

Nightmare

by Jake Barnes

My grandfather earned a dollar a day at the Sash & Door factory. He had a car, but he walked to work to save money. They weren't in need. Ten cents an hour in those days was decent money for manual labor.

I loved to visit my grandparents when I was a kid. Their big German Shepherd would greet us. He would bring me a ball, a stone. I would throw it for him, and he would fetch it back.

They had the most interesting things in their little house, the house where my father and his brother and sister were raised. In the dining room was grandmother's knick-knack cabinet. It was full of wonderful things, but my favorite was a large seashell. You could put it to your ear and you could hear the roar of the ocean.

I was fascinated by their ice-box, too. My dad worked for the power company, and we had a refrigerator. My grandpa had an ice business when he first came to this country from Sweden. During the winter he could cut the ice from the river and store it. He delivered it to his customers all year round.

I loved my grandma. She was my favorite person in the world. She was warm and jolly. She would play Parcheesi with me and let me win. When we came to visit, Grandma would make me a sandwich with butter and brown sugar. I could sneak into an empty kitchen cabinet and eat it. Even then I had this urge to hide in some secret space where nobody could find me. Maybe it was a premonition. A year or so later we were at war, and it wasn't until the battle of Midway, six months later, that the tide turned in our favor, and I stopped waking up screaming.

