

PUNK GRANDPA

By LaurA! Force Scruggs

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Cast of Characters

LAURA: an 8 3/4 year old misfit girl, raised in the fundamentalist, born-again Christian tradition and takes everything very seriously, until she doesn't, under the influence of her grandpa.

GRANDPA: a completely uninhibited, free man, with a very unique sense of humor. He completely accepts and loves his granddaughter, LAURA.

There are many other various characters, who mostly do not understand LAURA, which are played by several other ensemble members.

*Possible cast breakdown:

YOUNG LAURA: an 8 3/4 year old misfit girl, raised in the fundamentalist, born-again Christian tradition and takes everything very seriously, until she doesn't, under the influence of her grandpa.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR: Laura grown up, much calmer and more confident in herself, trying to get **YOUNG LAURA** to realize everything is going to be okay. But she may have relapses sometimes.

GRANDPA: a completely uninhibited, free man, with a very unique sense of humor. He completely accepts and loves his granddaughter, LAURA.

ENSEMBLE #1: Josh, Adult, Churchgoer #1 & #5, Uncle Jon, Kid #1, Sean, Schoolboy, Jake, Friend, Security Guard, NY Guy, college car person

ENSEMBLE #2: Aunt Susan, Grandma, Mandi, Woman Resident of Nursing Home, Kid #2, Juniper, Lady at Bank, Churchgoer #4, college car person

ENSEMBLE #3: Dad, Churchgoer #2, Darren, Teenager, Policeman, Doctor, Director

ENSEMBLE #4: Mom, Teacher, Churchgoer #3 & #6, Kid #3, Stranger Lady, Black Umbrella Puppeteer, Tour Guide, Emilie, Aunt Amy

Settings by Scene:

Scene 1: Normal, IL, Laura's bedroom

Scene 2: Grandma and Grandpa Pohlmann's house in Mount Prospect, IL

Scene 3: Grandma and Grandpa's church in Mount Prospect, IL

Scene 4: On the road with Grandpa and a bank in Mount Prospect, IL

Scene 5: Dinner table back at Grandma and Grandpa Pohlmann's house
in Mount Prospect, IL

Scene 6: Grandpa's room

Scene 7: Alzheimer's Land, bare stage

Scene 8: Grandma and Grandpa's house

Scene 9: Adult World, bare stage

Scene 10: Fairyland

Time

December 1981 - present

Place

Normal, Illinois; Mount Prospect, Illinois; Alzheimer's Land, Adult World and
Fairyland

Scene 1

(There is a chair Stage Right. There is a screen or blank wall center stage (onto which various pictures and film footage are possibly projected upon throughout the show. There is a small chair Stage Left with a fairy chest with a few objects peeking out: a tutu, wings and other magical things. Offstage Left is an umbrella puppet and a small chair. Offstage Right are two big feet, which, when pounded upon the floor, make loud, echo-ey, monster-ish sounds. We are in YOUNG LAURA's childhood bedroom)

YOUNG LAURA

(knelt down, praying in her bedroom)

I'm sorry, God; I just can't do it anymore.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It is 7 am, on a Monday before school.

(Perhaps a picture of LAURA in second grade pops up on screen)

YOUNG LAURA

It is December of 1981

(Perhaps a song or image from 1981 plays or pops up)

YOUNG LAURA

and I live in Normal, Illinois.

(Maybe a picture of Normal, IL pops up)

YOUNG LAURA

I am 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ years old.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I am doing my morning devotional and I read the Bible verse,

YOUNG LAURA

(reading her Bible)

“Pray without ceasing, for this is the WILL of GOD.” King James version.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

So, I start making my bed

YOUNG LAURA

(singing and making bed)

“Pray without ceasing for this is the will of God...”

YOUNGER LAURA

But, God, how can I pray without ceasing forever? But I have to, it's in the Bible!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I look down at my Precious Moments bedspread

(Slide: Precious Moments picture)

that says,

YOUNG LAURA

'Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.'

Exactly. I know I can do this and,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

with JOY!

(continue to make bed, singing)

YOUNG LAURA

'Pray without ceasing,'

(top idea)

but, God, how can I pray without ceasing during school?

In my heart, but I won't be able to stop my mouth from moving, so everyone will think I'm drunk,

OLDER LAURA

like the High Priest Eli thought Hannah was drunk in the Bible, even though she wasn't, she was just desperately praying to have a baby.

YOUNG LAURA

And after school, during play practice?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was a green bean in a play at church called

YOUNG LAURA

(sings)

"Clarence the Carrot."

(picture of YOUNG LAURA as a green bean flashes up on screen or wall?)

YOUNG LAURA

And while playing over at my friend Elizabeth Rose's house tonight?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

There were elves that played hockey with the ice cubes in her freezer...

(plastic "ice cube or cubes" is/are thrown at YOUNG LAURA from offstage)

(noise of frustration! She shows how this would make her cease praying)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

The morning before, while waiting for church to begin,

(YOUNG LAURA acts this out)

I was holding my offering money in my right hand very tightly

YOUNG LAURA

because I was nervous that I was going to lose it. But, it got really hot, so I switched it to my left hand.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It was then that I realized,

YOUNG LAURA

too late, that *I broke the Bible* - I had *sinned*, because of that verse, 'Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.'

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was a very serious child.

(Slide: picture 1 serious little me flashes up on screen)

(possibly we see YOUNG LAURA's responsibilities whirling in a Wizard of Oz-esque tornado outside her bedroom window...)

