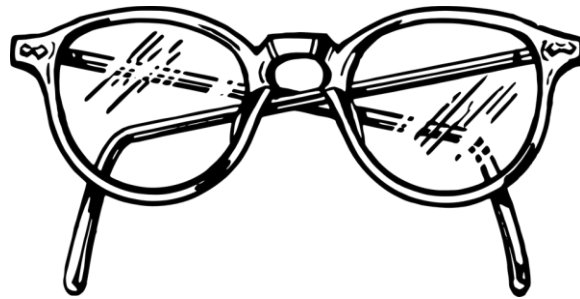


# Babcia Eyeglasses



By

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**FIRST EDITION**

Ela and Manka were going to Babcia (name for granny in Polish) house because the two girls were going to have a new brother or sister soon, so they had to stay at Babcia until the new arrival came.

“Ela, I hope mommy brings home a sister, we could playhouse.” Manka hugged her dolly as she pretends to feed it with her plastic bottle.

Ela shifted her doll from one arm to the other looking over her pink glasses at her younger sister. “I hope it’s a brother, I can only live with one sister, you are such a pain.” Manka took off running into Babcia house screaming and crying, “Babcia.... Babcia.....Babcia.”

Babcia opened the door with arms wide opened, as she invited her two granddaughters in.

“What all this crying, Manka. Dry your tears.” Babcia brought out her perfectly ironed handkerchief embroidery with colorful flowers and dried Manka eyes.

The girls closed their eyes and took in the entire wonderful aroma, of mouthwatering kielbasa, sweet sauerkraut and warm lip-smacking poppy seed bread baking in the oven. Babcia house was located in the Polish part of the city. When you walk through the neighborhood at Easter time, your stomach growled at all the delicious aroma surround the small community, especially the polish sausage.

Babcia house was always clean, sparkly like she was always waiting for company, everything had its very own spot and Babcia would notice any changes in minutes.

Elsa was the oldest and Manka was the youngest they never allowed to go out and play when visiting Babcia, they could only bring one doll. Elsa brought her glamour doll while Manka brought her doll that ate, slept and wet her pants that Babcia would not allow Manka to feed while visiting.

The two girls sat at the table with the plastic cover and they must sit quiet and be like little ladies, that's what Babcia expected. Ela and Manka sat there watching as Babcia pour out tea with white gloves from her collection of teacups and they ate cherry filled perogies and delicious paczki that Babcia made from scratch.

Manka just loved Babcia paczki, never filled with jelly like at the local bakery on Paczki Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. Babcia paczki filled with raisins and nuts, plus they melted in your mouth. Ela disliked the raisins and usually her plate piled high with plump juicy raisins.

When Ela wasn't looking Manka ate one of Ela's perogies little dumpling made of noodle dough sometimes filled with sauerkraut, cheese, onions, potatoes or mushrooms but for this party Babcia made cherry filled perogies, the girls favorite.

Babcia talked about the old times when she was little and showed them her album filled with pictures of her family. “Here’s a picture of Mamusia, Dy and Brother” Both girls looked at the picture and Manka looked confused. “Grandma who is that again Many and who died?”

Manka pointed at the picture. Babica got nervous, “I’m sorry Manka. It is my mother and father. I am talking in Polish again. I’m in United States since World War II, I must speak English.” Babcia closed her eyes as she thought of years past with a small tear forming in her eyes. “After lunch we will work on our cross stitch.” Babica taught the girls how to make angel food cakes and how to cross-stitch when they came for a visit.

She had a special basket for her cross stitch included was the girls work like Manka rabbit with big “Xs” you could see across the room and Ela was working on a frog on a lily pad. Babcia had a big magnified glass she wore like a necklace; the girls would make faces though the magnified glasses when Babica was not looking.

Babcia would sometimes take the girls to church for a Polish mass. Ela and Manka could not understand Polish, but they loved how Babcia said the Lord’s Prayer in Polish, it was like music to their ears.

Babcia was ninety years old, so after lunch was finish, she would always fall asleep, what she called her catnap. Babcia left Ela and Manka to entertain them, without causing

a mess. Ela and Manka watched, as Babcia glasses fall off onto the floor. Ela being the oldest hurried over and placed Babcia glasses on the plastic cover tablecloth.

