That way, she knows it's me even though she can see me in the camera. It's our secret knock.

"Hello Grandma. How are you doing today?"

"Hello, and welcome," says a voice from behind the door.

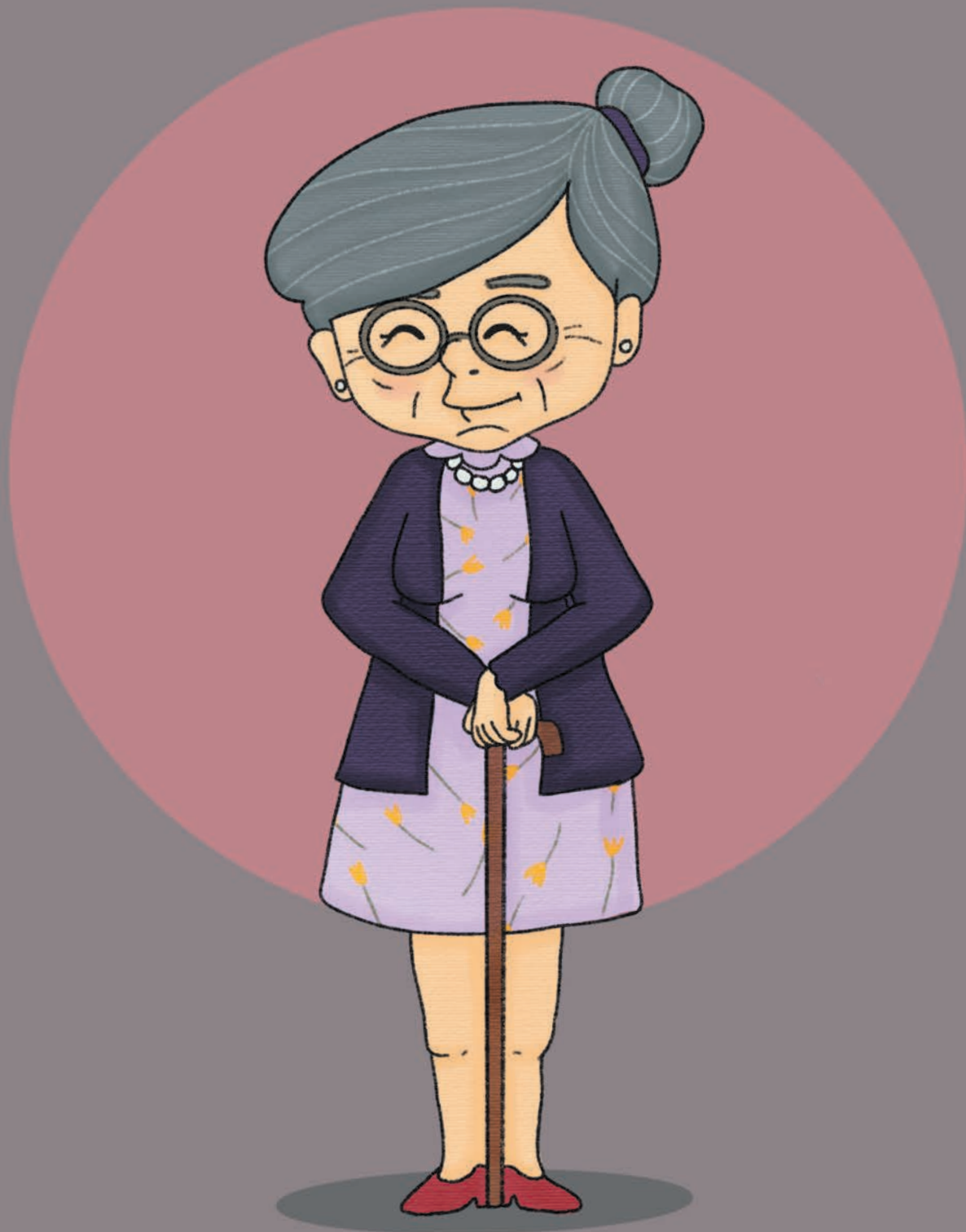
I know a small wisp of a lady with abundant silver hair and using a small cane is answering the doorbell ring and my secret knock.

"Grandma, it's only me, I'm waiting and it's really cold. BBrrrr."

"Hello, Brendan," she calls through the security microphone. "Please come in. I've just unlocked the door. Come in come in, so happy to see you."

"Hi Grandma, I'm just as happy to see you and I won't stay long. I know you're going to visit Grandson number 5," I say, laughing out loud.

"Oh Brendan, you always like to joke," but Grandma even chuckles herself about calling all of her grandchildren by numbers.



Of course, they all have names and she knows every single one of them by name, but using numbers lets her recall them by birth order.

“Yes, he had a worrisome experience during a thunderstorm recently and now because of that, I’m going to help him get over it.”

“If anyone can help him do that, it’s you.”

“His mom and dad usually help, but there’s a lot happening due to the new baby brother or sister to be; so I’ve been asked to help.”

“I’m sure you can help, you always helped me when I was younger. You still help me too, because you make me happy when I can just speak with you.”

“Why thank you, Brendan, that’s an honor coming from you. All children have worries from time to time.”

“So, can you tell me what’s going on and why I have the pleasure of you visiting today?”

I enter the hallway we walk down the hall.



I hear you on on your way to Grandson number 5, Jimmy, to help with a worry.”