YOUNG LAURA

I had to

(possibly run around stage or look out window at responsibilities that could be portrayed by other ensemble members/they are telling her what to do)

ENSEMBLE #1

get all A's in school,

ENSEMBLE #2

be top quizzier in Jr. Bible Quizzing,

ENSEMBLE #3

be a good steward of your time, money and talents for Missionettes/Christian Girl Scouts,

ENSEMBLE #4

obey all grown-ups

ENSEMBLE #1

and every time you saw a swimming pool, you had to

ENSEMBLE #2

swim the entire length of it,

ENSEMBLE #3

under water,

ENSEMBLE #4

both ways.

(act out swimming under water both ways)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It took a lot of work; I was exhausted.

(sit in chair)

I might have been serious forever and started gathering animals for the ark,

YOUNG LAURA

if it weren't for my outrageous, unforgettable, wildly inappropriate, punk grandpa.

(Slide: photo.30.jpg.crazywhoagpa)

*(Something in the public domain like "Cottontail" plays for about 30 seconds and Laura dances around, crazy, so excited to tell the audience about her punk grandpa! This is where **GRANDPA** makes his entrance and dances with **LAURA**)*

(Slide: GRANDPA's voice, saying, "Bob Pohlmann, All-American Boy")

YOUNG LAURA

This one's for you, grandpa,

*(maybe a picture of **GRANDPA** flashes up on the wall or screen)*

Scene 2

(We are now at **GRANDMA** and **GRANDPA Pohlmann's** house)

YOUNG LAURA

I am 8 3/4 years old. I think it's going to be a magical day, because I am at my Grandma and Grandpa Pohlmann's house in Mount Prospect, Illinois!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I am there with my family: my mom, dad, brother Josh and baby sister Katie (who looks a little like Shirley Temple).

YOUNG LAURA

My mom is a strict librarian who wakes up in the mood to vacuum at 7 am on a summer morning and my dad is a CPA, who safety pins his socks together in the wash. My brother, Josh, is a six year old who makes fun of everything I do, always calling me

JOSH

Freakshow! You aren't just a freak in the freakshow; you are the entire freakshow!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I love freakshows,

YOUNG LAURA

but my brother didn't and him calling me freakshow hurt my feelings.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was not the favorite in my family; I just did *not* fit in.

YOUNG LAURA

My Aunt Susan once asked me

AUNT SUSAN

(possibly smoking)

So, how did you manage to spring from the loins of those two? I think you are a changeling.

YOUNG LAURA

What's a changeling?

AUNT SUSAN

A changeling is: a fairy child left in place of a stolen human child.

YOUNG LAURA

I'm a fairy?!

(YOUNG LAURA revels in what this could mean; might do a dance to fairy music)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My brother, Josh, doesn't know that I am a fairy.

He wrote

JOSH

"Laura is not allowed in the kids' bathroom" on the Kids' Bathroom Rules Sign, because she breaks the soap a lot! Freak show!

YOUNG LAURA

And when I brown hamburger meat,

OLDER LAURA

When cooking with my mom

YOUNG LAURA

I think it starts to look like an old man's head, you know, because of those wiggly lines in the ground beef, as they start to look gray as I brown them.

So I feel like I'm chopping up an old man's head, as I brown every side of the hamburger meat!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

No one else in my family thinks like this.

GRANDPA

Let's pray.

YOUNG LAURA

(is feeling desperate about her freakishness, wants some help from God)

Yes, please.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa prayed a lot; he loved to do it, for all kinds of reasons: to find something that was lost, to pray for others and to give thanks.

GRANDPA

Thank you, Father, for the pancakes.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I look down at my grandma's sparkly snowflake tablecloth

(Slide: picture of grandma's snowflake tablecloth)

YOUNG LAURA

and grab the Hungry Jack syrup when no one is looking,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

except for Aunt Erna's peppermint stick kid figurine.

(Slide: picture of peppermint stick figurines flashes up on screen)

YOUNG LAURA

(to figurine)

Don't tell anyone!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And I put just a drop of syrup on my pancake,

YOUNG LAURA

like a piece of fairy dust, because

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was a chubby child!

YOUNG LAURA

I try to spread it out over the whole pancake, with my fork fairy wand, but,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was shredding it.

YOUNG LAURA

And then, I hear

(make or hear high-pitched ringing sound, it is GRANDPA's hearing aid)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

and then my grandpa says into his hearing aid.

GRANDPA

Bob Pohlmann here, how's the foreign situation? Yes, FBI agent Kevin, my granddaughter Laura is right here.

YOUNG LAURA

My grandpa handed me his hearing aid and I looked at it,

(trying to figure out right thing to do)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

scared, wondering what the foreign situation was

YOUNG LAURA

and what I must have done wrong this time.

(get idea)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I remember the night before, when my brother and I were screaming at each other,

YOUNG LAURA

fighting over who should get to hold my baby sister, Katie, and then she started to cry.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And then...

(get big feet and tromp on stage with them, making a big, scary echo-y sound with each footstep)

YOUNG LAURA

It was my dad! He had heard everything!

DAD

See kids, even a baby can sense *sin!*

YOUNG LAURA

Did the FBI somehow find out about that?

(get hearing aid back)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I look at my family around the breakfast table and I carefully hold my grandpa's hearing aid; I was afraid of breaking it

YOUNG LAURA

and just, everything about the situation.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I look at it for a moment, take a deep breath and hold it to my ear.

YOUNG LAURA

Hello, Agent Kevin, this is Laura Force. How can I help you?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I listened and listened, and

(mashing hearing aid into ear)

YOUNG LAURA

I just hear some static!