Ela and Manka were getting bored. Babcia didn't have a television set, they couldn't go outside to play because first it was forbidden and second it started to rain, so they sat their listening to the grandfather clock ticking and Babcia snoring. Both quickly spied Babcia glasses. There was the old style with the big black rims, when Babcia had them on; they made her eyes look enormous.

They did not have anything to play with beside their dolls, and they instantly they got bored with them. Babcia trifocal glasses looked so inviting and interesting as they lay on top of the plastic covered tablecloth. Ela quickly without waking Babcia took off her pink little glasses and put on Babcia, making Manka giggle uncontrollably.

Ela little face looked funny with Babcia big round black frames. Ela eyes looked as big as saucer she started making faces and acting like Babcia. Ela started to turn green as the room became blurry, she removes the glasses at once.

Manka tried them on too, and they made her sick. So the two little monsters had an idea, they placed the glasses on the plastic covered tablecloth and closing one eye and looking through one lens, they played a game, 'What Can You See through the Blur.' They giggled with delight as they looked through the one lens, like describing images in the clouds. "I see an elephant wearing a hula skirt."

Manka looked over Babcia glasses to see what caused the elephant; it was only Babcia big gray recliner. Manka turn to look through the glasses, “Look Ela, it’s a bear doing the back flip wearing a skunk for a hat.” Looking over the lens, they saw Babcia big overstuffed couch with the newspaper folded in the corner.

The girls giggled with laughter, but covering their mouth, so Babcia could not hear. The girls hear a strange noise coming from Babcia glasses, both girls hid behind Babcia china cabinet and looked at Babcia glasses. “What happening Ela to Babcia glasses.”

Ela sneaked out of hiding, fear disappeared, and joy covered her face. Ela waved her hands for Manka to come over and talking with a whisper, “Come and see Ela, Babica glasses...it so beautiful.” Manka sucking her thumb hid behind her sister, like a giraffe, she stretched out her neck to get a better view.

Babcia glasses started to glisten; sparkle and shine as if it was full of magic rainbow circled the glasses making them glow. “Ela, what’s happening to Babcia glasses?” Ela and Manka just stood there watching with mouths wide open. As Babcia glasses rose up magically and started to dance around the room like a songbird. Ela and Manka could not take their eyes off Babcia glasses all they could say was, “WOW.”

Suddenly Babcia started to snore very loud, frightening the children. The glasses landed back on the plastic covered tablecloth again. Ela the oldest bravely touched the glasses; she could not believe her eyes a picture was forming, and it was so clear.

“Manka look.” Ela very carefully put the glasses back on the plastic covered tablecloth as Babcia glasses started to show pictures through the lenses.

“Ela, what’s happening to Babica glasses?”

In just minutes Ela and Manka could see things through the top part of the trifocal’s glasses for distance, they never saw before. “Ela did you see that? It’s a city.”

Ela looked up at the pictures on the wall, “I saw that picture, it’s of Poland, silly.” Quickly Ela pulled down the picture of Poland hanging on the wall and quickly put it back of the wall in case Babcia noticed it missing.

“Manka look through the glasses, can you see the room and Poland.” Manka took the glasses in her small hands holding the glasses so fragile and looking through the lenses with one eye. All she could see looking through was Poland, but when she looked outside the glasses, she could only see Babcia vase of black eye Susan’s on the table across the room. Ela looked too and she saw the same thing. “These are cool glasses.”

Suddenly Babcia started to change position in her chair. Ela and Manka froze like Kulebiak (a rolled dough filled with mushrooms and sauerkraut). Ela gave her sister a



push over to the chair, “Shhhhh lets sit and watch.” The two little girls pulled the glasses away from their eyes and Manka sat on Ela lap, as they watched Babcia glasses like a television set. Babcia glasses showed Poland at Christmas, the farmland the beautiful cities.

The girls got excited when they saw children their own age, playing games and having fun in school and home. The girl noticed a girl their age looking in a mirror as a woman put braids in her hair.