“Yes, that’s true, honey,” I must run over there soon; well, run isn’t quite the right word. I’ll be using my cane, but I’m sure everything will be okay.”

“Understood, Grandma, and there’s another reason why I’m here. I want to introduce you to some friends of mine who have heard about you and want to meet you.”

“Oh my, that’s interesting. I don’t see them though”.

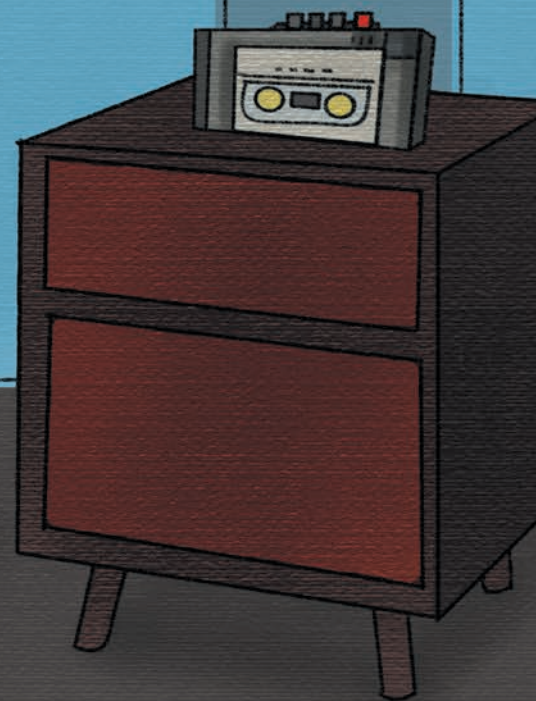
“Well, they are reading all about you in my latest book. Do you remember I was always worried that I wanted to be a writer and my teachers thought I would be better off working as an engineer or a doctor?”

“Yes, I remember,”

“Well, I guess they were wrong because I’ve won an award for my first book and now I’m working on my next book. I want my readers to meet you in the story I’m writing. I want them to learn from you all about how to overcome worries the same way you always help your grandchildren to solve a worry and get over it.”

“Well, that’s a tall order, honey.HHow do you think I can do that?”

“I figured out a way to help, I’ve brought you a small tape recorder to record any stories you want to share about worries. Just start whenever you have time.LLet me know when you’ve finished one and ready to start the next.”



"I like that idea. It's sort of lonely here from time to time. I miss having lots of children here. But, if I can tell my stories in this way, that will make me use my imagination and make me feel happy. I hope your readers like the stories I tell."

"Yes, Grandma. It's all set." I am delighted.. "Here's the button, to start the recorder. Once you start just speak in the same way you like to talk to your own grandchildren, including me. Let's see how it goes, now, before you have to leave to visit Jimmy."

"Okay," Grandma smiles and holds the recorder lightly in her hand.

"Great, " I say with a sigh of relief. "Using your imagination please say hello to all the readers who want to hear your stories, now."

Grandma Annie starts speaking. She is sitting in her rocking chair, and I sit quietly nearby musing about her and her home.

I have always loved Grandma Annie's house. Small but filled lots of natural light during the day, and in the winter evenings and even some spring and autumn days, with fire logs gently burning in the living room fireplace. Grandma's piano with more photos and picture framed portraits than you can think of. Also, many trinkets, and small figurines on wall shelves and a huge sofa with lots of soft fluffy pillows. Painted in what Grandma calls "robin-eggshell blue" the lighting whether day or night is softened. Best of all, Grandma's rocking chair and table.

next to it are the main and most important items because that's where Grandma always stays when telling one of her stories about kids with worries and how they solved and got over their worries.

On this day, Grandma places the recorder on the little table next to her chair and starts rocking back and forth slowly. She begins softly with, "Hello and welcome. I think I've met you before. I'm Grandma Annie. Have you come to hear another story about kids with worries? I hope so. I'm always happy to share my stories because all children have worries from time to time. My stories help to solve those worries in new and useful ways.

She continues, "Today's story is all about being afraid of thunder and how to get over it. I'm going to tell this story to my grandson. His picture is right there on the piano and he's holding his Teddy Bear, named Theodore. I just found out that he is afraid of thunder. He told me on the phone about a terrible thunderstorm that happened recently that made him very afraid. I'm going to visit him, I think I can help. I'm going to tell him a story that his Grandpa told me about the time when Grandpa was a boy and he was afraid of thunder. I'm on my way now for a visit. You come too."

"That's great, Grandma, "I compliment, "Just click the button again and it will close. Thanks, so much. I can just imagine what's happening at Jimmy's while he's waiting for you to arrive."

"Hah, hah. I agree. with you. I'm sure Jimmy is speaking with his "Teddy Bear" right now, and "Teddy" or rather "Theodore" is talking back to him. You see, I know Jimmy needs a friend and until the new brother or sister arrives, he's the only child in the house.

Jimmy uses his imagination to speak with his “Teddy” and that’s a good thing. UUsing our imagination is exercise for the brain. It’s the same way riding a bicycle is exercise for our arms and legs.”

“You do have a way of explaining things, Grandma.” I compliment her again. “I’ll be on my way now so you can get going. I had a wonderful visit; can’t wait to hear the rest of your story.”

“Oh, I will get it to you honey. Just sitting and using my imagination to make the recording so far was fun. I was imagining loads of wonderful children listening and enjoying the story.”

I help her with her coat.

She remarks, “ I’ll make sure I finish it. Now, I’d better get going. Love you.”

