



ANGEL IN MY FAMILY

Description

SHE REFUSED TO RETIRE

She is a caretaker for a grand thirty-six years. She is loyalty, trust, and caring compiled together and gift wrapped for our family. At sixty-three she refuses to retire.

“You have a family and grown-up grandchildren who can take care of you. It’s time to relax and rest.” I murmured when she came into my library with a morning cup of coffee.

She silently stood for two minutes which meant that “I don’t like to discuss the issue.” And she left to attend my two-year-old grandson: the fourth generation scion of our family. I couldn’t help but reflect on, “she is an angel in my family.”

I laid- back and pondered how she has spread her protective care taking wings to my family. She has taken into her fold the whole gamut of supervisory and maintenance duties. In three decades, she has seen the untimely deaths in my family: my father, my mother and recently my wife. All the time she has never let her concern quotient to waver. Her care has grown pronounced in not only looking after me, now living alone but also whenever my son and daughter visited with their toddlers.

A LONG JOURNEY

I’m speaking about a long dutiful journey of our custodian, caretaker, and nanny all rolled into one. And we used to call her Kumari, until today, I never knew her full name.

She is a simple, modest, punctual and careful in using her words. I often puzzled of her balanced, unruffled manner of going about attending her duties in our home. Staying alone for more than a year and a half, she never allowed me any discomfort; the timing and taste never changed. The breakfast, lunch, and dinner were hot and prompt on the table.

I remembered she informed me in a casual conversation, "I joined as an ayah, in the school which my father started. And later she helped my mother in the house on the third floor of our school building.

MY FATHER

My father was a demanding personality. When things wouldn't go the way, as planned he would rather turn red with impatience and quick anger. I knew him as a firm controller about the school work and the manner he dealt with teachers' day-to-day responsibilities.

Inconvenience and time of the day hardly mattered to my father. His exacting ways kept most of the teachers and me on edge all the time. But the grace as an excellent teacher he was more revered than feared. In this tough regiment, I'm his budding apprentice.

Kumari played a courier role during school hours. I waited outside my father's office, to enquire her after serving his morning coffee, "how are my father's moods?" She promptly alerted so I wouldn't get caught off-guard of his mood swings. For many years her duty was to keep the office and serve cups of hot coffee to him. And relay bits and pieces of his curious attitude when he was in the office.

Soon after my father's sudden death, after the mourning days, I saw Kumari shifted her care to my ailing mother. Having operated a few days earlier, she was most of the time confined to bed. She had at first, faced resistance from my mother. If my dad was demanding, then mother was impossible to please. She had a nasty way of hurting people: irrespective of age and gender. She disapproved anyone stepped into her kitchen boundaries.

Kumari was smart enough to please my mother; she withstood her biting remarks and insulting barbs.

Two rooms away from where my mom stayed I made myself cosy with my little family. My daughter and son are yet toddlers. My wife and I, steadily stepping up our careers engaged in school administrative tasks and teaching. I had no choice but entrust Kumari to attend my two kids.

MY FAMILY

In all these years, what amazed me, I have never heard any murmurs of objections from Kumari. No matter whatever errands she has to deal every day. I would see her coming as early as seven in the morning. Not wasting a moment she got down tending my little ones first with bath and dress. Later, she served them breakfast and walked them down to the school bus. The poise and affinity the way she looked after my daughter and son; I believed, has cushioned my family to ride decently well in the early years of my marriage.

Fifteen years later, she tearfully witnessed the second death in my family "my mother.

No sooner putting behind the memories of my father and mother. She seamlessly assisted my wife in her regular home and office tasks.

Now, my two young ones have grown up as nagging and demanding teenagers. During the two decades, Kumari has bonded closely with my family. And in these years nothing of her or her caring facets haven't a trifle altered. Besides, I realized, her concerned presence have created a happy flow of our everyday routines.

It's no denying, as seen always, my family affairs too were filled with good and bad times: a painful twist or a happy spin Kumari is always there. Mani, my wife needed her most. With a helpful stance, she was humbly ready as if waiting to accept any instruction.

Honestly, when I looked back and assessed my attitude. I keep wondering, "Did I maintain the same courtesy towards her when she was providing to my parents. The answer would be perhaps, not. Maybe, I'm an ignorant youngster. I was possibly not that sensible to understand her indispensable helpful hand she was to our family. For sure, I'm aware, that I have not appreciated her back then the way I'm lauding and appraising her today.

The significance of her dedicated dutifulness, for three decades, toward my family became clear on the day when an unendurable, devastating tragedy struck me.

MY WIFE

My wife got afflicted by ruthless, merciless disease cancer. It had appeared six years back. She endured desperate treatments: therapies chemo, radiation, strong doses of medicines prescribed. For five years situation seemed under control and things looked hopeful. And nothing appeared to my wife or me as a life-threatening alarm to handle urgently.

One casual visit, for a persistent, irritating cough, and subsequent reports and scans revealed the unimaginable reality. I was numb looking at the devastating spread of the silent killer that went on building in my wife's body. The doctors' prognosis, "she can hardly make it for the next six months" the words crashed into me like a tidal wave. In one tiny second my life tumbled into a descent of deafening emptiness.

Mani, my wife confined to bed and her mobility was on a wheelchair. Kumari once again stepped into her angelic role. For about eighteen months she held the complete responsibility of her safekeeping. Her little "walks" along our long open corridor, bathing, feeding, facilitating her visits to the toilets, physically lifting her onto the wheelchair and back to her bed. She coordinated like clockwork with the nurses appointed to provide the medical supervision.

Sometimes I had to witness uneasy moments when my wife needed to shift to her wheelchair. But she found comfort when Kumari's fragile, yet her willing hands, were the quickest to slide an alert grip around my wife's withering body.

We all know how fate would dictate its prescriptions and expiry dates. My wife lost her stubborn battle for eighteen months with the deadly malady.

I never expected that I would find myself in a situation where I have to live alone in my home. And have to make plans for my subsistence. A week after my wife passed away everyone left including my children. It's true they have their families to look after.

I'm not too sure would Kumari willingly continue with her commitments in the absence of my wife. Whom, I know she adored so dearly.

I'm facing thoughts, confusions, and fears I never earlier had any reason to deal with.

Will Kumari continue to stay in a house she stayed sentimentally bound for over three decades? And besides intimately attached to my wife, and she is no more,

It's now eighteen months that my wife took her last breath. But as if she had secret farewell words to Kumari "take care of my husband as you took care of my children and me." Today, taking care of me, sixty-three-year-old Kumari is as dutiful as she was to my parents and my beloved wife. Blessedly, a guardian angel is staying in my home.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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