Both girls looked at Babcia braided hair instead of pick tails as the little girl; Babcia wore her braids in a small white bun on the back of her head. “Look Manka that must be Babcia.”

Manka touched her own ponytails that were coming out, “Just like mine.” Ela pulled on Manka’s ponytail, “Look at yours Ela. They are not like Babcia, no way. You keep pulling on yours.” Manka started to suck on her thumb, “Mommy put them in so tight, and they hurt me.”

Manka eyes were forming big tears, Ela wanted to hit her sister and call her a baby, but she had to keep her sister quiet while Babcia slept. “Watch Babcia glasses and don’t cry.” Manka wiggled her nose then wiped her runny nose on her light blue sweater sleeve.

Ela and Manka watched as Babica got older and they saw a family a mother, father, and an older boy.

“Manka that must be Babcia family.” Ela and Manka were too young to even remember Babcia family; they only saw pictures and stories of them from Babcia. They saw Babcia father in a Polish uniform and how sad the family looked, as the train left the station.

The girls saw a young girl looking at herself, while combing her hair, “she looked just like me.” Manka started to brush her ponytail back, like Babcia did in the glasses. Ela looked at Babcia glasses than at her sister, “No, she looks more like me. I wear glasses like Babcia you don’t.”

Manka stuffed her upper lip in and crossed her arms. “Someday I will have glasses you see.”

Babcia glasses showed Babcia singing to a red and white flag, saw Babcia going to school, making friends with a girl with beautiful long blond hair and playing a game with a top.

“Look Ela at the funny looking top. It looks like fun.” Then Babcia glasses shook when the blond hair girl and her family taken away. “Ela where are they taking that girl.”

“I don’t know Manka, maybe Babcia glasses will show were they are taking her.”

They saw Babcia running after the truck and the little girl with the long blond hair, handing to Babcia the toy top, when swiftly a mean looking man with a spider on his shoulder, pushed Babcia and breaking the toy into small pieces.

Manka put her arms crossed on the table put her head in her arms, “Ela that man scares me with that spider on his shoulder.” Ela eyes were enormous as she watched her Babcia sitting on the ground crying, as she tried to put the little top back together, until Babcia’s mother came running and carried Babcia home.

Manka jumped up, “Ela I saw that top before, Babcia said it was given to her from a dear friend name \_\_\_\_\_.” Manka ran to an old picture all crumbed but smoothed out, in a small frame of the same little girl with Babcia arm around and the little top glued together with a few pieces missing.

“Look Ela, like Babcia glasses shows.” Ela looked at the little girl picture and pointed at the star, “she must be extra special, she even wears a beautiful yellow star on her sweater.” Manka wanted to play with the blue and white top, Ela stopped her, and “Manka it has cracked you will break it come on back and watch Babcia glasses.” To Manka the top was so tempting but the glasses were more interesting, she ran back to Ela and the glasses.

Just then, they saw fireworks and bombing like watching a war stories that their father watches on television happening in Babcia's glasses. "Ela I'm getting scared." Manka looked away. "You are such a baby, Manka." However, when Manka was not looking Ela closed her eyes too.

"Ela why is there war?" Manka mumbled inside her t-shirt that she pulled over her head, so she would avoid viewing Babcia glasses. "I don't know Manka, I don't know." Ela put her hands over her eyes as she watched.

Then they saw Babcia and her brother running away from the bombs and her mother kept talking and looking lovingly at Babcia and Babcia brother. "I wish Babcia glasses had sound, we could hear what they are talking about." Manka started to wiggle in her sister's lap. "Sit still Dummy, besides they are speaking polish."

Ela kept watching Babcia glasses, Manka popped her head out of her t-shirt and started to giggle and covered her mouth. "I know polish Ela. Babcia taught me, bat bush." Manka quickly put the embroidery napkin on top of her head.

Ela snatched the napkin off Manka head and folded the napkin neatly with the ironed folds, "Its babushkas do not bat bush." Manka started to pout again and tears were forming, Ela looked at her sister, "Manka don't cry. You will wake Babcia. Get back on my lap, so we can watch Babcia glasses some more."