I put on my coat and we exit to our cars.AAfter that day, I saw her again much later and the results were amazing.





Chapter 2

# ***At Jimmy's House***

**“H**ere we go again!”, said Theodore, as he jumped up and down on Jimmy’s bed.

“So glad you got over your afraid of the dark worries, Jim-boy”, Theodore always likes to joke with Jimmy, “I never had a clue about your newest worry.”

“It happens to the best of us, Theodore,” Jimmy replied.

“So, I think I know what that new worry is,” Theodore said casually. “Remember a few weeks ago, how you were totally scared during the storm because of the loud thunder and lightning bolts. You clutched on to me so tight I thought my teddy bear stuffing would pop. Then you tried hiding under the bed, only after you tried hiding under the bed covers, and finally you hid both of us in the closet.”



"I know, I know," giggled Jimmy." It wasn't so funny now that the storm is over. But I'm still worried about another storm and if there's thunder like that one."

"Well, Jimmy, chortled Theodore, "I'm glad Grandma Annie is coming here before that happens again. She helped you last time when you were afraid and worried. I'm sure she will know exactly how to help you now."

"Well, Mom said Grandma Annie has a story to tell me to help. I hope she helps you too, since you were as worried and afraid, as I was."

"But she doesn't know you talk to me and I talk to you. Right?"

"I know. But, if she did know, it's okay, and she would say it's a good thing and I'm using my imagination."

"Well, I don't care what you call it; I'm here for you buddy. Whenever you're afraid, I'm afraid. Whenever you have worries, I have worries. You can count on me!" chimed Theodore. "Hey, how about a high-5 handshake?"

"Sure, here! You got it."

They both laughed, and almost didn't hear the knock or see Grandma Annie entering.

"Hello, I missed visiting you so much! How are you doing? I remember on the phone you told me you were afraid of thunder and worried about a thunderstorm happening again!"



“Oh, Grandma. Yes, I’m really worried about that. Will you help me and Theodore?”, he asked holding his teddy bear closely.

“Why, of course, isn’t that what Grandma’s are for? So, Mom and Dad can handle other important things and Grandma’s can help their grandchildren with stories that solve their worries, said Grandma Annie, smiling.

She then explained to Jimmy, after hugs and kisses, “Please try to avoid being too surprised when I say, “Guess what, thunder is a good thing.” ”

“What? Grandma, are you joking?” Jimmy was totally confused.

Yes, I mean no,, I’m not joking. Thunder is very good and there is a reason why. Thunder lets you to know that you need to stay sheltered, so lightning doesn’t harm you.”

Jimmy continued to be surprised, “How can thunder be a good thing when it scares me so much and makes me so worried?

Grandma quickly replied, “That’s because thunder is like a lot of other noises that are good, but very loud. Loud noises can make you worried unless you solve your worry and understand why the loud sound is happening. You maybbe surprised to know there are other loud sounds that are worrisome but good. Like the loud screech of whistleblowing that happens to start a race. “

Jimmy’s imagination then allowed Theodore to say, “She’s got a point there. Those racing whistles are loud!” Theodore always had a way with words in JJimmy's imagination. Jimmy smiles then and listened.

“How about someone knocking loudly on your front door to let you know there may be danger in the area, and you need to stay indoors to be safe?” questioned Grandma.”

“See,” said Theodore unbeknownst to Grandma, “I remember when there was a stray racoon roaming around the neighborhood and the Vet services guy knocked on everyone’s door to let them know it wasn’t safe to be outside until they caught the racoon because it may have had rabies that awful disease that can hurt humans.”

“That makes sense, Grandma,” Jimmy agreed. “What else?”

Grandma Annie responded, “There are many other loud sounds that may scare us at first but are good things to have because they keep us safe. Even if thunder is very loud, it is also good. If we didn’t have thunder it sure would be hard to stay out of the way of lightning.”

Grandma Annie sat down on Jimmy's bed . She then made sure Jimmy, and Theodore, were listening, “Thunder is also a challenge because it is difficult know know how to handle its loud and scary noise. However, you can meet the challenge if you stay focused and count the way I’m going to teach you.”

That was when, both Jimmy and Theodore pperked up because Grandma Annie added,, “Did you also know that thunder can help you to know how far away the lightning is?”

“Really, Grandma?” Jimmy questioned, “How can that be?”

“Well, I’ll tell you if you pull the covers up and get ready to go to sleep.”



“Okay, Grandma!” Jimmy exclaimed as he pulled up the covers holding Theodore , and snuggled down. “How’s that?”

Grandma Annie giggled, “Okay very good, and pplease, no jumping either. We don’t want to ruin the mattress.”

Grandma sat down on the racking chair that was always reserved for her in Jimmy's room. She started rocking just a tad as she placed the recorder she had brought with her on to the table. She had found that making the recordings was interesting and decided she wanted to add the "afraid of thunder story" that she planned to tell to Jimmy, and Theodore to help Jimmy get over his fear. Then, she got ready to begin telling a very exciting and very true and important story that Jimmy, and TTheodore, will always remember.

She said, “Before I explain the way to tell how far off the lightening is, I must tell you a story about some children who were all, every single one of them, afraid of thunder and how they were almost struck by lightning as a result! It’s a story your Grandpa told me about how he learned not to be afraid of thunder when he was just about your age.”

Grandma didn't hear then, but Theodore, looked at Jimmy and said, "This better be good."

