



Sterlington Stairlift Stories for Children

Sterlington's Ever Ready Friend

Part One. The Beginning

Sterlington knew a stairlift in a big house with pillars each side of the front door.

In the house lived a girl called Fiona Fortune. Her mum and dad and brother lived there too, but their neighbours all knew Fiona best of all because she was so chatty.

Fiona spoke very politely and always dressed in smart clothes. Because she was so smart, instead of calling her Fiona, some people thought they should be more formal so they called her Miss Fortune.

"Good morning Miss Fortune!" they would say when saw her on her way to school.

"Good morning Miss Fortune" when she went into the village store.

"Good afternoon Miss Fortune" when she was going home from school.

"Sweet dreams, Miss Fortune" her dad would say when he kissed her goodnight at bedtime.

Her brother, Laurence, was not so smart. He usually looked scruffy and his clothes always had a stain on them, usually ink or mud or something horrible like that.

But his friends still liked him and instead of "Laurence" they called him "Lance" for short.

"Good morning Laurence!" grown-up people would say when they saw him on his way to school. But when his friends saw him they would say "Hiya Lance!".

Part Two. Grannie

Fiona and Laurence had a grandma who lived in a house a few kilometres away.

Sometimes they would go to visit her and they liked that because she used to give them some most delicious chocolate biscuits.

Grandma's name was Eileen Pound and when she was young she was very pretty and had ginger hair. But as she got older her hair turned a bit grey and she became unwell.

The children called her "Grannie Pound" and they did have lots of fun when they went to see her.

Because of being ill and having an accident Grannie Pound had bad legs and she used a stairlift to get upstairs to bed and to the bathroom.

When Miss Fortune and her brother Lance Fortune went there they wanted to ride on the stairlift, but Grannie Pound wouldn't let them.

"You'll wear my batteries out if you play around on the thing, then how am I supposed to get upstairs?" she asked them.

The stairlift had a key, just like a car has a key, so without the key the car won't go and neither would Grannie's stairlift.

So Grannie used to remove the key and keep it in her pocket when the children were around.

Part Three. Ever Ready

The stairlift was called Ever Ready because he had always worked properly and always seemed ready to go, and Eileen Pound was very pleased about that.

But Ever Ready knew that Fiona Fortune would really like to have a ride upstairs on his very comfortable seat if she got the chance.

One night Sterlington Stairlift and Ever Ready were having a chat in their special stairlift message language.

They sent tiny vibrations which went along the rail, across the landing, through the landing window, out into the fresh air, between the trees and lamp posts and telegraph poles, through the landing window in the other house, across the landing, along the rail, straight to the other stairlift.

The stairlifts in the town sent message to each other every night, but nobody else knew, no cats or dogs or foxes or birds, or people. It was all done very quietly and only stairlifts knew!

That was how Sterlington knew that Ever Ready was a bit worried about Fiona Fortune wanting a ride on his very comfortable seat, because Ever Ready told him in a secret stairlift message.

Part Four. Clothing

In the hot weather Laurence, whose friends called him Lance, and Fiona, whom people called Miss Fortune, wore lovely light summer clothes so they wouldn't get too warm and sticky.

Fiona always looked very cool and smart but Laurence always seemed to get some kind of stain on his shirt and trousers. On the 18th of June he got grease on his clothes.

He was doing something to his bike and it was new, clean grease but when it got on his nice shirt it made it look all gungy and horrible.

But Fiona looked very smart in her long summer dress with stripes and with her hair tied in a pony tail with a lilac coloured ribbon.

On that day their Mum took the children to Grannie Pound's house and told them to be very good whilst she went to an important meeting in the town.

Part Five. The Garden

They were in the garden, sitting on a wooden bench, when Fiona said to Laurence "Show me what you've got in your pocket, scruffy old Lance".

"NO!" said Laurence.

"Go on" said Fiona, "I know boys always carry a lot of junky things around with them, I want to see what junk you've got".