Manka still pouting, looked at her sister, “It would still be better, if it has sound.” Ela helped her sister on her lap. “Just watch.”

Suddenly Babcia brother and mother were running toward a big boat. Babcia family kept looking back at the destruction from the bombs that destroyed Babcia home and town.

Babcia glasses shooed, as the girls watched as the glasses were showing so many Poles, shoved inside of a boat, all crammed inside, they all looked so frightened. Ela looked concerned she picked up the glasses hoping to get a better view, “Where’s Babcia and where are they going. I hope that bad man with the spider on his shoulder doesn’t show up.”

Manka tried grabbing the glasses out of Ela hands. “Is Babcia on the boat, Ela? Let me see.”

Ela tried to locate Babcia through the lenses. “There she is.” Ela pointed at Babcia family, sitting together saying the rosary, all in tears and huddled over their beads.

“It’s so dark Ela. Babcia must have been so scared. I would be.” Ela swallowed very hard, as fear crossed her face as she looked at Babcia sleeping so soundly, as her glasses were showing so much pain.

There was complete darkness as Babcia glasses changed and the glasses started to glisten and shine again and quickly Ela and Manka saw a beauty blue sky and sea gulls flying around.

“Look, it’s like when we go fishing with Daddy.” Suddenly the crowd on deck ran to the edge to watch a beauty woman wearing a crown and holding a torch came into view, the crowd looked happy and they were cheering.

“Look at that lady, she is sure beautiful.” Manka looked at it with fresh eyes. Discussed Ela piped in “That’s the Statue of Liberty, silly. What are they teaching you in second grade these days?” Ela tried to mimic her mother but Manka was not listening, she was too busy watching the beautiful statute.

Ela stood tall and resided, “...Give me your tired, your poor; your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, temper-tost, to me: I life my lamp beside the golden door.” Manka clapped her hands, “Ela what was that you said?”

Ela knocked her head on the table, “What are they teaching you these days, Manka...it’s the inscription on the Statue of Liberty, stupid.”

Then Babcia glasses started going fast forward, as the images of different things went quickly by. Babcia glasses started showing something that looked like a big train station

with lots of fence round, “Was Babcia put in jail?” Manka looked with concern at her Babcia. Some people of the boat turned away, others struggled in long lines hungry and very tired.

“No silly, she was at Ellis Island, before coming in America they taught this in school, you will learn it, in third grade like I’m in now.” Ela sat back in the chair trying to look smart as she pushed her pink glasses up.

“Why is Babcia there?” Manka looked worried. Ela made a face, “they had to stop here, for what, I don’t know maybe to give them a paper to live in United States.” Manka started to suck on her collar of her light blue sweater.

Babcia family with only the clothes on their back and only two small suitcases walked around a strange city, riding on a train that went underground. “Manka, look a subway, now cool is that.”

Ela and Manka saw city lights and a small apartment not big enough for a snail. “Ela, they looked happy, even when they don’t have a television set, a microwave oven or even toys, poor Babcia.”

Ela and Manka watched Babcia brother dirty and exhausted working at a low paying job at such a young age a little older than Ela.

Babcia helped her mother with hand sewing for the neighbors; they would work into the night and Babcia mother doing housework in the daytime. “That must be where Babcia learn to cross stitch.” Manka looked at Babcia pillowcase she was stitching. “Shhhh. Be quiet you will wake, Babcia.”

Then swiftly a classroom shown, and they saw Babcia was being yell at and chased from mean looking kids. “Babcia, if I was there, I would show them whose boss.” Ela showed her fist. Manka started to laugh, “Ha that’s funny.” Ela stuck her tongue out at Manka, “Why I should...”

Just when Ela was about to hit her sister, they saw through Babcia glasses on Babcia apartment door was a sign written, ‘Pollock’s Go Home’, “Ela what does that say?” Ela sound out the word “Pol-lock.” Manka looked at her sister, “What does that mean.” Ela looked upset and sad, “It a cruel way to call the Polish. Tommy once called me that, and I gave him a black-eye.” Ela rolled up her sleeves as she thought of Tommy and pushed her glasses up again off her nose.

