

Tears and a Friendship Filled with Love

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I frequently travel to Canada. Though it's now quite difficult for me to embark on such long journeys at this age, the love of my children and grandchildren pulls me there. Despite my reluctance, I end up spending two or three months in Canada—my second home after London—enjoying joyful days.

As summer was nearing its end, my son insisted I come visit. I can't walk much anymore, but still, one day he took me to a large shopping mall in Toronto. "Mom, let's go get coffee from Tim Hortons," he said. These days I sometimes carry a cane for support, just in case my balance falters. My son handed me the cane and we went to the mall. He seated me comfortably in a chair and went off to get the coffee. As I waited, I began observing my surroundings.

What I saw was touching: Two elderly gentlemen, likely in their mid-70s or older—one wearing glasses and the other not—recognized each other from afar. As their eyes met, they embraced each other and immediately burst into tears. Believe me, I was astounded. For nearly five to six minutes, they kept hugging, crying, and wiping each other's tears.

The gentleman without glasses tenderly removed the other's glasses and wiped his eyes with his hands. At that moment, my son returned with the coffee. I asked him to look at the emotional scene unfolding in front of me. The two elderly men eventually sat together on nearby chairs. For the next 20 to 25 minutes, they held hands, placed loving hands on each other's shoulders, and continued wiping each other's tearful eyes. They kissed each other's foreheads, embraced repeatedly, and shared deep affection.

One of them got up and seemed to be looking for someone. Soon, two young men approached—perhaps the ones he had gone to find. Then they all left together. From a distance, I could see the two elderly men joyfully reuniting with their families. My son took my hand and said, "Mom, let them go now. They've had their reunion."

I don't know if they were brothers or old friends, nor do I know how long they had been separated. All I know is—who says men don't cry? I witnessed two elderly gentlemen weeping openly, completely unaware of the world around them. They had no idea that a stranger, an elderly woman sitting nearby, was also moved to tears by their heartfelt reunion.

Where does one see such pure love these days? Love that touches even bystanders. I write these few words in honor of that friendship I witnessed in a Toronto shopping mall—one that left a lasting impression on my heart.

Who were they, those two souls who found love again?

And then, again in Canada...

On a bench sat a girl—

A fleeting stranger who, with a few warm words, formed a bond of love with me and claimed a place in my heart for life.

This is another small incident that happened to me. I was going from my son Bilal's house to my other son Munir's house. We had agreed that Bilal would drop me off at a shopping mall on the way, and Munir would pick me up from there. (I jokingly tell them, "You two play 'parcel parcel' with me—splitting the journey in half!")

So, Bilal handed me over to Munir, who said, "Mom, let's sit and have some tea before heading home." We went into the shopping center. There, I noticed a young girl in a headscarf eating something. After tea, when we came out, Munir asked me to wait on a bench while he got the car.

As I sat down, I noticed the same girl was already sitting on another bench. She greeted me with Assalamualaikum and asked, "May I sit with you?" She said she worked at a store nearby and was on her break.

I said, "Yes, of course, come sit with me."

I asked if she lived alone, and she replied, "No, I live with my parents."

She came closer and said, "You remind me so much of my grandmother. She's in Pakistan right now, and I miss her terribly. She's not just my grandma but also my friend." Then she quickly added, "If you don't mind, may I hug you?"

I stood up and hugged the girl, kissed her forehead, and said, "Think of me as your grandmother. After all, by the grace of God, I already have many grandchildren. One more is welcome!" The girl was overjoyed.

My son watched from a distance, bewildered at how this girl was hugging his mother so intimately. When he came closer, I told him, "This is my new granddaughter." I kissed the girl again and got into the car with my son.

As we drove away, my son asked, "Did you get your new granddaughter's name or number?"

I said no, it all happened so suddenly. She had told me the store where she worked, but I even forgot its name.

And so, this is my short tale of a passing moment of love—one that only a few lucky ones experience. I'll never see that girl again, nor do I know who she was, but she made a place in my heart forever. May God bless and protect her wherever she is.

Ameen.

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