

The Letter Without Ink



young woman tried to write a letter to her dying father.

She meant to say everything.

How much she loved him.

How sorry she was for the years she'd been distant.

How scared she was to lose him.

How she didn't know how to go on without his quiet steadiness in the world.

She wrote. She revised. She started over.

Each night, the words sounded right when she began — but by morning they felt too small, too fragile. Like trying to catch the wind in a basket.

Then one afternoon, she gave up.

She walked into his room, sat beside him in silence, and placed a blank sheet of parchment in his hand.

He was barely conscious. His eyes fluttered open.

He looked at the page, then at her.

And smiled.

He squeezed the parchment gently and whispered,

“I heard everything.”

He died two days later.

She never found the page again.

Years passed.

One winter evening, her own daughter came to her — tears held back, voice trembling.

She sat down, then stood up. Then sat down again.

Something was clearly on her heart, but she couldn't find the words.

The mother said nothing.

Instead, she opened a drawer, pulled out a fresh sheet of parchment, and placed it in her daughter's hand.

Then said, quietly,

“This helped me once.”

And waited.

— *William Zeitler*
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