Ela and Manka looked at the glasses together where everyone was hugging and laughing together. “Why is everybody so happy?” Ela looked at the glasses and she started to smile to, “Look Manka at the paper that’s Babica reading it said, **‘WORLD WAR II HAS ENDED.’**”



The girls saw Babica dancing the polka with her mother. They saw Babica repairing the top and folding out a picture of her blond hair girlfriend. “Ela, do you think Babica would ever see her friend again?” Manka was thinking of her own friends, “I hope so, I would sure miss Helen, if she ever moved away.”

Babcia glasses started to shake again with sadness when Babcia watched men coming home from the war, hugging their families and sweethearts. “Ela is that Babcia father.” The girls saw Babcia looking at an old rip family picture. Ela ran to Babcia wall full of family pictures, “Manka, Babica is looking at that picture.” On the wall was a family picture turning yellow around the edges.

Both girls wanted to cry as Babcia’s family sat at a table with not much to eat. Only a little food Babcia mother collected for Holy Saturday she placed into a basket to save for Easter.

The girls then saw Babcia and her family taking the basket to an old Polish church to have it blessed by the priest. “Ela, I hope the priest can make the basket grow with food.”

Abruptly, Babcia glassed showed the family traveling on a bus, it was overcrowded and suddenly the sign Michigan came into view. “Look they are going to Michigan, our home state.” Taking another bus, it took them to a small house with an outhouse and a swing in the backyard. “Ela look, Babcia has to go to the bathroom outside, like at the state park.”

Babcia family was welcomed in by twenty people there was a party of dancing the polka and lots of polish food. "Look Ela that's looks so good." Ela wiped her mouth on her sleeve.

Suddenly the girls put Babcia glasses quickly back on the table when Babcia snorted very loud. Both girls looked back at the glasses, "Look. Babcia is going to school, that has on the board A-P-P-L-E, I can read that Ela it's apple."

The girls then saw Babcia's family sharing Oplatek (small thin white wafers) or Christmas wafer at Christmas time for good luck in the coming year and a reminder of Jesus Christ's love. "Look Ela, baby Jesus' chair at the Christmas Eve table, like Babcia always does at Christmas." Manka got excited. Ela shifted her foot from right to left as Manka kept jumping up and down.

"Stop it. I want to see, look and sit still as Babcia is playing the best part, the Virgin Mother in the live Nativity." Ela looked at her snoring Babcia, "Wow Babcia played Jesus mother, I wish I could be the Virgin Mary, I'm always the sheep."

Just then the girls saw Babcia going to midnight mass called Pasterka (Shepherd mass), all spoken in polish and the altar was beautiful with poinsettias and live Christmas trees decorated with lots of white little lights and on the top were ornate doves.

“Look Manka, it must be Good Friday, the altar is bare and black streamers.”

Manka pushed Ela away, “Look at Babcia she’s praying to Jesu...”

Then they saw Babcia family painting Easter eggs with different colors and patterns called pisanki and eating Babka yeast raised bread. “Manka, look at how Babcia eggs are so beautiful to yours when you mixed all the colors together.” Ela put Manka on the floor, “Mommy and Daddy said they were beautiful with the colorful rabbit stickers.”

Ela looked upset at her sister, “I wanted to make a rainbow but instead we had gray ugly Easter eggs.”

Babcia was so happy and suddenly Babcia was getting older, suddenly Babcia was going someplace. “Ela is Babcia going back to Poland?”

Gradually, Babcia glasses danced around the room as Babcia father with missing in action and now was coming home with injury that caused him to limp, came home to his family in the United States from Poland. Ela and Manka saw Babcia giving her father a big hug and big tears of joy falling down her cheeks. Babcia family was so happy and so blessed.

Suddenly the distance part of the glasses went all black, Ela and Manka got scared, and Manka gave the glasses a shake instantly a new picture started up, but in a new location through the middle lenses.

The middle of Babcia glasses for the intermediate years started to play, Ela and Manka could see Babcia when she was older as a teenage she was working for pickle factory working late, housekeeping and working in the fields.