Jimmy didn't mind Theodore's silly remark, and replied, "It will be. I'm sure."

"Did you say something, honey?" Grandma looked keenly at Jimmy. "No, Grandma, it's nothing."

That's when, if I know Grandma Annie, she simply said to herself, "I am very sure that Jimmy talks to Theodore. But, that's okay. If Jimmy does talk to his 'Teddy', I'm glad. It shows that he is using his imagination."

Because Grandma Annie believes in imagination as long as it's used correctly, the next thing she said was, "Okay, let's get on with our story."

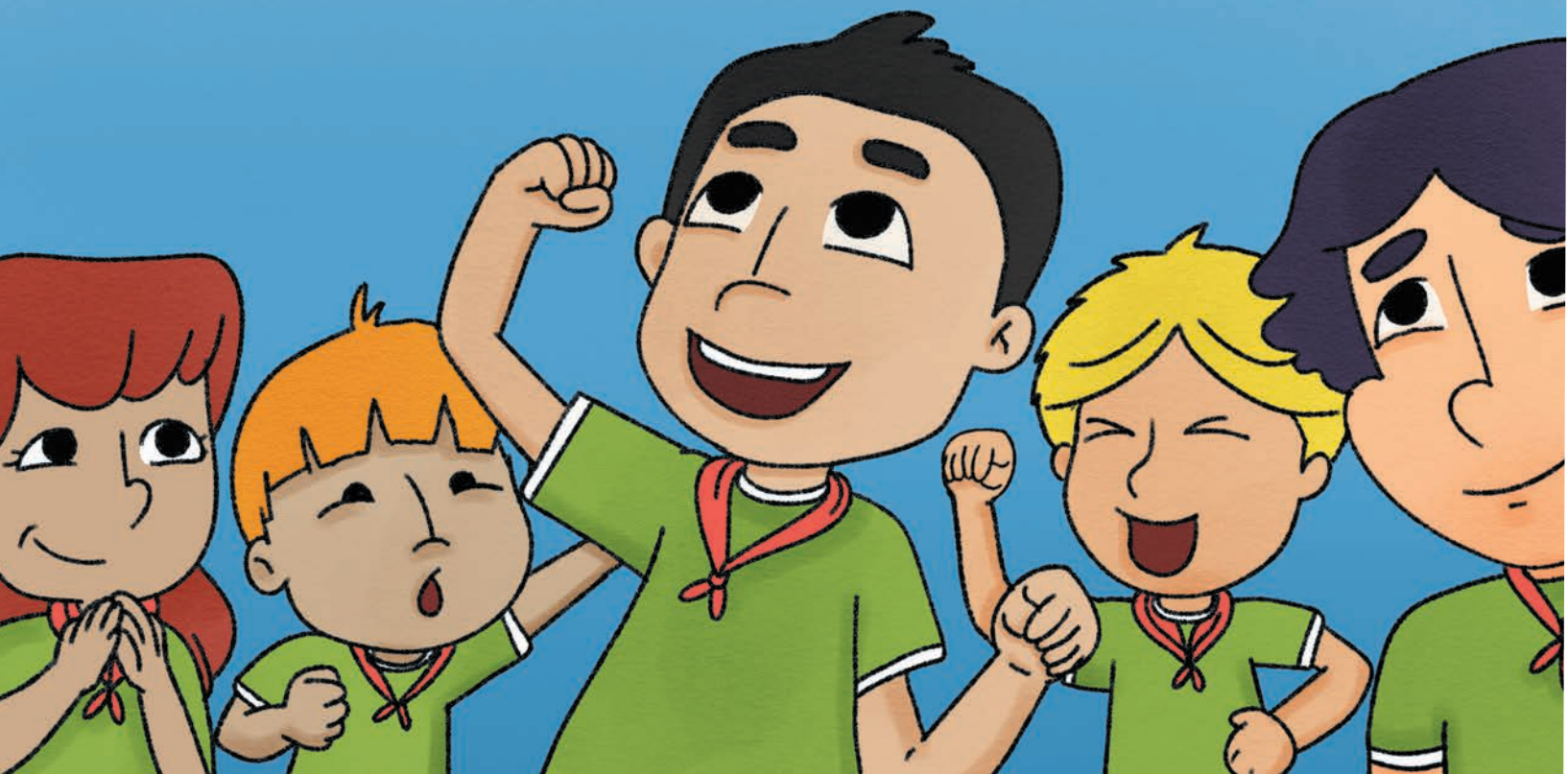
And clicked the recorder button too.





Chapter 3

# On the School Athletic Field Day Many Years Ago



I need to let you know this is the same story Grandma Annie told me, years ago when I was afraid of thunder. It all started on the day of the Middletown Elementary School Field Day event.

The entire school including Grandpa had all assembled for the outing. There were lots of school buses all lined up to take everyone to the event.

When Grandpa was a boy he walked to school and there were no daily buses for students, but the athletic field day was an all-day event and teachers and students and even parents who volunteered to help were there to ride to the park located on a large area just outside of town. All the children had gathered to take pictures with their class before the trip to Pleasant Valley Park where the field day events were to happen. Grandpa told Grandma Annie he heard one classmates named Suzy, talking to another classmate, named Billy and it was something like this.

“Billy are you ready to have me beat you in the 3-legged race? asked Suzy.

“Hah, Suzy! You will never beat me. I’m the 3-legged king, boasted Billy.

