

The image features a collection of silver coins and silver stacking tweezers. In the upper left, a carrying case is open, revealing several stacks of silver coins and a pair of tweezers with wooden handles. The tweezers are positioned diagonally across the case. In the foreground, several individual silver coins are scattered on a white surface. The coins are of various denominations, including US Silver Eagles, which are clearly identifiable by their intricate designs and the words "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" and "LIBERTY" on the reverse side. The overall composition is clean and professional, with a focus on the silver coins and the precision tool used for handling them.

A GENTLE FORCE WITH A MOVING HAND

The Making Of A Silver Stacker

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My Grandmother or "GrandMama" as we all affectionately called her was a gentle force with a moving hand. Guess you might just say Grandmama was an integral Hidden Figure in My Life.

Nope, GrandMama didn't build rocket ships or help send men to the moon

But she built a strong family, raising and helping to raise up a generation of educated kings and queens by planting little seeds from a Tree called "Mother Wit". Yes. That's us. The family tree is more than just a tree...it is the spirit of our ancestors moving like a gentle breeze through time immemorial.

I guess this business of "stacking" spurred some memories. And, I got to thinking a lot about GrandMama these days....

I imagine every grandchild has their own unique relationship and experience with grandparents. My GrandMama as I recall didn't have to rely on someone else's books for children's stories as she always had the best stories to share about her own life....

And, could GrandMama SHARE stories! She'd have me on the edge of my seat and told tales that would grip my imagination beyond measure!

Oh, GrandMama had a way with words I dare say!

Little did I realize that there was a purpose....she had a design...she would weave within my very being unbeknownst to me...until that day when I would be fully capable of understanding the things she would share...the lessons she was teaching.

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My little mind was being influenced by her powerful words of wisdom.

In fact, there was one story that I'll never forget that she would tell me. It had this one single character in the story. A person who went about calling upon people from time to time!

I think it appropriate that I share GrandMama's story with you all as it relates to one of those seeds she planted way back then...that I never knew she had instilled in me...until many years later....I began to notice little sprigs....springing forth...which brought me to this point in time.

Yes, GrandMama...she was a Gentle Force with a Moving Hand. There was even a newspaper article written about her...and its headline? You guessed it!

"A Gentle Force, with a Moving Hand"

Even that reporter understood who my GrandMama truly was! I treasured that newspaper article for years, keeping it with me everywhere I went until it crumbled into millions of little pieces. But I will never forget the treasure it documented....for it gave a testimony of sorts...of someone special to me....and, it would bear witness as well that there had been someone else who had discovered what I knew about her! GrandMama...she was magical; powerful! That newspaper surely had published that story about her as a record for all to see. For me that article meant all the world had a chance to hear about the hidden figure in my life...my GrandMama. (Of course, "all the world" was just our tiny community, maybe even just a slice....our neighborhood street)

Now, I must admit as time has gone by I tend to only remember only a few of her stories she shared. However, there is this one moment yet powerful storytelling time with GrandMama I am eluding to with this post.

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I was not any different than any other little kid of my age...I loved hearing wonderful stories that seemed to challenge the mind and spark the imagination! And, so it was with this one story! The main character was this gentleman who was a fine old fellow but thing isas GrandMama explained he was, "BLIND!!!"

I'd usually gasp right about then at this point in her story. I never knew about blindness until my GrandMama shared this story with me.

So naturally I asked: "GrandMama what's a blind man?"

And, GrandMama said, "Lack of sight. Can't see child. Thing is though such a state can exist within a man when he got two perfect eyes that God done already given him. Shame, too."

I never knew quite what she was trying to explain but before I could ask any more questions.....

Well, she went on to tell the story. Seems he enjoyed taking strolls from time to time and had a wonderful gift! His gift was "His Presence", as GrandMama would say.

Now, I'd always scratch my head at this point, cause wellI had no idea what GrandMama was trying to describe....

Puzzled, I'd ask..."Grandmama exactly how can a man's gift be His Presence?"

Well, she'd carry on with her story....never answering me...

And I, like always, could hardly wait for her to continue to tell me more!

She'd continue..."this old gentlemen would come calling, visiting families....knocking on doors!"

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"What for, GrandMama?"

"Where does he come from GrandMama?"

"Where does he live, GrandMama?"

"Is he my uncle, GrandMama?"

I feel I need to pause right here...in my defense re this last question...you see, seemed to me we had so many uncles and cousins! Heck where I come from and back then everybody was a relative...uncles, aunts, cousins....and you could even qualify for that distinction without really having any blood relations! So naturally, that was a fair question to ask :)

So you know, Grandmama never ever answered that series of questions above either

She'd continue with her story...

She'd look me straight in the eyes and, say, "He delivers His Presence". So, when he comes knocking always be PREPARED to welcome him in as he expects that he will be your guest. He might stay only for a chat, perhaps dinner or maybe hang around for awhile.

Now, after possibly hundreds of times hearing this particular story you all probably can guess by now that I like any other kid.....my imagination was so active I figured this old blind gentleman must be a real person; especially if he came knocking to visit.

Wide-eyed, I'd always think to myself , "I'm going to do just what GrandMama said, we had to PREPARE cause he might visit one day."

Excited I figured that was going to be a privilege to have such a special guest.