Then they saw Babcia dressed in bodice embroidery in bright colors and colorful skirt as Babcia danced at the local Polish festivities and at a polish wedding, than they saw a young man that looked just like their father. "Look Ela its Daddy." Babcia and the young man were dancing the polka. "It cannot be Daddy, but who could it be?"

Ela and Manka started to do a small quick step of the polka mimicking Babcia. They stopped when they saw the church they belong too, with the altar rail and crucifix Jesus, "Look Manka it's our church."

Manka sat closer to the glasses. "Manka, I can't see." Ela put Manka back on her lap so they both could see Babcia in a bridal gown; the young man that looked like Daddy was Dzia Dzia (grandfather in Polish). "It's Dzia Dzia, look it's Dzia Dzia." The girls were so excited they haven't seen Dzia Dzia since last year, before he past on.

The reception was lots of dancing to polish music as the guest dances the polkas and the mazurkas and the famous apron dance as Babcia wears the apron and fills it, with money for each dance.

Quickly Babcia glasses shows five babies born through the years. “Look Ela aren’t they just cute, look that one has to be Daddy.” Both girls started naming the babies, “There’s Aunt Flora, Daddy, Uncle Fil and Aunt Wira.” Glasses dances with fun times and celebrations consist of; birthday parties, graduations, holidays and even a time when daddy got lost in the shopping mall.

“Remember the stories Babcia keep telling us, how scared she was when daddy got lost and she finally found him under some raincoats eating kolaczki (cookies that look like bow ties with different jellies) he had a stomachache for weeks and today he still hates them.”

The girls giggled as they watched their father growing up. “Isn’t Daddy just handsome.” Ela sat biting her nails, as she watched her Daddy placing on a baseball game, first communion, going hunting, fishing and graduating from high school.

Babcia had so much love for her children as her family started to get big, as her children were starting to have children. “Look at all our cousins look yucky Farrar.” Manka stuck out her tongue at her cousin. “He cannot see you Manka, besides he likes you.” Ela giggled. Manka stuck her tongue out again for one more for good measurers, “Lizard breath.”

Manka swatted her sister, “That does it.” Ela gave her sister a swat. They started to hit each other; just then, the girls stopped hitting when they saw their Mother. They both

started to smile, “Look, it’s Mommy, she looks so beautiful.” Ela pushed Manka away so she could see her mother better.

Quickly Babcia glasses showed their mother in a beautiful wedding dress. “Babcia glasses are better than a video camera and that old album Mommy and Babcia have in black and white.” Manka put her elbows on the table she dreamy looked at her mother, “It feels like we are right there, Manka. Mommy looks just like a princess.” Babcia, Dzia Dzia, Mommy, Daddy, Aunts, Uncles and cousins dancing the polka, “I wish I was there it looks like fun.” Ela looked upset at her sister, “Stupid, you were not even born yet.” Manka gave her sister a look.

Babcia glasses show sadness when Babcia parents passed and her older brother. The girls started to cry, “Turn off Babcia glasses, this is too sad.” Ela was about to put the glasses under a napkin.

Suddenly it was as if the glasses felt Ela and the middle of the glasses went dark. Manka got mad, “look what you did Ela.” Ela folded the napkin and placed it on the side of Babcia glasses.

Manka was about to cry when suddenly the bottom part of Babcia glasses for reading began to play scenes. “Look Manka, it started up again.” Ela and Manka suddenly saw themselves first Ela and then Manka when they were born. “Manka look it’s me as a baby and there's me with my first bike that Babcia and Dzia Dzia bought me.”

Babcia glasses showed so much joyful time and suddenly like a tape going forward. It showed Manka held in her mother's arms that her father kept taking pictures. "Look there is Mommy, Daddy and I." Ela could not sit still.

"Look there is Babcia showing you how to ride a bike and do you remember how I won't let you out of the garage until you got those training wheels off." Manka crossed her arms and sat down in her chair, "Yes, I was ready to hit the road, but you made me go around and around in the garage." Ela pulled Manka ponytail, "I was only looking out for you."

