

Grandfather and gandalf

[Family](#), [Father](#)



The well-known adventure novel *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien and the historical fiction novel *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson both exemplify the use of the “ wise old man” archetype through the characters Gandalf and “ Grandfather. ” Although the former is a powerful sorcerer and the latter is a vulnerable slave, both act as sagacious advisors for the stories’ main protagonists—Bilbo and Isabel. At one point in the *Chains* text, when Isabel (a slave girl) goes to the town’s pump to get her water, Grandfather says to Isabel, “ A scar is a sign of strength...

Look hard for your river Jordan, my child. You’ll find it. ” Grandfather shows his wisdom by encouraging Isabel to search for her own freedom beyond the River Jordan, which, in this case, symbolizes the final obstacle she must face before reaching liberty. In the first part of the quote, Grandfather implies that Isabel will encounter a huge obstacle that might hinder her way to freedom, but he says that she must use her perseverance in order to endure it.

Similarly, in *The Hobbit*, Gandalf frequently gives advice to, and encourages, the easily depressed Bilbo in order to persist even though he (Bilbo) may run into dangers along the journey. While both Gandalf and Grandfather are wise, they differ in many ways, including the aspect that Gandalf possesses powerful abilities that make him as near as invincible. When Gandalf uses undefeatable powers to rescue Bilbo and the dwarves from a goblin stronghold, the narrator of the story describes, “ Just at that moment all the lights in the cavern went out, and the great fire went off poof! nto a tower of blue glowing smoke, right up to the roof, that scattered piercing white sparks all among the goblins. ” In fact, Gandalf proves to be so powerful that he

even has the capacity to electrocute hundreds of goblins in a matter of seconds. On the other hand, Grandfather, a helpless slave, does not possess any of the apparent physical capabilities that Gandalf possesses; Grandfather's only conspicuous characteristic seems to be his judiciousness, a quality formerly referenced as a similarity between Grandfather and Gandalf.

Although the two characters, Gandalf and Grandfather, come from completely different backgrounds—one has a significant physical advantage over the other—both still share the same intellectual qualities as wise men who dedicate to the success of their fellow colleagues and eventually help them achieve their goals. To apply this comparison to a global truth, a person may be born with more abilities or a better status than another, but there is ultimately nothing that prevents the person from having as equally successful results as the other.