“But you must have a partner for the 3-legged race, silly. What if Lenny is your partner?

Billy was unimpressed by Suzy’s quip, in a very bravado voice, Bill replied, “Don’t worry. Lenny is slow but I have a trick or two that would speed him up...that is, if he’s my partner.

Suzy wasn't put down by his retort, she asked "Then, what about the relay race?"

Billy wasn't hampered by that question from Suzy either, "Don't worry; I'll pick the best team!"

Suzy pushed on, "But what if you aren't the team leader?"

"Don't worry, Suzy, said Billy and standing like a bragger would stand, " I have another idea about that, so go on with more ideas and problems, I'll bet that I can still win.

"Oh," Suzy exclaimed, exasperated, "you're such a bragger! But, that's okay. I have a few ideas about winning too. It never hurts to be prepared especially on the last day of the school year!"

Then, jumping up and down, they both yelled, "Yay!!"

"Come on, Suzy, let's get our pictures taken before our school bus leaves for the park."

Once the class pictures were all taken, the students climbed into their respective school buses, and the buses started leaving in one long line. It took about an hour for the buses to reach the outskirts of the town and then arrive at the park area within the huge campground. Everyone had already been told the itinerary for the day including which events were for which grades, where to find restroom facilities, when and where lunch would be served, and who to go to in case there was an "owie" or a scraped knee or some other non-life threatening injury.



When I use my imagination I can picture Grandma Annie telling all of the story to Jimmy and Theodore, I have to laugh to myself when I imagine about Theodore but it's okay. Grandma would say it's just Jimmy using his imagination and that's a good thing.

So, I found out that Jimmy, listened intently to Grandma Annie's story about Grandpa. She even had an inkling that Theodore looked like he was listening too, as Jimmy held Theodore under his arm.

"So, what does that have to do with being afraid, Grandma? It sounds like that would have been a fun and exciting day. What were the competition events they played? Did Grandpa win, did Suzy or Billy win?"

Grandma Annie answered, "Oh yes, there were many happy and fun events starting with the 3-legged race which Grandpa won, not Billy," she smiled to herself. "It turns out Lenny was Grandpa's partner."

Jimmy persisted, "Did they have a relay race, and softball, and volleyball, and tug of war, and hula hoop?"

"Well, Jimmy," Grandma Annie was quizzical, "I don't believe they had hula hoops when Grandpa was a boy, but yes, I'm sure there was tug of war and a relay race and softball and volleyball. But here is what happened next, and it is all about being afraid and making the wrong choices."

"Ohhhh, what happened?", Jimmy snuggled further on his bed, and listened closely.

"Well, you remember I explained it was a perfectly lovely day. "

Jimmy nodded, and Grandma Annie was surprised that she thought Theodore was nodding too, although it may have been Jimmy just shifting his arm around Theodore.

“Yes, it was, a gorgeous and perfect day, a super fun morning with loads of activities for the event, and lunch time didn’t come all too soon since all of the children were famished after playing and competing in the morning events of the day. So, at lunch time all the kids are sitting on the ground with their fun lunch box meals having sandwiches with carrot and celery sticks and then ice cream popsicles for dessert. But the day didn’t stay perfect after they had all finished their ice cream. Without their realizing it, the sky above the kids had suddenly started getting darker and darker. The afternoon sun was gone soon as the clouds blocked it and those clouds were blowing in and billowing and looking darker and darker so that it almost seemed like evening instead of early afternoon.”

“Then what happened?” Jimmy asked quickly.

Grandma responded, and I can tell you from memory exactly what happened. From my recall when I heard this story when I was younger, after lunchtime ended with the delicious ice cream for dessert, and just before the start of the afternoon activities, when the sky became darker and darker and amazing clouds blocked the sunlight, it started to rain. At first, it was just a light sprinkling at first but then a stronger sprinkling and then the sprinkling turned to sprinkling heavily and worst of all before anyone knew it, there is a huge loud clap of thunder. When that happened, everyone started running in all directions.



Suzy and Billy and a few other classmates including Grandpa ran to the base of a huge tree, they held hands and sat down at the base of the tree. There is another terrible clap of thunder, then a huge streak of lightning and a very large tree branch fell right to the side of where they were sitting under the tree.

“OMG,” said Theodore to Jimmy.

“What, Jimmy/”, Grandma turned to look more closely at Jimmy.

Oh, nothing again, Grandma, I just said OMG, that’s, Oh my Goodness, not Oh my God!”

“Well Jimmy I’m glad you said that because it shows you realize how terrible it was and how dangerous it was for the children, including Grandpa. But what happened next was very critical. The children’s teacher had run to where their school bus was parked nearby and most of the class had followed her to their bus, but unfortunately not Billy and Suzy and the remaining classmates including Grandpa. Under the tree had seemed safe until the huge branch had come crashing down so close to them all, and now they were petrified and terrified and too scared to move.





Chapter 4

# On the School Bus



**“Q**uick children, yelled Teacher from the school bus,” the next time you hear thunder, count until you see a lightning flash and then run right away to our school bus, but don’t do that until after you see the lightning. Can you hear me? Do you understand what it is that I’m telling you to do?”

“Yes, Teacher,” yelled all the children, including Billy, Suzy, and Grandpa. “We won’t move until first we hear the thunder and then we count and see the lightning. We pinky promise.”

Just as Teacher had explained, there was another huge clap of thunder that made everyone shudder, including Teacher. Then, Teacher started counting loudly enough for the children under the tree to hear her.

