

BUBBLES

by Ken Bradbury



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Can you keep a secret? I have one cool grandma. Okay, everybody probably thinks Grandma is pretty cool, but you look up the word cool in the dictionary and you'll see my grandma's picture ... at least in my dictionary.

Her name is Marie but I've always called her Bubbles. Don't ask me why. I started when I was little and it just stuck. Then she started calling herself Bubbles. Then everybody started calling her Bubbles.

How do I start? Let's just say that your own grandma isn't supposed to be able to beat you playing video games. Your own grandma isn't supposed to be a better free-throw shooter than you are. The typical grandmother doesn't sit there and secretly play tag with you in church. Bubbles does. She does all these things ... and a lot more.

I like cheeseburgers. I mean I like them a whole lot. I guess there's nothing unusual about that, but how many grandmothers would make a cheeseburger cake for your birthday? Yes, it can be done ... if you use very large buns for the cake layers and ketchup for frosting. You name it, and Bubbles can do it.

But my favorite memory of Bubbles has nothing to do with video games or cheeseburger cakes. My favorite memory is of something much simpler. I guess it doesn't even sound like any big deal but to me ... it was some of the best times of my life.

I'd go visit Bubbles in the summertime. She lived in the country. And even though her hips and knees didn't move as fast as they used to, our most favorite time together was on Saturday afternoons when she'd put two bottles of orange pop into a plastic sack, wrap two fresh oatmeal cookies in wax paper, and we'd take off walking ... just walking.

Grandpa had a few cows and we'd open the back gate and walk across the cow pasture to a creek that ran behind their house. I guess that maybe the creek wasn't all that big but when you're six years old any creek becomes an ocean. Bubbles would sit on the bank of the creek and listen to the birds while



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