

The Yard Sale

Sprawled on the living room floor of grandma's empty house, my sister and I stared up at the ceiling, reflecting on the grueling last two days when neighbors and strangers had come, directed by a cardboard sign to our childhood home to rummage through all that grandma had owned and hadn't already been removed by family members. What do you charge for something you really don't want to let go of, simply because of whom it once belonged to?

After the first couple of hours, word must have traveled about the kind of stuff to be had at grandma's house, for women soon stopped coming by unless accompanying their husbands. Grandma had every man's dream of a tool shed. In fact, she had two; one for projects and yard tools, the other for automotive tools and supplies. Many folks returned for more after unloading their treasures at home.

As I reflected on all the material things I watched being carried out, a tear slipped down my face for the memories attached to each.

"You're crying." My sister observed.

I cast a sharp gaze at her puffy red face. "So are you."

And then the doorbell rang.

"I thought you took the signs down," I said irritably.

"I *did*," She replied as we went to the door.

We recognized the man as one who'd returned for seconds, and I wondered why I felt so resentful when this whole Yard Sale idea had been my own. But, hadn't these folks ripped enough of our hearts out?

"Very sorry to bother," he began and dropped something into my hand that clinked. "But these were pinned inside the weed-eater bag, and I thought you might like them back."

In my hand, held together with a large safety pin, were grandma and grandpa's wedding bands from the early 1930's.

I thanked the man through blinding tears and let my sister show him out. I couldn't guess when grandma had put the rings in the weed-eater bag, much less why. Grandpa had passed away in the early 60's, and it was 1998 when Alzheimer's had advanced to the point that grandma could no longer live alone. I wondered how many other bittersweet surprises were yet to come.

~ *diedre Knight*