GRANDPA

Hm, seems strange.

JOSH

Freakshow, you thought there was really an FBI agent?

GRANDPA

(with actions)

Josh, too far.

JOSH

I didn't do it; it was Hungry Jack!

GRANDPA

Josh, you are being too hard on your sister.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa was good at protecting me.

(Slide: 10huggrandpapicture flashes up onscreen)

YOUNG LAURA

(hoping maybe there could be)

So, there's really no FBI agent talking to you through your hearing aid?

MOM

Laura, stop it, it's not real.

GRANDPA

What does that have to do with anything? Well, what do *you* think, Laura?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa wanted to know what *I* thought!

YOUNG LAURA

I don't know...

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

maybe...

YOUNG LAURA

the faeries are playing with them today...

(to audience)

YOUNG LAURA

I love not knowing for sure if something is real or not.

DAD

Laura, calm down.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

That was

YOUNG LAURA

my dad.

GRANDPA

(get up to go to the bathroom)

I'm going to the twilight.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandpa meant he was going to the toilet,

YOUNG LAURA

as he always liked to play with words

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

and he told us everything that he was doing,

YOUNG LAURA

so we knew exactly where he was ALL of the time.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

On his return from the twilight:

(GRANDPA dances to Big Band/Jazz style music)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

He danced and sang a lot.

GRANDPA

(singing and dancing)

It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing! Doo wah boo doop bop bop!

GRANDMA

Bob! I hate scat singing and you KNOW that!

YOUNG LAURA

That's my grandma.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

So, my grandpa stuck out his prosthetic teeth at her.

YOUNG LAURA

He only had three real teeth,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

because when he was a kid,

YOUNG LAURA

every time his mom sent him to the dentist,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

he took the money

YOUNG LAURA

and went to the movies and bought lots of candy instead.

GRANDPA

I like your new dress, Caryl.

GRANDMA

I've had it for 35 years, Bob, and I wear it all the time!

GRANDPA

Where do you get those dresses with the bumps in them?

GRANDMA

Oh, Bob!

GRANDPA

(jumps up, hides around corner, puts on some sort of janitor's costume, and comes back into the kitchen, to GRANDMA, as if he is at his job, selling cleaning supplies)

Greetings, I'm Bob Pohlmann; a Fuller Brush man.

GRANDMA

(flirting)

OH yes, I have been expecting your services.

GRANDPA

(may poke her with broom)

I'm here to inspect all of your nooks and crannies.

GRANDMA

(pleased)

Bob.

GRANDPA

You have nice breasts, Caryl.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I covered my brothers' ears!

YOUNG LAURA

He said BREAST! You aren't supposed to talk about private parts; you could get punished for that.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It made me so nervous that I reached for the Hungry Jack bottle and started pouring the syrup on, as hard and as fast as I possibly could.

YOUNG LAURA

My plate was overflowing with syrup, spilling onto my lap and onto the floor.

GRANDPA

That'll put hair on your chest.

YOUNG LAURA

WHAT?

GRANDPA

That'll put hair on your chest.

YOUNG LAURA

What does that *mean*?

GRANDPA

It means it'll make you a big strong punk, like me.

YOUNG LAURA

Ohhhhhh!!!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I wanted nothing more.

(YOUNG LAURA pours more syrup onto her pancakes, in hopes of growing hair on her chest and becoming a big strong punk, just like her grandpa)

Scene 3

(At **GRANDMA** and **GRANDPA**'s church.)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

After breakfast, we went to my Grandma and Grandpa's very conservative church for a special Saturday Christmas Eve service.

(Slide: Church/harp/shape music cue)

YOUNG LAURA

Upon entering the church's narthex,

OLDER LAURA

their word for lobby,

(music stops)

I heard an adult say,

ADULT

The liberals are not going to Heaven.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I didn't know what a liberal was,

YOUNG LAURA

but it sounded kind of delicious, like ice cream or something.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I wanted to meet the liberals and tell them

YOUNG LAURA

Everything is going to be ok!

Then, I saw: ladies were lining up in the back of the church, waiting for my grandpa, an usher, to seat them.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

After he seated someone, they were always smiling. He would call every lady that he seated,

GRANDPA

(Singing)

Miss America.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

He was known as the best usher.

YOUNG LAURA

As a fairy, I know that animals live surrounded by natural enemies, whereas fairies live surrounded by *natural friends*.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa was definitely surrounded by natural friends everywhere he went.

YOUNG LAURA

But, it was time for me to go to children's church, to try to make my own friends.

TEACHER

(glasses down nose)

Where does alcohol come from?

YOUNG LAURA

(look around)

Nobody knew.

TEACHER

Besides the fruit and the wheat mixing together, THE DEVIL!

YOUNG LAURA

(raise hand, waits for teacher to call on her)

My grandma has a glass of red wine every night with dinner and she told me it's good for her heart.

TEACHER

and you believe her?

(YOUNG LAURA tries to figure out where she is and what she's doing here)

YOUNG LAURA

I felt like Auntie Em, when Myra Gulch was taking Toto away,

OLDER LAURA

dying to tell the church people what I really thought of them,

YOUNG LAURA

but, being a Christian woman, I couldn't.

I wondered what was going on upstairs in big church.

(Cut to GRANDPA asleep in church, waking up suddenly, driving to a donut place, getting a donut and then coming back to church, just as it ends)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

After the service, I saw Grandpa talking to all of these grown-ups that were bragging about their children's prestigious careers in science

YOUNG LAURA

and technology

OLD LAURA

and going into the ministry

YOUNG LAURA

and so my grandpa said,

GRANDPA

My kids are doing great, too. My son John, he lives in New York. He drives a big car, runs his own business. He's a pimp.