“One and two, and three and four...”, before she reached counting to five, everyone saw a streak of lightning brighten the sky and flash with a huge bolt. “Okay, now run!”, called Teacher. “Run, run, run!”

Within a few more seconds, the children who had been under the tree were safely on their school bus. “Thank goodness,” sighed Teacher, “You made it!”

As I recall my Grandma telling me this story, several of the children from under the tree were shaking and crying. Teacher made sure they were safe and sound too and placed a towel around each child’s shoulders before helping them to sit down in their school bus seats.

Teacher told them she was so I’m so glad they were all there now on the school bus and safe even though it was still raining terribly with thunder

and lightning. So, also tried to explain what happened and she was very, very sorry! The kids looked quizzically at each other wondering why Teacher would be sorry. Then Teacher went on to say that she had checked the weather report right up to the time the school buses were going to leave for the field day event. The weather person she spoke with assured her that it looked like it was going to be an awesome day for the event. Teacher was relieved by this news, then she told the class why she was so sorry.

She was calm but controlled when she spoke, “Even though the weather report was good, I’m very sorry that I didn’t give you instructions on what to do if there was potential for a possible rain or thunderstorm because the weather report was for fair and mild weather and I got busy with all the other goings on in preparation for our trip. We were loading game balls and sacks for the 3-legged race and explaining things to the volunteer parents in addition to taking photos and boarding everyone on the buses and then checking that everyone was accounted for.”

Teacher continued, but halted, when she said, “But, today was an awakening for us all on what can happen on a perfectly lovely day. You saw the rain start with no warning. Nobody knew it was coming. Not even the weather report and after the rain started everyone started running everywhere. You may have worried about getting drenched by the rain and so you decided to stay under the huge tree to avoid the rain and not get drenched any more than you were already.

But then there was a huge clap of thunder. I saw some of you putting your hands over your ears! And within seconds I saw a huge streak of lightning



in the sky and a huge tree branch fell right near where you were all sitting under the tree.”

Grandma’s story when she told it to me gave both Suzy and Billy a lot of credit for telling the children to stay calm. Her story also mentioned that Teacher was proud that when they all saw the huge branch fall right near them, she was sure they understood they also needed to get out from under that tree as soon as possible and run to their bus for safety. Then, she explained the most important part of this story. She told them, you should know if we didn’t have thunder, we wouldn’t have any warning about lightning. And lightning is very dangerous. After that, all of the kids understood why teacher had told them to count until they saw a lightning flash after the thunder crashed. She explained further that if we didn’t have thunder we might just run under a tree and wait for the rain to stop, but that would be the worst to do. Lightning could hit the tree and the tree could break and fall. Then, Teacher asked, “What’s the best thing to do if you are outdoors and it starts to thunder?”

Billy stood up from his seat without raising his hand, and yelled, “Run for cover! Geronimo!!!” and even though he hadn’t raised his hand, all the class laughed including Teacher.

Then, Suzy shared an important idea, after raising her hand, and said, “If you are indoors when it happens, stay away from the windows?”

Teacher agreed, “Yes, Suzy. Then, after you are in a safe place, think of happy things to do when it’s over. You can also count during a thunderstorm and that’s sort of a game but it’s an important game and you all counted

after you heard the clap of thunder so that as soon as the next lightning bolt flashed, you were able to run to the school bus before another clap of thunder and another bolt of lightning. Do you know that counting like that also tells you how near or far away that bolt of lightning is and when it is safe to run for cover before the next lightning bolt strikes?

The kids showed a lot of interest then, and nodded agreement.

Suzy, raising her hand, asked, "So, how do you do that again, to check the lightning after thunder?"

Teacher added, "Just start counting slowly and add the word "and" after each number, like the second hand of a clock that we learned about in class. I'll try to show you but we need to hear a thunder bolt."

I remember that Grandma told me that Grandpa told her, just at that time, a huge bolt of thunder sounded and everyone in the school bus jumped and screamed. But teacher stayed calm and started to count slowly and the children sat back down and counted along with her. Soon enough, a brilliant streak of lightning flashed only after the count of three. So, the lightning they realized has been close by but not as close as before. Teacher also let everyone know that she also knew something else about lightning. That was if you see lightning but don't hear thunder, it is because the thunder is too far away to hear. Sometimes, that's called "heat lightning" because it usually occurs in the summer, and it's just the same as regular lightning."

So, let's get back to Grandma and the telling of the rest of the story.

At that point, Suzy asked, “So, is a school bus a safe place to be in a thunderstorm?” Her classmates appeared worried after Suzy asked her question and Teacher responded quickly.

“Yes, Suzy, a school bus is a safe place to take shelter because a car or a bus have rubber tires so if lightning strikes the lightning is “grounded” by the tires. That’s an electrical term.”

Grandma always laughed whenever she told the next part of the story because Billy jumped up again, without raising his hand, and called out, “Oh, I know about electricity. My Dad says electricity is dangerous and can give you a bad shock and hurt you a lot.”

Teacher was pleased even though Billy had as usual not raised his hand, “Yes, Billy. Lightning is electricity! The electricity in lightning is just as dangerous and can be more dangerous and hurt you worse.”



Suzy had drawn a picture by that time and held it up to show her classmates, “Look, I drew a picture of what happens when lightning strikes. I think it shows what can happen to us if we forget that thunder is a warning and a signal that lightning is not far away, and thunder helps us to stay safe.”

