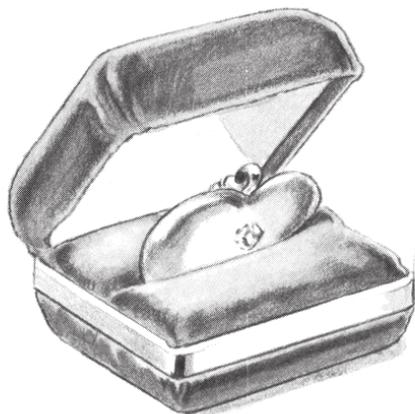


## Chapter 1



### The Locket

It all started when my mother placed the small, square, blue velvet jewellery box on the kitchen table. She motioned me to sit down beside her. Then she picked up the box and opened it slowly. She gave me a meaningful look.

I realized that there had to be something awfully important in the box. Mom had even waited till Ben was in bed so we could be alone.

Slowly she lifted out a thin, gold chain. Dangling on the bottom of the chain was a locket. It was shaped like a heart, with a tiny diamond in its

centre. She pushed against the bottom of the locket and it opened. She handed the locket to me. Inside were two tiny heart-shaped pictures.

“That’s your great-grandmother,” Mom said, pointing to a nice looking woman with a little smile on her face and long, curly brown hair, “and that’s your great-grandfather.” He looked stern.

I shut the locket and looked at it. The gold gleamed and the diamond sparkled.

“You don’t remember your great-grandmother because she died before you were born,” Mom said. “But today is her birthday. Baba gave me this locket on this date when I was eight, just the same age as you are now.

“Do you think you’re old enough to take good care of this, Sarah Rose?” Mom asked.

She’d said my whole entire name. This had to be a very important moment.

“Yes!” I answered.

“All right,” said Mom, “it’s yours.” She paused. “Don’t lose it. And if I were you I wouldn’t take it to school. It’ll get lost there for sure.”

I put the locket on the shelf above my bed, thinking it would look perfect with my white and pink dress.

I got ready for bed. I laid out my clothes for the next day at school. 'Course the locket would also look perfect with my green sweater, I thought. I was going to wear that and my black pants the next day. But my mother did say not to wear it to school. . . .

“Sarah, didn’t I tell you not to wear that to school?”

It was breakfast the next day, and I was wearing the locket with my green and black outfit. It looked great.

“Mom,” I said, trying not to get mad, “I’m not a baby. I won’t lose it. Honestly. I just want to show it to everyone.”

She sighed.

I started thinking about all the games I could use the locket for at school. Like pretending it had magical powers. Or that there was a secret map inside it. Or — like in the book I’d been reading the night before — you spin it and

suddenly you're in another dimension.

"Don't worry, Mom," I said, trying to sound very grown up. "You must trust me."

She sighed again. She shook her head.

"Let me see, let me see," squeaked my baby brother, Ben.

He made a grab for the locket. He's four. Right at that moment his fingers were covered in peanut butter. Come to think of it, they usually are.

"Ben!" I yelled. "Don't ever touch this." I threw on my jacket, grabbed my lunch and kissed my mother. "See you after school," I said.

"Don't forget I'm picking you up!" she shouted after me as I ran out the door. "We have some shopping to do."

"Okay," I yelled back.

Thank goodness I don't have to walk Ben to school. He goes in the afternoon so Mom takes him there and picks him up too.

After the bell rang and we had all hung up our jackets, Sam was the first one to notice the locket. (Sam is short for Samantha, and she's my best friend.) She sort of ogled my locket. Ogle is

a word I'd read the night before. That's what the kids in the book did when they met an alien in another dimension. It means you stare so hard your eyes practically pop out of your head.

Soon half the class was oohing and aahing. Carefully I pulled the locket over my head and took it off so Sam could get a really good look.

"Gym!" shouted Mrs. Lester.

I figured I'd better not wear the locket to gym so I put it neatly away in the corner of my desk.

We had a really busy day and I guess I kind of forgot about putting my locket back on.

Anyway, just before the last bell, I remembered. Good thing too. Imagine what my mother would say if I went home without it! I opened my desk and reached for it.

It was gone. Gone! I threw everything out of my desk but the locket was nowhere to be found! I felt like I was in an elevator, going down very fast. I couldn't believe what had happened.

The bell rang. I looked around to tell Sam, but she'd already left. I threw everything back into the desk. I felt sick. For a minute I just stood there

not knowing what to do. I knew I couldn't stay in the classroom any longer — Mom would ask me why I was late. So I put on my jacket and started out to the car. I prayed she wouldn't notice 'cause if she did I was dead!