"Don't know what I've got, can't remember" said Laurence.

After a bit more prodding and teasing Laurence started to empty his pockets.

It was amazing just how much stuff came out and even more amazing how he managed to get so much stuff in his pocket to start with. Fiona thought it would be even more amazing if he managed to get it all back in his pockets again.

There was a screw, a pen knife, an elastic band, a plaster, some string, a tube of bike grease, a piece of rag, seven bus tickets, a piece of wire and nine other things which are too horrible to mention in a nice story like this.

Fiona, whom people called Miss Fortune, looked at all the junk, including the nine other things which are too horrible to mention, and thought about what she could do with them.

She picked up three things, but none of the ones which are too horrible to mention. "Let me borrow these. I'll hide them in the house and you have to find them, but give me a little while to find some good places!" said Fiona.

"OK" said Laurence, who liked finding things, "call me when you've hidden them".

Part Six. The House

Fiona went into the house and saw Grannie Pound, who looked a bit tired.

"What are you cheeky monkeys up to?" she asked.

"We are going to play a hide and find game" said Fiona. "I'll hide some of Laurence's things in the house and he's got to find them.

"Alright" said Grannie, "I might have a nap soon so play nicely and wake me up if you need anything".

"OK, thanks Grannie!" said Fiona. "I won't hide anything in here though, then my scruffy brother won't disturb you". She went out of the room, closing the door so Grannie could enjoy her nap in peace.

It took Fiona about two minutes to realise she was all alone with Ever Ready the starlift. She sat down on the very comfortable seat, pushed the lever, but nothing happened.

"Why won't it work?" she wondered.

Fiona, whom people called Miss Fortune, was not very good with machines but she could work some things out. After a quick look around she saw the lock but there was no key in it. That was because Grannie Pound had taken the key out and put it in her pocket so the children wouldn't play around and wear her batteries down.

She sat on the bottom step and looked at the things she had borrowed from Laurence. One of them was the piece of wire.

She pushed the end of the wire into Ever Ready's lock and turned and twisted and prodded and poked the other end of the wire, this way and that way, up and down, round and round, until, suddenly, some lights came on.

"That's it" thought Fiona, "now it should work".

While she was playing around with the wire it sent some vibrations to Ever Ready and he knew something was wrong.

Sterlington also knew because the wire moving around in the lock made some scraping vibrations which went along the rail, across the landing, through the landing window, out into the fresh air, between the trees and lamp posts and telegraph poles, through the landing window in Sterlington's house, across the landing, along the rail, and right into his brainbox.

"Something wrong?" asked Sterington in his special stairlift message language.

"It's Miss Fortune" answered Ever Ready. "She's poking a piece of wire around in my lock and made my lights go on. I'm afraid she may start riding up the stairs".

"What's wrong with that?" asked Sterlington. "I thought that's what stairlifts like us were made for!"

"Yes, I know that" said Ever Ready "but Grannie Pound took the key out to stop the children playing around on my seat. Not only that, Miss Fortune is wearing a long dress and it could easily get caught under my little wheels and she may get hurt if she's not careful".

"Oh, I see!" replied Sterlington. "Then whatever happens don't give in to Miss Fortune. Even if she does all the right things, refuse to move and wait till her Grannie comes along.

Fiona tried about six times to make the stairlift work but Ever Ready didn't take any notice and kept still.

"Rotten stairlift" said Fiona, "why won't you go?"

Just then Laurence, who had waited for a long time in the garden walked into the hallway. "What are you doing?" he asked Fiona, whom some people called Miss Fortune.

"You know we're not supposed to touch the stairlift".

"I think I'll change its name to Never Ready" said Fiona, "because it won't go".

"Let me have a look" said Laurence, who was sometimes called Lance by his friends.

