

The Silver Dollar Tossel

By Cameron Clay and Dennis Knight

The brisk air nipped at Claire's fingers. Her rhythmic execution of "Silver Bells" captivated the holiday shoppers, especially those allergic to department stores. Claire grew accustomed to crowds assembling behind her as she tickled the keys on the Sixteenth Street Mall. The empty tin cup a previous busker left behind filled at record speeds.

That night she counted her proceeds and reserved her customary payment to the liquor store. The remaining cash would keep her fed and pay the rent for her efficiency on Colfax, but when she came to the silver dollar at the bottom, she left it there. It just seemed wrong to spend that treasure in her struggle to make ends meet.

The seasons moved on and so did Claire. Her work on the mall led to a gig at Denver's Dazzle jazz club, and that led to a continuous paycheck along with some fame. But the silver dollar stayed inside the tin cup in her kitchen cabinet.

Claire was still living in the efficiency, using the Laundromat down the street. She would puzzle over the enigma of tossing out perfectly good dryer lint with the fresh smell of Downy. One day she casually tossed the clump in her wet raincoat pocket along with the snips and snails and other anomalies she frequently came across, like that strange sprouting almond.

As the coat hung drying, a reaction took place. From the pocket emerged a single stem bearing a fruit Claire had never seen before. It was about the size of an orange, but with a smooth, caramel skin. She took a bite. It had the taste of her grandma's English toffee, right down to the crisp, sweet and coffee-like flesh, covering another almond-like seed. The fruit immediately made her feel like she had enjoyed a full meal and her appetite remained satisfied all day.

She tossed that seed in the same pocket, to reside with the lint and other anomalies. The next day, another stem emerged bearing fruit, just as delicious, just as filling. But what could it be? She had tossed the lint in her pocket; she had tossed the first seed in her pocket and tossed the next seed in there, too. Well, she needed the coat that day, so she simply had to clean out that pocket.

It was then she discovered mysterious plants had aggressively taken root in the lint. Eureka. There must be something magic in the lint. She looked for something handy in the kitchen to toss her rooted plants in and found only the tin cup with the silver dollar, but it was really not big enough. So she took the silver dollar to the dollar store and bought the finest pot a dollar could buy, one nice enough to qualify as that special thing she had been saving the dollar for.

That led to daily production of a single delicious fruit providing her daily nutritional needs in a most satisfying way. She would toss the next seed in the lint, and she began calling her fruit "tossell." Somehow it seemed to fit.

In fact, the tossell ended world hunger. It was Claire's recognition of the chemical reaction of seeds and Downy laundry lint that did it, of course, but the expenditure of that lone silver dollar had contributed.

Claire, having made her millions, is now faced with spending all of her dollars searching for an antidote to the serious tossell allergy that now has the whole world sneezing.