Teacher was pleased, she thanked Suzy, and shared that, “We sure never want what your picture shows to happen to anyone ever! “

I remember Grandma telling me that after that, all the children relaxed and nodded in agreement. Grandma also made sure to explain that most, important of all, lightning is bad, and thunder is good and when she did that, she told me that in the story that Grandpa told her, all of the class understood and happily chimed in to say, “If we didn’t have thunder it sure would be hard to stay out of lightning’s way!” with lots of laughter and calm reassurance.

Most important of all, the message I learned to overcome my worry about thunder was it doesn’t matter who you are or where you live, lightning is bad. It can affect and hurt anyone! But, thunder is good because just like the kids in Grandpa’s story, as told to Grandma, “If we didn’t have thunder it sure would be hard to stay out of lightning’s way!”

Grandma also told me that after that day, Suzy, realized something important about Billy, and she told him, “Thank you Billy, for helping, I guess you are not a bragger after all; just want to share things that you know.”

Teacher was also happy and suggested they all sing a song and have some fun since the bus drive had started driving the school bus back to the school where the children’s parents would meet them.

**SONG: It's raining, it's pouring.  
I've got thunder in my head.  
But I don't care, the lightning's out there!  
And I'm in this safe place instead!**

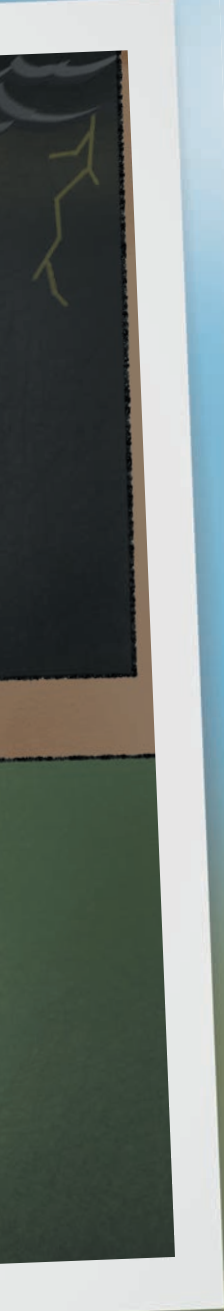
**It sure had been an awesome, eventful and surprising day but also a day to learn something very new and important in order to get over being afraid of thunder and all the children felt very lucky and very confident about learning how to solve a real worry.**

*It's raining, It's pouring  
I've got thunder's sound in my head.  
But I don't care; the lightning's out there!*

*So, I'll stay in the safe place instead!*







## CHAPTER 5

# A New Worry after Afraid of Thunder



I heard later from Grandma about what happened after she finished telling Jimmy (and Theodore) the story that Grandpa had told to her. I wanted to know if it had helped Jimmy to get over being worried about thunder happening again and making him afraid.

Grandma told me, she asked Jimmy, “Now that you’ve heard this story, I hope you’ve learned one of the most important things you’ll ever need to know about not being afraid of thunder.

Jimmy was absolutely convinced and told her that he agreed that if we didn’t have thunder it sure would be hard to know lightning is on the way and to bet out of the way to a safe place as quickly as possible.

Grandma was glad that Jimmy agreed. But then Grandma found out there was another worry that the thunder had caused. Jimmy explained to Grandma that when a sudden noisy loud noise happened suddenly especially like thunder it made him put his hands over his ears to make the sound go away and stop.

Jimmy commented, “That’s the same thing the children did in the story you told us ...oops I mean me (he looked sheepishly at Theodore) about Grandpa when he was a boy.

Grandma thought for a moment, and said, “Oh, I see. So, you were afraid of thunder, but you got over it, except now, you have another worry or problem.



“Yes”, said Jimmy, “you’re right. Now, there’s no reason to be afraid of thunder’s sound because it’s a warning to get to safety as soon as possible. But what can Theodore and I ...oops ...I mean what can I do to completely get over being worried about wanting to put my hands over my ears and wanting to make the sound go away?”

“Hmmmm,” Grandma mused, “I think I know something that will help. It’s something you can do instead of putting your hands over your ears whenever these types of noises happen, especially loud sudden thunder, and it makes want to put your hands over your ears, even though those sounds are helping. They are of course warnings that danger can be near and as quickly as possible to get out of the way so would you like to know what to do if the sound is thunder and very bothersome?”

Yes,” replied Jimmy laughing, “I’m sure I like going around with my hands over my ears. I might miss out that it’s time for dinner, or we’re going to watch a video. Or, that there’s no more thunder! I sure would look silly to Theodore....I mean to everyone.”

Then grandson and grandma started laughing uncontrollably. Once everyone was back to normal Grandma explained further, “ The loud sound that thunder makes is a warning that danger is near, and we need to stay out of the way of any lightning strikes seconds or longer after thunder sounds the alert. So, here is something I mentioned earlier to help.”

She picked up Jimmy's toy xylophone, placed it on her lap. Then she picked up the xylophone mallet hammer and hit the largest key on the xylophone to produce a loud, low sound.

Jimmy was quick to react, "Sorry, Grandma that doesn't sound much like thunder."

Grandma agreed. "I know. How about if I just knock my fist on this table?"

Jimmy nodded, "That'll work, but Mom or Dad might not like hearing it."

"Hah, ha," laughed Grandma and she vaguely thought she noticed a glimmer or humor from Theodore too. "Okay, I agree. So, let me do this again" and she struck the xylophone key like before. "There, did you hear that sound?"