Then they saw Babcia playing bingo in the church basement and Babcia yelling "Biiiiiiiiinnnngo." she won \$25.00 the only time Babcia ever won anything. Ela ran to a picture and it was Babcia holding a \$25.00 bill. "I always wonder why Babcia was holding that money, I thought she won the lottery."

Babcia was so happy when Pope John Paul II became Pope. The girls remember Babcia saying "A Pope from Poland, it's a miracle all other Pope's came from Rome, but this Pope is Polish, God sent us a saint." Babcia glasses showed Babcia collection of Pope John Paul memorabilia she has collected through the years. "Look Manka it's the Pope, Babcia must have known him personally from Poland?" Both Ela and Manka, looked at the pictures Babcia had of the Pope on the wall.

Babcia glasses showed Ela and Manka fishing with Dzia Dzia and the big pancakes that Dzia Dzia made. “Remember the watermelon spitting contest we had.” Ela got closer to the glasses when they showed Dzia Dzia showing them how to make the hula-hoop work. The girls giggled with delight.

The trip Babcia and Dzia Dzia got for their fifty anniversary to go to Poland. Babcia was so happy. Just then, Dzia Dzia got sick the glasses showed Babcia praying and crying.

Babica glasses turned a gray color, when they saw Dzia Dzia funeral and the sadness that crossed Babcia face.

The glasses quickly showed Babcia friends all going to be with the Lord leaving Babcia praying longer each day and praying her rosary and going to Polish mass that wasn't weekly but now was once a month.

The girls started to cry, but looking at their snoring Babcia, they sat quietly watching their Babcia in the glasses eating alone, going to the church alone, she looked so small and so very lonely.

“Ela, it must be really hard to get old, you lose your friends, you don't feel so well, and people probably don't come over as much.” Manka looked around at her Babcia spotless house.



Then suddenly the glasses showed Babcia getting excited as she prepared for, Ela and Manka visit today. “Look Manka, its today with Babcia. Right now, and look it’s when I accidentally pour my tea and Babcia doesn’t look mad, but happy look at the glasses they are shining.”

The glasses also showed Manka eating Ela pierogi. “You ate one of my pierogis.” Just then as Ela about to give her sister a hit, Babcia awoke and the glasses went dark. “Girls, I must have dozed off.” Babcia reached for her glasses, she put them on showing her big blue eyes shining through.

Both girls quickly jumped into Babcia lap, “I love you Babcia.” Ela first and then Manka, “I love you too, Babcia.” Babcia gave them both a kiss on the cheek. Babcia was smiling she was cherishing this special time with her two grandchildren. “My little angels.”

Just than Daddy ran in, “You two girls have a new baby sister.” Babcia hugged her son and congratulated him, “Praise be to Jesus.” Babcia poured out some vodka to celebrate while the girls drank chocolate milk. As the girls got ready to go as Daddy talked to Babcia. The girls got into Daddy’s car, both still thinking about Babcia glasses.

“Manka maybe next time we can have Babcia tell us the stories behind what we saw through her glasses today?” Ela put her seatbelt on.

“I cannot wait until I get my own glasses.” Manka gave her doll a hug. Just then Ela took off her pink glasses and looking at them, “Manka put your seatbelt on.” Manka ignored her sister.

Ela looked at Manka, “Manka do you think someday, my own glasses will show my past, teenage years and present just like Babcia glasses?”

“Ela, they just have too. I want to have glasses too.” Manka clicked her seatbelt on and started to suck her thumb. Ela lean over and gives her little sister a big hug. Manka pushed Ela away. “Why did you do that for?”

Ela put her glasses back on, “I wanted to have one memory giving you a hug, so you can never say, and I never hug you.”

The two girls started to giggle, “Manka I hug you, so when someone looks through my glasses when I’m Babcia age, they can see that I really do love you, Manka.” Ela gave her sister a hug, “Me too Ela, me too.”

Ela and Manka will always remember that special day with Babcia glasses.

**THE END**

In September 1939, German invaded Poland and in July 1942, German relocated Warsaw Jews. Babcia never saw her dear friend again.