So Laurence, who was quite good at machines and things had a look. "It should go" he said. "All the lights are on and it's not jammed up or anything". "Perhaps I can take this cover off and have a look inside"

Part Seven. Caught in the Act

"Oh no you wont!" said Grannie Pound in a very loud voice. "I told you both to leave my stairlift alone, now move away from it"

Grannie Pound had just woken up from her nap and wasn't very pleased to see her grandchildren doing naughty things.

She found out that Fiona had poked a piece of wire in the lock and they were all surprised when Grannie Pound tried to put the key in the lock and it got stuck.

"You see what happens when you interfere with other people's things!" said Grannie Pound. "Now I'll have to get Stan the man with the van to come and fix it or I won't be able to get up to bed tonight.

"We're very sorry" said Fiona and Laurence. "We didn't mean to break anything, we just wanted to have a ride.

Grannie Pound knew they were only playing around and didn't really mean any harm.

She was just going to say "it's OK children" when she saw it.

Right in the middle of her lovely soft seat, right in the middle, where everyone could see it was a great big stain of GREASE!

"Who did that to my lovely seat?" she said, almost shouting.

"Did what?" asked Fiona and Laurence together.

Then they saw it, and their eyes nearly popped out of their heads with surprise.

"Stand STILL" said Grannie Pound. "Don't either of you move until I find out what happened here".

The children stood very still. They knew they were in enough trouble already and didn't want to upset Grannie any more. She might not give them any chocolatebiscuits or lunch or tea or anything at all! She might not even let them visit her again.

So they stood very still.

"So, it was you Fiona!" said Grannie Pound at last, after having a very long and careful look around.

"You, little Miss Fortune who always look so neat and tidy, You are the one with a great blob of grease on the back of your dress. "you are the one who sat on my lovely Ever Ready stairlift seat and made it all greasy".

Fiona was very shocked and Laurence was sure he saw a teardrop start to run down from her eye.

"It couldn't have been me" She said to Grannie Pound. "I don't use grease and I always keep my clothes very clean".

"Not today!" said Grannie.

Laurence knew Grannie Pound was right because Fiona turned round a little bit to hide her tear from Grannie Pound, and he saw a great big blob of grease on her dress.

Laurence was just going to laugh when he realised the grease was the same colour as the grease he had got on his shirt.

So he kept quite. Then he said "shall I try to find out where the grease came from, Grannie?"

"NO" she answered sternly, "just stay exactly where you are, both of you. I'll go and look".

Part Eight. Grannie the Detective

Grannie Pound asked where the children had been and started to look around the house.

There was no grease on the stairs, no grease anywhere else in the hallway, or on anywhere else on Ever Ready the stairlift. There was no grease in the front room where grannie Pound had her nap.

There was no grease in the kitchen or near the front door or the back door.

Then she went into the garden. Grannie Pound walked slowly along the path, looking carefully at the grass and flowers as she went.

The she spotted it!!!!

Right on the bench where Laurence and Fiona had been sitting before their game started, a giant blob of grease.

What Fiona Fortune didn't know was that before she went into the garden Laurence had put some of the things from his pocket on the bench. Just as he was doing it, he saw a squirrel run across the grass.

Laurence watched the squirrel go behind a tree then jump over the fence into the garden next door.

The fence wasn't very high but it was just a bit too high for him to see over.

So Laurence, whom some people call Lance for short, stood up on the bench to look over the fence.

Yes, you've guessed it! One of the things he put on the bench was his tube of bike grease and when he stood up he trod on the tube and some of the grease squirted out onto the bench.

Because the grease was quite dark and the bench was quite dark, and because Laurence had been looking towards the sun when he was watching the squirrel, he didn't notice that the grease had squirted out.

When he got down off the bench he picked up the things and put them back in his pocket.

So when Fiona, whom some people called Miss Fortune, sat down on the bench to talk to Laurence, she didn't notice the grease. That's how it got on her dress!

When Fiona went indoors and sat on Ever Ready's very comfortable seat some of the grease must have gone onto it.

Grannie Pound didn't know exactly what had happened but after a careful look around she guessed most of it. She was quite a clever Grannie!

