002

MARA

It's been three weeks since I brought Grandpa home, and no one has been looking for him. What kind of family does he have? Aren't they worried about him? If whether he is still alive or dead? What kind of family are they?

I found out that Grandpa has Alzheimer's because a few days ago, I saw him pass out again. So I brought him to the clinic, and the doctor told me about his illness.

I'm now running out of money. I used some of my savings to pay for Grandpa's check-up and bought his medicine. His medicine is not a joke at all; it's expensive, and the doctor said it's dangerous to skip drinking it since he already did for more than two weeks.

I sighed. I can't bear to kick Grandpa out of my apartment as well. I asked him where he lived, but he said he forgot even his name he forgot. The only thing I know about him is that he has a grandson named JayJay, but how could I find him when I don't know his surname as well?

I knocked on the door again when I got no reply, with my heart pounding harder.

"Mara, what are you doing here? Can't you see how busy we are?" I jumped in fright to see my manager standing behind me. I took a deep breath, clutching my chest.

"I'm so sorry, Ma'am, but can I go home? My grandpa is sick, and I need to send him to the hospital. He fell to the floor just now, and his head hit the edge of the bed, bleeding. He is alone at home, and I'm worried, Ma'am.

"Can't you see how busy we are today?"

"Please, Ma'am." I cried this time. As time passed, my worries heightened. She sighs, glaring at me.

"Go." She shortly said.

"Thank you, Ma'am. Thank you so much."

"Make sure to return tomorrow, or you'll lose your job."

"Okay, Ma'am." I thanked her and ran to my locker, took my things, and ran to the exit, but I bumped into someone.

"I'm so sorry." I apologized and ran out of the restaurant without looking at who I bumped into and called a taxi. I have never taken a cab since I came here because I'm saving money, but Grandpa is in danger. I told the driver my address, and we quickly drove off.

"Uncle, can you please drive faster? It's an emergency."

"Okay." And we zoom out, cutting into every car, and I arrive in front of my apartment fifteen minutes later.

"Uncle, can you wait for a while? I need to bring my grandpa to the hospital."

"Okay. Do you need any help?"

"I think I am." I stepped out of the taxi, and the driver followed me.

"Grandpa!!

"Mara, he passed out. My God, I don't know what to do." Rena, my neighbor, said, crying.

"Grandpa!! I cried to see the blood on his forehead. "Uncle, please help me carry him in your taxi. He picked up Grandpa without uttering a word and ran outside.

"Thank you, Rena. I need to go."

"Don't mention it. Now go." I nodded and followed the driver outside, and he quickly sent us to the nearest hospital.

"This hospital is a bit expensive, but this is the nearest; if we go to the other hospital that's a bit cheap, we need to travel for another thirty minutes, but your grandpa needs a doctor to check him now." The driver explained.

"It's okay, uncle. Thank you."

"Wait here. I call the staff to help bring your grandpa inside.

"Thank you, uncle." After a few minutes, he returned with the two hospital staff with a stretcher.

"Uncle, thank you so much. I pulled money from my wallet and handed it to him, but he pushed it back at me.

"You need it." He whispered. I burst into tears and bowed at him while saying thank you.

"Go, your grandpa needs you." He softly patted my head before he went inside his taxi. I bowed at him again and ran after the staff that wheeled Grandpa and was brought directly to the emergency room, and I stayed outside, praying that he was just fine.

After an hour, the doctor came out. " How's my grandpa, Doc?"

"He is okay now, but he shouldn't skip his weekly check-up, and his medicine or illness will worsen. The hospital staff will send your Grandfather to his room in a few minutes." He said and left.

"Weekly check-up? But how could I do that? I don't have money for it. His medicine I only bought ten because my money wasn't enough, and the bills here, where should I get the money to pay here?

A nurse stepped out from the emergency room with the two staff, pushing a stretcher with Grandpa, still unconscious. They walked past me, and I just quietly followed behind them. I hope they will give Grandpa the cheapest room, seeing how poor I look.

We stopped before a double door, and my eyes widened when they pushed the door open.

"Nurse, I think you bring Grandpa into the wrong room. I couldn't afford to pay for this."

"Don't worry, Miss; it's already taken care of." She replied, and the two staff laid Grandpa on the king-size bed with an expensive cover.

I'm hyperventilating right now, just looking in the room. It seems like a first-class suite in a

five-star hotel. Oh my God, where should I get the money to pay for this? My heart is thundering inside my chest. Am I going to jail if I can't pay this? I looked at the nurse and staff, but they had already left.

Oh dear god, where should I get the money? I bite my lips nervously. Grandpa, I'll be back. I'll find money so that I can bring you home. Maybe they would let me get you home, and you rest there. If we stay here longer, our bills will go up every hour. I kissed his cheek and then went out of his room. I went to the information to ask how much the bill of Grandpa was, hoping I could afford to pay it.

"Excused me, Miss, how much are the bills in room 701?"

"Mr. Fernandez. His bills are \$2000." I gasped, covering my mouth. \$2000? Where should I get that amount? Is it almost my half-year salary?" I thought nervously. I left without saying thank you to the woman and hopelessly walked to the hospital's exit. I don't know where to get that money, but I snapped out of my thoughts when someone bumped into me, and I fell to the floor. The guy doesn't even say sorry or look back. He keeps running.

"Maybe he has an emergency." I thought, standing up while dusting myself and walking to the exit.

I sat on the bench outside of the hospital, wrecking my head where to get the money I needed. I have no one to run to. I can't borrow from Rena because her husband earns only enough for them.

Jared, maybe he can lend me some money. I took out my phone and dialed his number, but I couldn't contact him. What happened? Did he change his number? My shoulder slumped down, and I wanted to cry. I dialed his number again, but still the same, and my tears rolled down my face this time.

It's been almost four months since the last time I talked to him, and I'm hoping that his phone is just off or doesn't have a battery, that's why I couldn't contact him.

I wiped my tears, trying to erase the worst scenario, why I couldn't contact Jared, and trying to think positively. Jared loves me. He courted me for almost a year before I said yes to him, and I know he loves me. I trusted him.

I took a deep breath, and my eyes caught the necklace dangling on my neck, and I smiled in relief. Two months ago, I brought it to the pawnshop. I wanted to know how much the value and I was surprised. It costs \$3000 if I pawn it. I couldn't believe my late mother owned that expensive necklace. She gave it to me when I was just five as a birthday gift. I

I rushed back inside to check on Grandpa to tell him that I'll go home for a while if he was awake so that I could pawn my necklace and have money to pay for his bill.

I half ran to his door, smiling, happy that I could bring Grandpa home after. I burst inside, surprised to see it was already empty and only the cleaning lady was inside.

"Excuse me, Aunty, where's the patient here?"

"Oh, he checks out already. His grandson came, and he transferred him to the other hospital." She replied. My shoulder slumped down, and my tears fell on my face. I haven't said goodbye to him.

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