And, my daughter, Amy, she's doing real well, too.

She works for him!

CHURCHGOER #1

We will have to talk to pastor about this!

CHURCHGOER #2

We're praying for you!

CHURCHGOER #3

Is he a real Christian?

YOUNG LAURA

The churchgoers decided it was time to go to

CHURCHGOER #1

Baker's Square!

(and the churchgoers leave quickly)

YOUNG LAURA

It was as if Grandpa was Dorothy and had thrown water on the witch, causing the judgy people to shrink away and disappear!

I was shocked and jealous that grandpa could say such things inside of a church.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Like grandpa, I have encountered some self-righteous, condemning, judgmental church people throughout my life.

In high school, there was a girl in our church youth group, Jen, who was dating a non-Christian guy named Darren. One night we were all hanging out and Darren dropped something on his foot and said

DARREN

(dropped something on his foot)

Oh my God.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Mandi,

(wait for it)

a girl from our church, said,

MANDI

Is he your God, Darren? Is he?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I couldn't believe how quickly she came up with that asinine statement; it was as if this button marked "Automatic Judgment" had been pushed on her. Now, not only did I marry a non-Christian, I married an Atheist!

AUNT AMY

It's like in "Splash," when the Tom Hanks' character has a crush on a mermaid; he thought he'd at least fall in love with a human! You thought your husband would at least believe in God.

(Slide: picture of Jake in kitchen)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Sometimes, grandpa and I just don't follow the rules. Back to that pimp moment at church...

GRANDPA

(Calling after church people, as they quickly leave)

Nice doin' business with you. And don't take any wooden nickels!

YOUNG LAURA

As the judgy people were leaving, I also caught several other churchgoers, who were laughing, like the people of Oz, rejoicing that the Wicked Old Witch was dead, the witch being the other people who were leaving and saying

(CHURCHGOERS #4 - 6 could possibly be puppets)

CHURCHGOER #4

I think God has a sense of humor -

CHURCHGOER #5

And He gave part of it to Bob Pohlmann,

CHURCHGOER #6

to give to us!

Scene 4

(On the road with GRANDPA; to the bank!)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Back to that magical day...

After lunch,

GRANDPA

Come here, oldest grandpunk, we're going for a special ride!

YOUNG LAURA

(first time, exactly what she wants)

Just him and me.

GRANDMA

When are you coming back?

GRANDPA

I don't know; we're just going down the road apiece.

GRANDMA

We're having goulash and tomato soup spice cake at 5; so don't take too long.

GRANDPA

(with action)

Heil!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

and he stuck his teeth out at her

GRANDPA

(singing)

Okay, Caryl!

YOUNG LAURA

That's what grandpa did when he was done fighting with grandma.

(Slide: Music Cue instrumental version of "Tonight" from Westside Story plays)

Despite their fighting, I knew that grandma and grandpa truly loved each other.

(GRANDMA and GRANDPA act out OLDER and YOUNGER LAURA's words below)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandma told me that the first time she saw his smile,

GRANDMA

It was like in "Westside Story:" I saw him and the world went away...

(Music Cue – music stops)

(Slide: happy grandma and grandpa)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

When grandma and grandpa were dating they'd see each other every day at lunch and at night,

(GRANDMA and GRANDPA act this out as LAURA's say it)

YOUNG LAURA

but one night grandma got sick,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

so they agreed that they would just have to talk over the phone.

YOUNG LAURA

At about 9 pm, grandma's doorbell rang and grandma told me

GRANDMA

That was late in those days.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It was grandpa.

YOUNG LAURA

She could see his pajamas under his clothes.

GRANDPA

I just couldn't stay away.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Also, grandma told me that after they got married and had three kids, every time she and grandpa wanted to

GRANDMA

"get friendly,"

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

they'd send the kids to the store for Twinkies.

YOUNG LAURA

That was the only time the kids were allowed to have Twinkies.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And when grandma and grandpa were on vacation once at Mammoth Cave and the tour guide said,

TOUR GUIDE

We are about to turn the lights out and you will all experience **total** darkness, like **velvet**.

(Lights go out)

GRANDPA

Kiss me, baby!

(GRANDPA kisses GRANDMA)

YOUNG LAURA

And so everyone laughed and no one was scared!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

On our way out the door, grandpa grabbed my little sister's thumb and stuck it in his mouth.

YOUNG LAURA

He thought she'd been sucking on it too much, we were all trying to help her quit.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

She didn't put her thumb back in her mouth *for the rest of the day*.

YOUNG LAURA

It was as if grandpa had put a spell on her thumb.

(maybe KATIE tries to put her thumb back in her mouth, but just can't, as she is under the spell of GRANDPA, this could be portrayed by a puppet or baby doll)

(Slide: 2grandpacar picture flashes up on screen)

(sit down, get cozy, settle in, buckle up)

In his gargantuan white Oldsmobile with a silver streak across the top, grandpa was driving all over the road, as if no one else was going to be

there and careening around corners, going faster than I had ever gone in my life; nobody I knew drove like this. I loved it; it was exhilarating, like we were flying on a magic carpet or like a bird was giving us a piggyback ride, like they do sometimes for fairies! And, he yelled out the window to every woman we saw, they were all his neighbors and friends:

GRANDPA

Hey! Pick you up in an hour!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I was laughing hysterically as we watched women stare at him, laughing, enjoying this routine he would perform every time he met one of his female friends, as we screeched off into the distance.