"Yes, and I bet you're going to tell me that I just need to use my imagination to make that sound like a loud crashing thunderbolt."

Well, Jimmy, we don't have much choice, and do you remember that using your imagination helps exercise your brain just like riding a bicycle helps exercise your arms and legs?"



Grandma never mentioned Jimmy's and most likely Theodore's reaction but I'm sure they were both "all ears" ...no pun intended.

Grandma continued, "So, now I need to think of the sound that thunder makes and begin counting like Teacher taught her class in my story."

Grandma started counting with Jimmy and she almost thought she caught an action to show that Theodore was also doing some type of counting. Anyway, after the count of 3, Grandma slammed the mallet against the smallest key on the xylophone.

Now, did you hear that," she asked? We'll try again, and when I ping the mallet on the littlest key, use your imagination and pretend that lightning is striking. When that happens, the last number you counted will be how many miles away the lightning was and because you were using your imagination and focusing on counting, you completely forgot about putting your hands over your ears, right?"

Gotit, Grandma! Wow, that's real neat", Jimmy smiled and gave a thumbs up to Theodore and to Grandma.

Grandma smiled, "Yes, I know, but remember no talking now. Just listen to the imaginary thunder, then begin counting in your mind until you hear the mallet "ping" for imaginary lightning. Let's try it again. I will count out loud just to help. "



“Can you knock on the table just one time to make it awesome? To the best of my knowledge and knowing how Grandma always worked to help her grandchildren, I sure that Jimmy and most likely Theodore were in bed with covers drawn close under the chin and ready to count without speaking.

“Okay, Jimmy. Here we go and again I am totally sure that Grandma must have knocked very loudly on the table and Jimmy counted in his head nodding as he counted each number thinking One.... and.... two.... and... three... and... four... and five and then something interesting happened if I’m still recalling correctly how Grandma helps all her grandchildren to have happy experiences and good thoughts. She also counted out loud but very softly and surprise, surprise,

Jimmy was starting to yawn and could hardly keep his eyes open, but he did say, “That was great, Grandma. He yawned again and then asked, yawning, “ Can we try that again? I could imagine the thunder had sounded and I was counting in my mind and when you “pinged” the mallet I could even imagine a great streaking lightning bolt in the sky. Let’s try that again. Okay?

Okay, and this time I’ll just ping softly. We can pretend the thunder isn’t as loud as before and that it’s going farther and farther away and that will mean you will need to count more numbers...are you okay with that too?

Jimmy yawned from his bed, and said, "I'm sure I can count a lot more numbers and use my imagination the way you said.

Grandma agreed, "Good, so here we go." She "pinged" the mallet softly on a larger but not the largest key and then started to count softly out loud saying, "One.... and... two... and three... and four... and five... and six... and seven.... and eight...." She counted up to twenty and then pinged the smallest key very, very softly. "Well, that would have been 20 miles away", she marveled, then exclaimed, " oh ...my goodness, look at you, Jimmy."

To the best of grandma's recollection, Jimmy must have counted to at least Twenty-one.... and.... twenty-two.... and twenty-three... and.... then stopped and drifted completely off to dreamland.





## CHAPTER SIX

# All Worries Solved

# WORRIES SOLVED!



**G**randma mused, “Oh, he’s gone to sleep just like before when he was afraid of the dark and I helped him get over it with another story. I guess using his imagination for counting helped him fall asleep or maybe he just had a long day. I know that when he wakes, he won’t ever be afraid of thunder again. I’ll be able to congratulate him too, that “he got over it”. I’m sorry I also didn’t have time to mention many other noises and sounds that help us. Like the loud sound of a tea kettle whistle. Also, the alarm clock sound to get out of bed and start the day. Even the noisy annoying sounds that big trucks and trash vehicles make when backing up because of potential danger. Or a big tractor trailer backing up and persons jumping out of the way. When sounds are loud and annoying, they still help us know that we need to take action to stay out of danger and there are also ways to make sure we stay alert and not put our hands over our ears.

Later, the next time I saw Grandma she was very excited to give me the recorder with all the story material she had completed. “It was so fun, “she explained, “The only thing is that I’m not sure I included everything that I wanted to. Also, I didn’t tell Jimmy that thunder is also a challenge! It’s loud and even scary; but you can meet that challenge by choosing to stay focused and counting while using your imagination, like we did.

I agree, Grandma, “That’s what you taught me so long ago, it seems”.

Grandma smiled at me then, “I also wanted to add, after that day, in the story Grandpa told me, if anyone asked, “Are you afraid of thunder?” they would each make a whistling sound ...then say, Thunder is a signal. If we

didn't have thunder, it sure would be hard to stay out of the way of the danger from lightning."

But then, Grandma gave it even more thought, and said, "Maybe I won't need to tell him after all because he got over it.

Because Grandma has such an interest in using our imagination, I'm sure I know exactly what happened after Jimmy fell asleep. Grandma started to rock softly in her chair and softly just above a whisper, said, "I love you, Jimmy". Also, if I'm not mistaken, she never questioned whether Theodore wondered if she loved him, and she simply said, "I love you too, Theodore."

I don't have to be there to right then, Grandma was sitting back in her rocking chair (there's a special one for her in Jimmy's room) smiling, closing her eyes, and rocking slowly and waiting for the next worry to solve. She's very wise, and we all love her very much.

The End.



