

My Grandmother's Pendant

By Glenda Walters



Early one morning my mother called to inform me that my grandmother had passed away. Upon hanging up, I chose to sit in my favorite chair, reminiscing of times we had shared together. Suddenly, I'm twelve years old and I'm in the Fifty-Fifty Store, my grandmother is buying me a double scoop of peach ice cream. Now we're walking to her house, carrying the ingredients to make my favorite dessert, chocolate meringue pie. It was her tradition to make two, and it was my job to lick the beaters once the pies were placed in the hot oven.

Twin weeping willows once graced her backyard, and many a weekend was spent in my younger years swinging on their vine-like branches, pretending to be Jane out of an episode of Tarzan. As a youngster, late Saturday nights were spent in her bed sharing ghost stories. One night the old bed slats gave way and we ended up on the cold linoleum floor. At first, I was frightened, but within minutes she had me laughing at how awkward we looked sprawled out on the floor.

My grandmother lived in a poor section of town. Her home backed up to the railroad tracks, and long after she had fallen asleep I would lie awake waiting for the train to pass by on its way to unknown places. There was also the eerie sound of creaking boards, as automobiles drove over the old wooden bridge that covered the tracks behind her house. To this day, thoughts of her float back to me when I hear a lone train whistle.

There she sits in her favorite overstuffed chair, reading a well-worn Bible with her priceless almanac by her side. My grandmother religiously lived by both books. Over the years I've kept one of her almanacs, dated 1968. Her last Christmas card, addressed to me, is displayed each year among the many cards sent from family and friends during the holiday season.

My grandmother died when I was in my mid-twenties. The week before her death that inner voice had encouraged me to visit. Unfortunately for me, having waited, next week was too late. It was then that I asked for a sign that my grandmother had forgiven me for not taking the time to see her more often. Upon closing my eyes, I found myself viewing a mother-of-pearl pendant with a violet flower in

the center. Within the vibrant purple petals sat an amethyst. Was this my sign, and if so what did it mean? Sleep soon invaded my questioning thoughts.

At the funeral home I finally managed to gain enough courage to look upon my grandmother for the last time. There was the pendant that had been in my vision. It hung on a delicate gold chain around her neck. Suddenly, I remembered seeing it among her trinkets one day as she showed me the contents of her jewelry box. She had shared with me that it had belonged to her oldest daughter named Daisy, who had passed away at the age of eighteen. The amethyst had represented not only Daisy's birthstone, but my grandmother's as well. My answer had come by way of a forgotten piece of jewelry. After sharing this story with my mother, she later gave me my grandmother's beloved pendant.

Each year I make time to drive by my grandmother's old house. Repairs have been made to the sagging porch, and vinyl has replaced the Batton Board siding. The weeping willows in the backyard have long been cut down, along with the twin elms that once shaded the front lawn. The rusty iron fence that once stood guard has been torn down, and the squeaky gate no longer swings open to welcome a little girl with pigtails to come in and play. The only details that time has not erased, is the style of the aging house. All appears to be lost, but everything remains unchanged within the archives of my mind.