

## *The Magpie Song*



This is an extract from a book. The story is told through the letters written by a young girl called Carla and her Grandad.

The story begins with a traditional song which is related to events in the story.



*One for sorrow  
Two for joy  
Three for a girl  
Four for a boy*

*Five for silver  
Six for gold  
Seven for a secret  
Never to be told*

Dear Grandad,

Its noisy in the city. I can't sleep. When I look outside I see a million orange lights below.

I can hear police sirens, a dog barking and the television from next door.

I thought about you far away in the country. Is it noisy there? Will you come and visit us one day? Will you write to me?

Goodnight,  
Carla



Dear Carla,

*Sometimes I can't sleep either. But it's the silence that keeps me awake.*

*I look out of my window and see the black shapes of trees, and clouds racing past the moon.*

*When my eyes become used to the dark, I see the whole sky is full of stars.*

*I think about you too, high up in your flat. I'd like to visit you one day*

*Send my love to everyone.*

*Grandad*



Dear Carla,

*Yes, it did snow here too. I'll tell you about it, but first let's talk about school. Your Dad never liked school, but I taught him to carve wood and now he makes some wonderful things. Everyone can do something well. Just remember that.*

*The woods are like a magic place, as white as the pages of a book. It tells you the whole story of the night before, if you know how to read it. The words are animal footprints. I could see a fox had been hunting and some deer had been in the garden.*

*There's a family of magpies nesting In a hollow tree by the house. Do you know the song? One for sorrow, two for joy ... There were three magpies this morning - three for a girl, that's why I thought of you.*

*Write soon.*

*Love, Grandad*



Dear Grandad,

There are wild animals in the city too. Dad told me. He says when you work nights you see all kinds of things other people don't.

I asked Dad about the Magpie Song, but he said he didn't remember it. I've never seen a real magpie.

Dad says he will make me a bird table for the balcony.

Please come and see me soon.

Love from  
Carla



Dear Grandad,

Why haven't you written?  
It's your turn to write.

Carla



*Dear Carla,*

*I'm sorry. I wasn't well. I'm better now. It was so cold here, I had to stay in bed. I slept for days. Guess what woke me up?*

*A whole family of magpies were fighting by the hollow tree. There were so many I could hardly count. Seven, I think - seven for a secret. They collect all kinds of shiny things and hide them in the tree.*

*I'll tell you a secret, Carla. I've been hiding shiny things for a long time, too. One day they'll be yours.*

*I'm carving a little magpie for you. When it's finished, I'll send it.*

*I'm all right. Don't worry.*

*Grandad*



Dear Grandad,

I'm sorry you weren't well.  
We've got a secret too! Mum's  
going to have a baby.

Do you think the baby will be a  
boy? I don't know where he will  
sleep. He will have to share my  
room.

I like your secret.

Love from Carla



*Dear Carla,*

*Yes! I heard about the baby. I'm so pleased. It  
will be born in the Autumn. I wish you could all come  
and live with me. There's plenty of room, but there's  
no work here for your Dad.*

*I've finished the magpie and now  
I'll paint it, but not just black and  
white - magpies have a green and  
blue sheen when you look at them  
carefully.*

*I'll send it soon.*

*Grandad*



Dear Grandad,

Thank you for the magpie.  
I love it. I carry it everywhere  
with me.

Dad has been making the  
bird table today. It's just like a  
miniature house.

Love, Carla



*Dear Carla,*

*There were four magpies this morning and I knew  
your brother was born. Don't forget our secret.*

*I love you.*

*Grandad*