## **World War II**

The Polish army received no effective assistance from the West, and by mid-September German armies had overrun most of western and central Poland. On September 17, Soviet troops invaded Poland from the east, and the two invading powers divided the country between them. Enormous reprisals were exacted against the Poles throughout the German-occupied region. In the Soviet-occupied area, many thousands of Poles were forcibly deported to Siberia. In 1940 thousands of captured Polish army officers were murdered by Soviet security services. A mass grave containing many of the bodies was discovered later in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk, Russia.

Numerous members of the Polish government and the military forces succeeded in escaping from Poland during the final phases of German and Soviet military operation against the country. Most of the refugee Polish troops, numbering about 100,000, succeeded in reaching France, where they were regrouped into combat units. These units and others that were later organized in the USSR rendered valiant service to the Allied war effort in North Africa and Europe. In the meantime, a government-in-exile, led by General Wladyslaw Sikorski, had been organized in France. Following the collapse of France in 1940, the Polish government established headquarters in London.

The German armed forces occupied all of Soviet-held Poland during the initial phase of their attack on the USSR in 1941. During their occupation of the country, the German armies pursued a policy of systematic extermination of Polish citizens, particularly Jews, most of whom perished at **Auschwitz** (Oswiecim), Treblinka, Majdanek, Sobibór, and other concentration camps scattered throughout the country. In April 1943 the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto, rather than wait for destruction in the camps, rose in rebellion against hopeless odds. The Germans quelled the rising after three weeks of fighting. At the end of the war the estimated total of civilian casualties numbered more than 5 million, most of which was

inflicted by the Germans. Polish military casualties in the war totaled about 600,000. The material losses suffered were similarly enormous.<sup>1</sup>

Immigration

### **From 1924 to 1964**

The Immigration Act of 1924 further reduced quotas for immigrants deemed to be less desirable. Immigrants from northern and western Europe were considered highly adaptable and more likely to “fit in” with Americans than immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. As a result, immigrants from Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland were assigned generous quotas. Quotas for countries such as Russia, the source of most Jewish immigrants, and Italy were cut back. Practically all Asians were barred from entering the United States. In 1941 Congress passed an act that refused visas to foreigners whose presence in the United States might endanger public safety. In a gesture of goodwill toward China, an ally of the United States during World War II, Congress passed a bill in 1943 allowing 105 Chinese immigrants to enter the United States annually.

These laws, coupled with the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, discouraged immigrants from coming to the United States. After World War II, however, Congress recognized two new categories of immigrants, war brides and refugees. A 1945 federal law, the War Brides Act, authorized the admission of the wives and children of citizens serving in the U.S. armed forces during World War II, without regard to quotas or other standards. Congress classified people escaping from their homelands for political reasons as refugees. Included in the initial group of refugees were people who had survived Nazi persecution in Europe during World War II and people fleeing Communism in Eastern Europe after the war. The Displaced Persons Acts of 1948 and 1950 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 authorized the admission of over 500,000 people.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>"Immigration," *Microsoft® Encarta® 98 Encyclopedia*. © 1993-1997 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

**Ellis Island**, complex of one natural and two artificial islands, joined by causeways, in Upper **New York Bay**, southeastern **New York**, near Manhattan. The complex belongs to the U.S. government. From 1892 to 1954 it was the headquarters of an **immigration** and **naturalization** district of the U.S. The original island was called Oyster Island by the early Dutch colonists; it was later known as Gibbet Island, after a pirate was hanged there in 1765. Samuel Ellis, a merchant of **New York City**, bought the island in the 18th century and gave it his name. From Ellis it passed to New York State; it was bought from the state by the federal government in 1808, and for a time it served as the site of a federal arsenal. In 1892, when Castle Garden, the immigration station at the Battery in lower Manhattan, could no longer handle the flow of immigrants, the reception headquarters was transferred to Ellis Island. In 1898 and 1905, the two additional islands were created by dumping earth and rock nearby. It is estimated that about 16 million immigrants entered the country through Ellis Island. Due to declining immigration, the Immigration Service closed the station in 1954 and transferred its activities to Manhattan. In 1990, the former immigration station was dedicated as a **museum**, after undergoing a six-year-long renovation; it contains documents and artifacts related to four centuries of American immigration.<sup>3</sup>

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