

A RESCUE BY LOVE

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An old man loses his wife; his children desert him; he leaves on a cruise ship to commit suicide but is saved.....

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There stood an old man looking at a picture of his long departed wife. The house seemed so empty without her. Her companion of the last forty years or so was now buried fifteen feet or more below the ground in her grave. Ah, Gwendoline had been such a nice wife ! It had been a fateful Monday morning when he woke up to find that she had passed away in her sleep. He cried and cried a lot that day especially during her funeral. His children, all grown up, two sons and a daughter had consoled him and yet that moment too had passed and now the house seemed empty without his wife. Only memories remained etched in his mind; some vague and others so clear.

The empty house provided him little solace. There was no one to care for him and neither did he have someone he could care for. His children, all grown up and married had not offered to take care of him now that he was old and helpless. At eighty years of age, he was not growing any younger. Luckily he was still fit as a fiddle and yet the world did not seem to want him.

His own flesh and blood had refused to take care of him. It hurt him deep inside. He remembered rearing them up and looking after all their needs. And now when it was time for them to care for him, they had looked the other way.

What should he do? He thought and thought and then then he thought of going on a luxury cruise to the Bahamas from Hawaii. Ah, perhaps he could just topple over the edge into the deep blue sea. No one would miss such an old man as he.

So he bought a ticket for the cruise. He packed up a few belongings in a suitcase including a picture of his wife and children. The next morning at twelve he was headed for the docks. As the taxi dropped him, he got his first sight of the cruise ship named 'NAUTICUS'. There were hundreds of people, young and old boarding her. And soon he too was amongst them. He had booked a luxury suite for himself. After twentyfive minutes, he was soon seated in his berth which was tastefully decorated and furnished. It was about noon when he made his way down towards the bar. There was a lot of live music and the mood was gay and festive.

He was soon digging into a plate of prawns and eating them lost in contemplation. His own mood was still a little bit somber. And then an old lady walked upto his table and asked permission to be seated next to him. He looked up and found a nice looking woman with deep blue eyes standing. She looked to be cute and her smile was warm and affectionate. So the old man asked her to be seated. Once the introductions had been made, he asked her if she would like something to eat or drink. Of course she refused but he was a gentleman and he had her order something. Over the course of their conversation, Molly, as she called herself told him about her husband had died of a heart attack the previous year and that she was lonely. Her two children,

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Chris and Mandy, were grown up and had refused to keep her with them. Luckily her husband had left her quite a fortune and she had decided to go on a luxury cruise. It was something that she had always dreamed off. And the old man whose heart had been somber, was suddenly much happier. As the day progressed he and Molly danced and played bingo in the evening. Life seemed to look much better to the two suddenly. They seemed to feel young and happy again.

The next day, they met again and they spent it going over their lives. They enjoyed listening to the music, eating and dining, watching a play, playing bingo, watching the sun go down and dancing together to the slow music. Both of them were enjoying each others company a lot. The old man had never felt so good in life and when he thought of how he had decided to end his life on he cruise, he felt ashamed.

Here was Mandy who had so much in common with him. On the cruise he also ran into an old university friend and it was the latter who had recognised him. It had been ages since he had met him. They were soon discussing their lives. And his friend, Howard, had just lost his wife to cancer. He had been pretty sad till his children had thought of taking him on a pleasure cruise. The old man met his married daughter and son with their families and it was a homely family. The old man felt a tinge jealous that Howards children were caring for him. Alas the old mans own children had deserted him when he needed them.

However, Howard and the old man, soon decided that they were going to spend quality time together.

The old man felt suddenly a lot happier and he was even laughing quite a bit. His sadness had been replaced by happiness now that he had found friends.

The third day of the cruise saw the old man and Molly arm in arm, walking on the deck of the cruise liner. They even had photographs of themselves taken by a professional photographer. And it was on the deck of the ship, that the old man proposed to Molly who had looked upto him; her eyes dancing with happiness and she had assented. The old man embraced Molly and she embraced him. Now the old man suddenly felt young and happy again. He had been contemplating suicide but his heart had been rescued by love.

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