“Tell me this story, Grandpa,” I say, tracing a crooked line over his eyebrows. I sit on his lap with a plate of spicy cookies, and lick crumbs from my lips.

A thousand wrinkles smile back at me.

Grandma once told me that each of Grandpa’s wrinkles is a story waiting to be told. That must be why we call him Great Grandpa. Nobody has more wrinkles than Great Grandpa.

“Girl,” Great Grandpa says, “you’ve got the prettiest gingersnap smile since your grandma’s.”

Grandpa leans way back in his chair. He stares at the ceiling, and I look up there, too. The white ceiling glows like a sky crowded with stars.

Grandpa squints his eyes. He looks at something far away, much farther than the sky ceiling. He tells about a fishing trip he once made with his father. His voice is warm and soft, like my favorite blanket.

“The lake was so smooth that day that the dragonflies wouldn’t land.”

"Why not?” I ask.

"Ripples," he tells me. "Their buzzing wings make a tiny breeze that ripples the
I feel the soft breeze of dragonfly wings in my hair.

"The fish spot the ripples, and... JUMP out of the water to EAT the dragonflies!"

I almost jump right off his lap! Gingersnap crumbs fly all over the chair. We both laugh.

"We reeled in four speckled trout," he went on. "Their bellies made rainbows on the bottom of the lake." Grandpa tickles my belly.

"I wish I had been there," I tell him.

Grandpa takes my hand and we walk to the closet. He pulls out a dented metal box, full of fishing lures.

"Choose one," he says.

I pick a silver spotted fish lure.

He nods. "That one will catch you a fine trout."

Grandpa takes out another box. He dumps wooden blocks onto the floor. The edges of the blocks are as smooth as baby skin.

I build castles, dollhouses, and pirate ships. Grandpa laughs from his story chair as he watches me.

"Your mother used to tell stories with these blocks when she was a little girl. And your mother's mother, too."
“Good stories?” I ask.

“Great stories!” he says.

"I wish I could have been there," I said.

Soon, it’s time to go.

Great Grandpa squats down for a hug. I can see myself in his eyes.

“Don’t forget this," he says.

He hands me a small box. I peek inside at the fishing lure.


I kiss his pink cheek. It is soft as baby skin, like the edges of the wooden blocks. I wonder if my mother and mother’s mother have kissed his cheek before. I giggle at the thought.

I wave to Grandpa as we drive away. I peek at the fishing lure again. I see myself staring back from the silver of its shiny belly. I watch as my fingers move to my face.

I think I feel a new wrinkle - or maybe just a gingersnap smile pulling at my cheeks.
Gingersnap Smile

1) How close to each other do you think the grandfather and the child in the story are?

2) What is the most emotionally engaging scene in the story?

3) Can you recount the fishing episode in your own words?

4) Compare and contrast grandpa’s wrinkles and the child’s smile.

5) List the similes in the story.
Gingersnap Smile

1) How close to each other do you think the grandfather and the child in the story are?
   
   Answers may vary.

2) What is the most emotionally engaging scene in the story?
   
   It’s the parting scene that scores big. The child was so engrossed in grandfather’s story that she doesn’t want to go. Grandfather is going to miss the child too as he has many stories to tell her. The child is going to treasure the small box grandpa gave her for a long time.

3) Can you recount the fishing episode in your own words?
   
   Answers may vary.

4) Compare and contrast grandpa’s wrinkles and the child’s smile.
   
   They’re both central to the story, and do spark a great interest in the reader as the story progresses. Here each wrinkle stands for a story and wisdom; while each time the child smiles, it reflects her heartfelt joy and her curiosity to hear another story.

5) List the similes in the story.
   
   His voice is warm and soft, like my favorite blanket.
   
   The white ceiling glows like a sky crowded with stars.
   
   The edges of the blocks are as smooth as baby skin.