YOUNG LAURA

I couldn't believe how grandpa was married, but flirted with every female he came into contact with. But Grandma didn't mind; she told me

GRANDMA

He gives me too much attention!

LADY CAST MEMBERS

and all of the ladies seemed to love it, too.

YOUNG LAURA

Next stop on my adventure with grandpa: the bank.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

The moment we walked in, all 25 of the female tellers turned, waved and smiled at grandpa.

YOUNG LAURA

When I went to the bank with my mom, we'd go straight in and come right back out in five minutes.

I don't know how long I was there with grandpa and time didn't matter. The manager sat me down at a kid's table and gave me a coloring book and

crayons. It was like a dream sequence. It was as if everything had gotten bigger and I felt small, fairy-sized =).

(Possible dream sequence – Laura dances to music with jumbo crayons, bubbles, rainbow streamer, etc., at the end, takes pretend (possibly inflatable) donut out from under chair and “eats” it)

Somehow my grandpa found where the donuts and coffee were; if there were donuts and coffee in a place where my grandpa was, he always found them.

(admiration)

When we were getting ready to leave, it started to look overcast outside.

(panic, terror)

So, my grandpa went to the Lost and Found right away and asked,

GRANDPA

(serious)

Did anyone turn in a black umbrella?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

making believe that he had lost his. Of course, there were tons of black umbrellas, so he just picked one.

YOUNG LAURA

I could never do that!

It was dishonest, but it was so funny!

GRANDPA

I've lost so many umbrellas; somebody's walking around with mine.

YOUNG LAURA

(realizing this)

Ohhh, ok. That made sense to me.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Then, we headed home...

(get back in car)

YOUNG LAURA

Then, when we were about a block away from grandma and grandpa's house, grandpa just started honking the horn like a maniac.

GRANDPA

(shows how much he enjoys this game, builds it up)

I do this every day; watch. The kids are going to come out.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

(builds, like a race)

At that moment, all of these kids started pouring out of every house on the block and running after us. Then, my grandpa started driving on the sidewalk!

GRANDPA

Race ya!

YOUNG LAURA

The kids loved this game, except for one.

TEENAGER

(call, yell)

Get off my sidewalk.

GRANDPA

Drop dead!

YOUNG LAURA

Grandpa loved to say that and I loved to hear those two words, so magical to me, because *grandpa really didn't care what anyone thought.*

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

When we pulled into the driveway, about 25 kids had assembled and they all wanted grandpa to twirl them around and give them

KIDS #1, #2 & #3

Airplane rides! Airplane rides!

YOUNG LAURA

And he was happy to swing them all around and around and around.

(GRANDPA swings kids around)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

But, after the last kid, he was getting tired, so he started heading towards the front door.

YOUNG LAURA

But, the kids wouldn't let him go. They blocked the door, so grandpa started

(run Down Right, around)

running around the side of the house to the back door

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

and all of the kids followed.

GRANDPA

(pounding on door, might be a sign that says BELL OUT OF ORDER, PLEASE KNOCK)

Caryl! Open the door!

YOUNG LAURA

I waved my hands towards the door,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

willing it to open, like a fairy spell -

YOUNG LAURA

And - it worked!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandma opened the door,

YOUNG LAURA

and we slipped in, just in time, as we saw the kids smashing their faces up against the glass, looking at us, wishing they were where I was, WITH HIM.

(Slide: singing with grandpa picture flashes up on screen)

Scene 5

(Dinner table at grandma and grandpa's house)

YOUNG LAURA

(sit down in chair)

We sat down to eat our goulash and tomato soup spice cake.

GRANDPA

Let's pray. Thank you Father for the goulash and tomato soup spice cake.

(Singing)

Pass the biscuits, Miranda!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

There were no biscuits or anyone named Miranda!

YOUNG LAURA

Grandpa would just say this over and over to drive my grandma crazy.

GRANDMA

(growls)

Get some new material, Bob.

GRANDPA

Okay, Boss.

GRANDMA

You know I hate it when you say that!

MOM

I hear the Russells are pregnant again.

GRANDPA

I think they don't know what causes it, because they keep on having them!

The first one can come anytime. After that, they take nine months.

YOUNG LAURA

Huh?

GRANDPA

(singing)

Mary had a little lamb.

She also had a bear.

I never saw Mary's little lamb, but I always saw her BARE!

GRANDMA

What did everyone think of the sermon this morning?

(Silence)

Bob?

GRANDPA

Oh, it was nice....

GRANDMA

Bob! You snuck out for a donut again and missed the whole sermon, didn't you?

(Slide: doorbell sound)

(GRANDPA is saved by the doorbell)

YOUNG LAURA

(She is happy to help GRANDPA escape GRANDMA's questioning)

Who could that be?

(looks)

It's a policeman!

Oh no, they found my Mighty Mouse vitamins and they've come to arrest *me!*

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I had been flushing my Mighty Mouse vitamins down the toilet for about a month now, because they tasted like throw-up.

YOUNG LAURA

And so I knew that a humongous pile of them had accumulated underground and it was only a matter of time before someone found them and came to arrest me!

GRANDPA

(size up policeman)

How's it going baby? Are you fine and dandy, sugar candy?

POLICEMAN

We received a report that someone was driving on the sidewalk.

GRANDPA

Yeah, it was me. What? Is it illegal?

YOUNG LAURA

Grandpa was just playing; TAKE ME! I'm the one who should go to jail, for flushing all of my Mighty Mouse vitamins down the toilet! I know you found them!