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I'd set about preparing little tea cups, my little dishes...placing slices of warm gingerbread cake that GrandMama had made...I'd set a slice aside for him on a little plate. It was all hard work. I'd wait...I'd get impatient...So, I'd just go and sling open the door...cause I could not understand why he hadn't chosen to stop by for a visit. I mean, after all...I had PREPARED for his visit, my GrandMama knew him and in our neighborhood everyone visited each other regularly, they came knocking...would stay for dinner...a chat...

GrandMama would cut that slice of gingerbread cake whenever I asked her....she'd just smile and say, "Here you go baby"....

Then she'd lovingly watch me as I couldn't seem to understand why he was a no show that day....

She'd eventually join in with me for my tea party. Then, She'd just say, "You did good today. He didn't have no reason to stop by here. Now Baby, go on outside and play!"

Throughout all this time...not until I reached a certain age, would I inquire about his name! So, one day I exclaimed...

"GrandMama, what's his name?"

And, for the very first time GrandMama asked me a question....

She simply asked me, "Why?"

Trying to hide my utter confusion at her total lack of understanding.....I answered...

"GrandMama!!! So, I will know who to let in the house, GrandMama. You know when he knocks on the door." (Of course, now by this time I had already been taught to never ever open the door for complete strangers)

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GrandMama said, " Oh, baby his name is Mr. Hard Times. "

So, from then on I'd ask GrandMama to tell me the story about Mr Hard Times!That's the story about an old, blind gentleman with the first name, "Hard" and whose last/sir name is "Times".

Yep, GrandMama would just smile at me and repeat the story to me, time and time again.

[Let's Pause again at this point in my post - note I'm still thinking as a child...so didn't know any better at that age y'all ... cause people had all kinds of strange names. I mean my name is rather unique, too, you know :) LOL!]

Any who....

I asked GrandMama to tell me the story again....

Until one day when I figured she was either tired of telling me that same old story or she figured it was time....for the truth!

She said, "Baby, Hard Times really is real and He comes a knocking whether we want him to or not. And, seems to me most times most people would prefer he just went on and passed them by"

Okay...you guessed it! I couldn't resist!

So, I asked "Well, WHY GrandMama?"

And, GrandMama said, "Well, child daily living keeps most folks busy and too bogged down. Before they know it they done gone and forgot about having enough to satisfy old Mr. Hard Times for when he comes a knocking. Folks just ain't gotta enough to feed themselves let along some old blind gentleman who just shows up unannounced at their door"

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Of course, I wanted to know what would Mr. Times do if people wouldn't invite him in.

And, well GrandMama said,...

"Oh, that old Mr. Hard Times don't need or wait for invitations. When he comes knocking, he just comes right on in, seems you don't get to pass up on the Gift of His Presence. His blindness baby doesn't make him feeble just means he don't discriminate! He comes by from time to time to chat. Some of the old folks used to say he is a teacher by profession. Just most folk don't take too kindly to some old blind teacher trying to show stuff to people who got two perfectly good eyes to see things well enough for themselves. But the old folks they say that you best be PREPARED for when Mr Hard Times comes knocking. Now, you gone outside and play baby. And now you remember what Grandmama just told you, baby!"

That was the last time GrandMama ever told me that story. And, truthfully I never ever wanted to ask her to again! 'cause though I obediently went outside that day, I didn't play....I was shaken....

GrandMama had just added water and nutrients to the seed she had planted.....She knew I was coming of age and I would begin to grow...to process the meaning, the message...

Honestly, I was a tad miffed, too! In that kid sort of way 'cause I wasn't about to go saying that to GrandMama! You see, the way I figured it out that day....unbeknownst to me seems GrandMama was playing a game with me...all that time....

And, as for Mr Hard Times....well, I wasn't so sure about him anymore....

[in my Forest Gump voice] : "And, That's all I got to say about that!"

GrandMama gave me slices of gingerbread cake

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I carefully placed them on my pretty tea set....having to replace them each and every time...as they were, I quickly learned...disposable.

Then one day I noticed something....

GrandMama had Silver Coins...Silver Dollars it seemed....

I secretly watched her as she carefully placed them in a 5 gallon bucket. She had several of those buckets filled with Silver Dollars under lock and key. And, to me....it was the stuff of legends I tell you!

So, I boldly, risking my life, decided to asked her, "WHY?"

She said, "These here coins are what GrandMama sets aside for Mr Hard Times, for when he comes knocking! Baby, those slices of gingerbread cake don't seem to last very long or go very far based on the way Mr Hard Times seems to look at things. Besides, sometimes you never know when he gonna decide to overstay his welcome, if you wanna call it a welcome. As such, he be one visitor who'll stick around longer if he sees you didn't prepare before he drops by. I'd be telling you child...just makes him stay all the longer! Those old folk believe he must've been some kinda teacher from deep in the old country at some point in his life, that old blind man!"

Dang!

GrandMama was a Silver Stacker!!!

And, she had planted the seed towards raising me up to one day become a Silver Stacker, too!

Truth be told, I have been like what GrandMama described, distracted, busy and bogged down with daily living at times. And, in all my getting....it's taken me the longest to truly put into practice what GrandMama was not only telling me but living, demonstrating herself ...as an example to not only me but all of us kids, both young and old. And, I reckon, I've still yet to master it

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The Art of Stacking Silver and Gold!

Well, "Thank you, GrandMama! I'm trying to stay focused nowadays."

And, my GrandMama (G-D Rest Her Soul & May She Rest In Peace)would probably say at this point to me....

"Well, you stayed outside playing long enough, 'bout time you came around."

Me: "Uh, Yes, ma'm"

Moral of the story:

"The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding."~ PROVERBS 4:7

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