When she went back indoors she said "why did you stand on the seat, Laurence?"

"To see Cyril the squirrel" said Laurence.

"Why did you call it Cyril?" asked Fiona Fortune who had wiped her eyes and felt a little bit cheerier when Grannie Pound went into the garden.

"I call all squirrels Cyril because it rhymes" said Laurence.

"Even if they are girl squirrels?" asked Fiona.

"I just said all squirrels" said Laurence, wondering why girls have to be told everything twice.

"That's enough!" said Grannie Pound. "Laurence I want you to go outside, empty your pockets, make sure the cap is on your tube of grease properly, put all your things in this plastic bag and give them to me until you go home".

Grannie handed Laurence a very large, very strong, boyproof plastic bag.

Laurence knew Grannie Pound was still angry so he didn't argue.

Part Nine. A Change of Clothes and a Cup of Tea

Whilst Laurence was outside Grannie Pound helped Fiona to take her dress off and cleaned the grease off as well as she could. She gave Fiona some spare trousers and a tee shirt to wear.

Grannies usually keep a few spare clothes around in case children visit them, because grannies know things go wrong sometimes, and Eileen Pound was a girl who didn't have to be told everything twice.

Ever Ready was a very quiet stairlift and whilst all this was going on he listened very carefully.

After Grannie had sorted out Fiona's clothes she went to the kitchen to make a nice cup of tea.

Usually she had a cup of tea soon after her nap, but because of the horrible grease problem she had to wait and was quite thirsty by the time she actually made it.

With Grannie Pound in the kitchen, Laurence in the garden and Fiona in the bedroom getting changed, Ever Ready sent a daytime stairlift message to Sterlington to tell him what had happened.

"Have you got one of those soft pastel pink seat covers?" asked Sterlington.

"Yes" answered Ever Ready, the smooth, normally clean stairlift. "Grannie Pound was furious about the grease on it and I don't know what she will do next".

But Ever Ready soon found out!

Grannie Pound did some of her best thinking when she had a nice cup of tea in her hand. She finished the tea and said "that was absolutely delicious!"

Having a rest and a delicious cup of tea had helped her to work out what to do next.

Part Ten. Stan the Man with the Van

Grannie Pound went to Ever Ready and looked at the label stuck to his cover.

Right there, in clear big black print was the telephone number of Stan the man with the van.

Quite near to Ever Ready was a telephone, so Grannie Pound phoned Stan the man with the van and told him about her jammed key and the horrible grease stain on her very nice seat.

Well, it used to be very nice until Laurence and Fiona managed to get some horrible grease onto it.

"Don't worry" said Stan the man with the van, "I'm sure we can sort it out".

Luckily he wasn't far away and managed to call at Grannie Pound's house before the children went home.

Stan the man with the van changed the lock and gave Grannie Pound some new keys.

Then he got some tools from his nice blue and orange tool box and took the seat right off.

"How can I sit on Ever Ready now?" asked Grannie Pound, who was watching from the corner of the hall.

"Don't worry" said Stan the man with the van, "I'll put a new seat cover on and fix it back again".

In about ten minutes he had finished it. Every Ready had a clean new seat which was even nicer and softer than the last one.

Grannie Pound sat on it and was ever so pleased. She tried her new key and Ever Ready, knowing she was the proper owner, worked very smoothly and took her for a lovely ride up the stairs and back down again.

She was so pleased she even made Stan the man with the van a very nice cup of tea, and gave him some most delicious chocolate biscuits.

Fiona, whom some people used to call Miss Fortune, did, eventually, have a ride on Ever Ready the smooth, clean stairlift with the soft pink seat.

It was on her birthday and she had a ride with Grannie Pound's permission whist her dad was there to make sure nothing went wrong.

Ever Ready, and Sterlington, and all the other stairlifts around the town certainly had something to talk about after all the goings on at Grannie Pound's house!

Laurence, whom some people called Lance for short, never did stop being scruffy.

But that's just the way some people are!

The End