POLICEMAN

I don't know what you're talking about. This whole family is crazy. Just, you

(points at grandpa)

don't drive on the sidewalk

and you

(points at YOUNG LAURA)

take your vitamins, young lady.

Good evening, folks.

GRANDPA

Nice doing business with you. And don't take any wooden nickels!

YOUNG LAURA

(jumping up and down)

Yay, grandpa, we're not going to jail!

GRANDPA

Nope. Don't you worry, little punk, Bob Pohlmann is a good boy. And you are a good girl.

Scene 6

(In grandpa's room)

YOUNG LAURA

After dinner, grandpa and I had music time in his room, just him and me.

(Slide: Grandpa's voice sings, "Robert L. Pohlmann, la la la!")

(Slide: picture of grandpa playing the saxophone)

GRANDPA

This is a shove-it! Do you know what this is called? It's called a shove-it!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa showed me his saxophone cleaning tool

YOUNG LAURA

every time I saw him!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

It was basically this furry black and white thing on a stick and he would

YOUNG LAURA

shove it

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

inside of his saxophone to clean it.

GRANDPA

Shove-it!

I want to have a theory talk with you, punk.

YOUNG LAURA

This made me feel very special, smart and important because I had been taking piano lessons for two years and music theory was the hardest part for me.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My piano teacher told me we would take a vacation from theory, but, we never came back from it.

YOUNG LAURA

But, somehow, I knew all of the answers to grandpa's questions about theory!

He made me feel like a Sophisticated Lady.

During one of our theory talks, grandpa asked me

GRANDPA

(looking at his sheet music)

What does Rubato mean, grandpunk?

YOUNG LAURA

Not in a strict tempo; like you, grandpa.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa decided to start playing the saxophone, pretty much because someone told him he was too old to start, at the age of 68.

YOUNG LAURA

He didn't feel ready to play in a band with people his own age yet, so...since senior citizens could audit *any* class for free at the high school nearest to his house, he learned how to play the saxophone by playing in the band at Prospect High School.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I can just imagine the things he might have said and done in that high school band class.

(Slide: something dreamy like "Stardust" (in the public domain) starts playing quietly in background)

YOUNG LAURA

I am sure that he walked in like he owned the place, as that was his way. He would say and live

GRANDPA

If you act like you belong, people will believe in you.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I bet he announced to the whole class,

GRANDPA

I'm going to the twilight!

YOUNG LAURA

every time he had to go to the toilet. And, I am sure he asked all of the kids,

GRANDPA

Do you want to see my teeth?

(stick out teeth)

(Music stops playing)

YOUNG LAURA

My grandpa gave me a real love for big band jazz/swing music.

(Perhaps LAURA dances (maybe with a rainbow feather boa) to a medley of Big Band/Jazz/Swing songs in the public domain)

(Slide: Grandpa in big band picture flashes up on screen)

(Slide: Music Cue - some kind of Big Band/Jazz music in the public domain plays under LAURA's words)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Swing is defined as: melody notes that are played ahead of the beat, across the beat or behind the beat, allowing the performer to express a more relaxed, rhythmic or even driving feeling, with an “anything can happen” feel, full of improvisatory FREEDOM!”

(Music stops playing)

YOUNG LAURA

That describes not just the only kind of music my grandpa would listen to, but his approach to life.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I aspire every day to possess the kind of freedom that he had, as my Uncle Jon says,

UNCLE JON

the kind of freedom for which people would pay thousands of dollars for in therapy.

Scene 7

(We are in Alzheimer's Land, bare stage)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

The Big Band/Jazz/Swing music always reached grandpa, even...when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

YOUNG LAURA

It's hard to say when grandpa actually got it, since he was so out there all the time anyway...

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

The last words I could understand my grandpa say were:

GRANDPA

Doo wah....

(This section should be different from the rest of the play: slower & serious)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandpa having Alzheimer's felt to me like I was in a backwards version of my favorite movie, "The Wizard of Oz," from color to gray.

YOUNG LAURA

Throughout his life, he certainly had the *heart* of Tin Man,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

the *brains* of Scarecrow

YOUNG LAURA

and the *courage* of Lion. The *courage* to

GRANDPA

Crash the original Mayor Daley's birthday party,

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

the *brains* to tell me after every heartbreak,

GRANDPA

Don't worry, men are like streetcars, there'll be another one along any second now.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

and the *heart* to say, after I'd spent my entire paycheck from State Farm Day Camp in one afternoon,

GRANDPA

Don't be too hard on yourself.

YOUNG LAURA

Grandpa made my troubles melt like lemon drops.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Grandpa was my home, but I didn't have any ruby slippers I could click together to get back there.

(music stops playing)

I was so angry and confused, because I had prayed without ceasing for God to heal grandpa from Alzheimer's and it wasn't working. My family and I really believed that God would deliver grandpa from Alzheimer's, but He didn't.

YOUNG LAURA

I wanted to drop a house on Alzheimer's.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

We were tired of running and felt like we were passed out in the poppy field, under the wicked spell of Alzheimer's...with no snow to wake us up.

YOUNG LAURA

For the first time, grandpa couldn't do whatever he wanted.

This is the punk grandpa who took all of the Sweet'n Lows in the boxes at every restaurant table we sat at (he had a trick with his fingers to make it look like he was only taking one), who, when he was asked to take a fertility test at the doctor and was handed the cup, said,

GRANDPA

Oh, I thought someone was going to help me

YOUNG LAURA

and, who pounded on the glass in the monkey house at Brookfield Zoo, because there was a sign that said

ENSEMBLE #1

Please don't tap on the glass.

