Pearls from the past

Written by Elizabeth Barrett Thursday, 01 December 2011 15:39 - Last Updated Monday, 12 December 2011 16:39



The day my grandmother Helen showed me a string of pearls I was surprised, since she knew my indifference to fancy and expensive jewelry.

Yet, I admired the iridescent luster of the bluish-grey orbs and how they diminished in size, from the front of the necklace to where they joined a silver clasp.

She told me how her father presented them to his only daughter on her 16th birthday and how special she thought they were.

"I want Betsy to have them when she turns 16," my grandmother told me.

I wanted to hand them back and tell her she could give the necklace herself to her only great granddaughter.

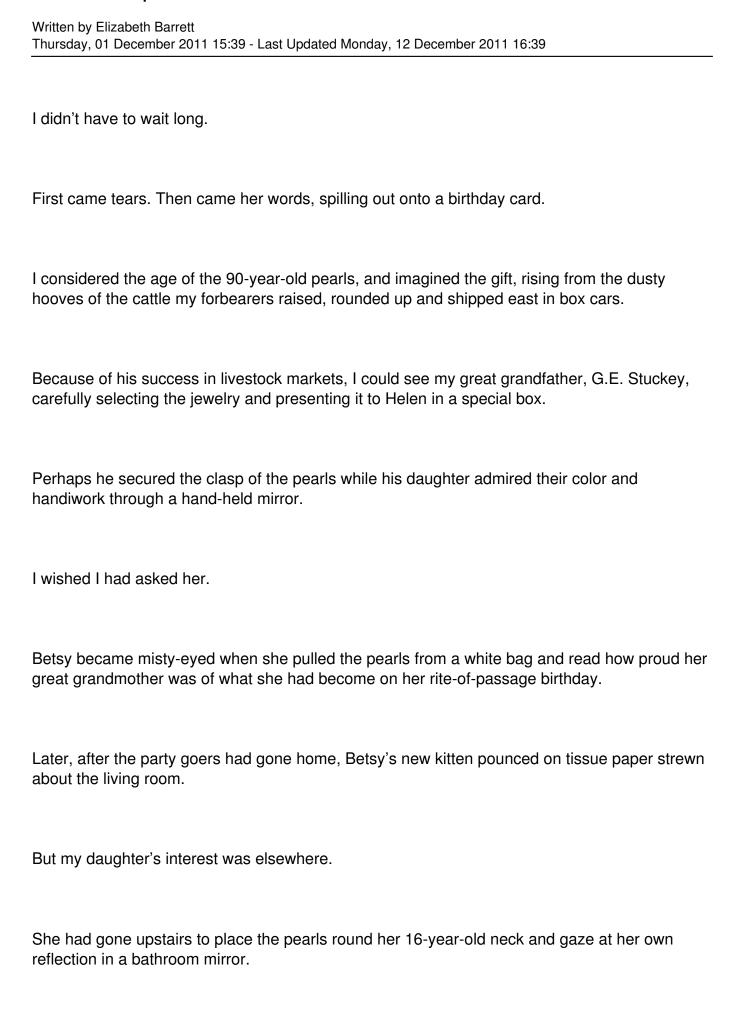
But, at the age of 101, grandmother Helen knew better than to defy the age genes much longer.

During her funeral, two years later, I remembered the pearls—safely stored in a cloth container in the bottom of my jewelry box.

While planning Betsy's birthday celebration earlier this month, I realized it was time.

The night before family was to gather, I retrieved the necklace, placed it on the kitchen counter and thought about what my grandmother would say to her great granddaughter.

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Somehow, somewhere, I sense that my grandmother Helen knows just how special a gift they are.