Ana Bole

The Meaningful Mirror

A few weeks ago, my aunt texted me that she had something special to give me and if you were to know my aunt, you would be skeptical just like me if I would receive anything at all. But to my surprise when I came home to my childhood bedroom during spring break, I had a gift waiting for me. Sitting on my dresser was an old, stained brown cotton bag with the words “S.Kind & Sons Jewelers and Silversmiths Philadelphia.” Carefully wrapped up in this worn bag, two layers of tissue paper, and bubble wrap just to keep it safe was a hand mirror that belonged to my grandmother. When I got all of the protective wrappings off, I was holding this beautiful sterling silver mirror engraved with my grandmother's initials on the back, GMA. Gertrude Alma Millar, or how I know her nana. The handle is slightly dented from over the years of her holding it. My hand fits perfectly on the indentation created from her hands and as I looked at myself in the clearest mirror, I had ever seen all I could think of was my nana.

Eight years ago, my grandmother passed away at the age of 86. She was and still is the kindest woman I ever met. I know a lot of people say that about their grandparents, but I still believe my nana is number one. She grew up relatively wealthy and received a degree in English at the University of Pennsylvania during a time when women did not go to college. Yet, she left it all behind to raise her nine children and to support her husband's business venture. I think if my grandmother was still around today, she would say all of her sacrifices over the years were worth it. She now has 17 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, and the business she supported is now thriving.

The question I keep asking myself is why out of all the grandchildren was I the one blessed with this mirror. Maybe it's because my aunt knows I love antiques or maybe because I do not have a lot left from my grandmother. Maybe, I was just on my aunt’s good side the day she decided to give it to someone. I’m not sure I’ll ever fully know the reason why. Nevertheless, I will be forever thankful to have it and I texted my aunt exactly that. She responded with a picture of my grandmother holding this very same mirror on her wedding day with her grandmother standing beside her. She had this mirror with her the day our family began. I can imagine her looking into the glass with her hands shaking from wedding day nerves and her picturing what her life will look like in the years to come. Maybe someday I will hold this very same mirror in my hands the day I start my family. If I’m lucky, I will have a life filled with love and happiness and family just like my Nana.