YOUNG LAURA

Now, it was as if he was on the other side of the glass, / was pounding on it and the glass was an insurmountable number of inches thick.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

But, in a lot of ways, grandpa was still himself and glowed and sparkled despite the Alzheimer's, like Glinda the Good and all of those babies in the sky in "The Wiz." I remember being at a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," featuring my sister, Katie, in the children's choir. As the curtain opened on the second act, my grandpa, who was wearing a red sweater and sitting in the front row, stood up, got up on-stage and shouted,

GRANDPA

GO KATIE!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

A few months later, I saw another production of “Joseph,” but I didn't like it nearly as much.

My friend Sean said,

SEAN

Well, of course you didn't like this production of “Joseph” as much, your grandfather wasn't in it!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

When grandpa was put in the nursing home, he asked for his saxophone, and he would still say,

GRANDPA

Let's pray

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

a lot and once, when my Aunt Amy was visiting him,

(GRANDPA acts this out)

he laid down on his back on his bed, touched his nipples and then touched his manhood over his diaper and said,

GRANDPA

I'm a dirty boy.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And once in the nursing home, he was found in the bed of another woman. The staff separated them and so, for weeks afterwards, the woman would roam the nursing home, asking,

WOMAN RESIDENT OF NURSING HOME

Where's that man?!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

There were some things that even Alzheimer's couldn't take away from grandpa.

(Remembering)

One day, I was visiting grandpa in his room at the nursing home and his Benny Goodman tape was playing. He was at a later stage of Alzheimer's, utterly confused, had no idea who I was; he just looked at me and asked

GRANDPA

(different, needing an answer, vulnerable)

What do we do now?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

(get idea, stand up)

Dance.

GRANDPA

Dance, yeah.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And we did.

(go to Stage Left)

(OLDER LAURA and GRANDPA dance together)

(Slide: Video montage of grandpa dancing)

(OLDER LAURA and GRANDPA catch sight of GRANDPA dancing on the video up on the screen, it is as if they have conjured him up with their dancing)

Scene 8

(Back at grandma and grandpa's house)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Back to that magical day in my 8 3/4 year old life:

That night:

YOUNG LAURA

But, grandpa, I don't want to go to bed. I just want to dance with you!

GRANDPA

But, little punk, you know what'll happen if you don't go to bed.

YOUNG LAURA

(terrified!)

WHAT?

GRANDPA

You won't grow hair on your chest.

YOUNG LAURA

I wanted hair on my chest and I wanted to be the best possible punk grandkid.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And, Grandpa made a deal with me: he would show me his sleep apnea machine and then, I would go to bed.

YOUNG LAURA

He hooked himself up to the machine and,

GRANDPA

I am the man from outer spaaaace!

YOUNG LAURA

Was grandpa a fairy, too? With fairies, there are only degrees of play, because they find fun in everything they do, nothing is work for them...

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

As I drifted off to sleep,

GRANDPA

The waves are waving, the wind is winding, the Laura's are Laura-ing...your bed is a ship!

YOUNG LAURA

And then, he sang me a lullaby he made up,

GRANDPA

Laura Spidora, don't spit on the floor! Who wiped it up? Josh did!

(Slide: picture of grandpa and I asleep)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I remember hearing grandpa laugh in his sleep that night, across the hall from me. He even cracked himself up when he was unconscious; I thought,

YOUNG LAURA

'My grandpa has more fun than anybody.'

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Usually, I didn't sleep well.

YOUNG LAURA

I would have nightmares about the boy at school who told me,

SCHOOLBOY

You even *run* like a goody-goody!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And I'd also have bad dreams about this stranger lady who asked me

STRANGER LADY

How old are you?

YOUNG LAURA

I am 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ years old.

STRANGER LADY

Just say you're 8 $\frac{1}{2}$.

YOUNG LAURA

(perhaps thrashing around)

No, no, noooo!!!! That would be a lie! I'm not 8 $\frac{1}{2}$, I'm 8 $\frac{3}{4}$!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

And sometimes, I was afraid that I wouldn't wake up the next morning.

YOUNG LAURA

But, not that night; that night I slept better than I ever had!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

The next morning, I woke up and something was weird. There was something on my body that had not been there the night before.

YOUNG LAURA

There was hair on my chest!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I catapulted out of bed and ran down the hall, proclaiming,

YOUNG LAURA

Grandpa, grandpa, GRANDPAAAA! I have hair on my chest!!!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

While I was sleeping, grandpa had cut off part of the hair from on top of his head and taped it to my chest!!!

(Slide: 12happylittleme&grandpa picture flashes up on screen)

Scene 9

(Adult World, bare stage)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

As an adult, grandpa continues to affect me today. I have found a wonderful husband who is like my grandpa in many ways.

For instance, like my grandpa, he is very playful. When we were engaged, me, being an Elementary Education major, asked, So, should we have a theme for our wedding? Jake, being a physics teacher and software developer, said,

JAKE

I thought the theme is, "We're Getting Married."

(Trying to think of the most outrageous, unlikely theme)

What do you mean, like, Wizard of Oz?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

At our Wizard of Oz-themed wedding reception, we had a Munchkin table, where everything was over-sized, so that the guests would feel small; my maid of honor dyed her floor-length hair to look like a rainbow and for our escape, we had "flying monkey" Curious George gummi's thrown at us.

Like grandpa, Jake also really doesn't care about what other people think. Once, after meeting one of my particularly eccentric friends for the first time, I asked him, "So, what did you think of her?"

JAKE

Well, I didn't hate her as much as I thought I would.

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

As an adult, there have also been times when I have felt misunderstood in similar ways that my grandpa experienced. A lot of people thought my grandpa was on something. My Uncle Jon's friends would ask,

EVERYONE EXCEPT OLDER LAURA AND GRANDPA

Has your dad been drinking?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandpa was not a drinker or on any kind of drugs; but a lot of people thought he was. I can relate. I once went to a doctor for a required check-up before working as a counselor at State Farm Day Camp. It was the first time the doctor had met me and he asked,

DOCTOR

Have you ever done any illegal drugs?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

When I answered, "No," he did not believe me.

DOCTOR

Never?

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

Also, once I auditioned for a certain children's theater company and did not get called back. A friend of mine had lunch with the director shortly thereafter.

FRIEND

Do you remember Laura Force?

DIRECTOR

Oh yes, she was very creative. The only reason we didn't call her back is because she's mentally unstable.

(possible laugh from DIRECTOR)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I did have my head examined and everything came back normal...

I recently was walking down the street in my neighborhood of Rogers Park in Chicago, wearing one of my mismatched outfits, and a five year old girl pointed at me and asked,

KID #1

Mommy, what was that?!

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

At times like this, I think of the tin man holding up the ax for many years and then getting to release his arm and let it go, after being oiled by Dorothy and Scarecrow, because, like grandpa, I can let these things go and ask for others to throw more apples at me, like from the apple trees in Oz.

Scene 10

(Fairy Land)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

I never stopped thinking about how Aunt Susan told me that I am a changeling/fairy.

So, sometimes, I'm a fairy

(take outer skirt off, to reveal tutu)

and not just on Halloween. A LOT!

(put on wings)

And, I know that grandpa wouldn't think that I am weird or too much or tell me to calm down or that there are better ways to spend my time; he'd be happy for me to be a fairy, because I identify as a fairy more than as a human. It's who I am.

(put fairy flower hat on and get wand)

Once, I set an alarm off at a bookstore when I was dressed like a fairy and the security guard searched me and said,

SECURITY GUARD

Well, you didn't steal anything. The only thing in your bag is a Bible. And the only reason I can think of as to why the alarm went off is because of the glitter you have all over you.

OLDER LAURA

Also, sometimes I teach kids how to be fairies.

*(Other ensemble members can act out what **OLDER LAURA** is teaching them about fairies)*

We make personalized fairy dust, dance and learn fairy facts, such as:

Fairies are found at the "in-between places," such as fences, forks in the road and bridges.

and at "in-between times," too, such as: twilight, midnight and at noon.

YOUNG LAURA

I think my grandpa came to me at an in-between time in my life, when I needed someone to believe in me and being a fairy, it's not always easy to get people to believe in you.

OLDER LAURA

And, somehow, it can be even harder to believe in yourself.

Once, when I was in New York City, as I was flying out of the Drama Bookshop with my fairy wings on, a man came up to me and asked sweetly, not making fun, he just wanted to know,

NY GUY

Are you a real fairy?

OLDER LAURA

And we posed together and took pictures....I was dressed up like a fairy to promote *this* show, handing out postcards...

Grandpa taught me if I believe in myself, then others can see me.

I know my grandpa would never claim to be a fairy, but...Grandpa has helped me to find my own magic.

And now, my goal is to pass the punk on to my nieces and nephews, to encourage them to be themselves.

My niece, Emilie, upon learning the ending of Westside Story, said, at about the age of five,

EMILIE

Well, if they made the movie a little longer, a mermaid fairy could magic Tony back alive.

OLDER LAURA

And once, out of nowhere, my niece Juniper, at the age of three said,

JUNIPER

Even ghosts come out in the Spring.

(go front and center)

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

My grandpa's been gone now for 16 years; he passed away due to Alzheimer's. This year he would've been 102 years old.

If I had one wish, it would be:

to dance with my unforgettable grandpa one more time.

(Slide: fairy noise)

(OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR waves wand, makes wish come true: GRANDPA magically appears)

(Slide: photo of grandpa smoking)

(Dance/grandpa quote montage:

*(Punk Grandpa theme song plays while **OLDER LAURA** and **YOUNG LAURA** dance with **GRANDPA** or a **GRANDPA** puppet, interspersed with quotes from **GRANDPA**)*

(Punk Grandpa theme song plays)

GRANDPA

If you act like you belong, people will believe in you.

*(Punk Grandpa theme song plays and **GRANDPA** and **OLDER LAURA** dance)*

GRANDPA

That'll put hair on your chest.

*(Punk Grandpa theme song plays and **GRANDPA** and **YOUNG LAURA** dance)*

GRANDPA

(to audience member)

Hey! Pick you up in an hour!

*(Punk Grandpa theme song plays and **GRANDPA** and **OLDER LAURA** dance)*

GRANDPA

Did anyone turn in a black umbrella?

*(Slide: long fairy noise...somehow, a black umbrella puppet (with huge googly eyes, thick red pipe cleaner lips & a nose) "chases" **OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR** across the stage)*

BLACK UMBRELLA PUPPET

I am not your umbrellaaa!!!!

*(Punk Grandpa theme song plays and **GRANDPA** and **YOUNG LAURA** dance)*

OLDER LAURA/NARRATOR

(kneeling down and praying, like she did at the top of the show)

Thank you God, for giving me a grandpa that put hair on my chest.

*Sometimes, people don't know what to make of grandpa and me. We just were and are **the way we are: PUNKS!***

(Lights out)

END OF PLAY