

TRUE BLOOD

The role of daughter in law has been very easy. That is until your illness struck. You got admitted to hospital, and your flesh and blood, sons and daughter have united together, which is great, but has left me rendered an outsider.

I also care for you and knew you for many years before this dementia. I had to watch as they forced the antibiotics in your mouth. The tablets that you needed, but that you spat across the living room. I had been caring for you that day and had spent hours trying to get you to take them voluntarily.

That same day I got your old photos from the cabinet. That hope in your eyes as you recognised Jim in the photos. You gently touched the photo on his sandy wavy hair. You turned your eyes to me. Not sad, but happy. The dementia cannot erase all of the happy times however hard it tries. I also know you long to be reunited with your husband. You hope that time is very near.

He died twenty years before. Not once from that day have you even noticed another man. For you had forty years together before that in your house. The house that pulls the family together many times a year. Your children were born in the main bedroom, and there have been many parties in the living room.

After that visit your health went down fast. The infection took hold. You did not want to leave home, but there was no choice. It was with force your daughter made sure you got in the ambulance. You had refused other daily tablets, and refused some of your meals. You have been admitted with a suspected heart attack too.

You have been in critical care for the last three days. Other problems have been identified. You have made some small steps forward but the situation is still uncertain and your life hangs in the balance. The reality for the family starts to happen. Your daughter is hysterical and I have to sit with her in your home and calm her down.

Then the call comes a few days later. You have been moved to a normal ward and they are pleased with your progress. Not only that but in a week or two you could be on your way back home if all goes well.

And then it comes to me. Disappointment. And I put on a false happiness to your daughter. Not because I wanted you to die. It was because deep down I know you

wanted to die. Because you told me in private that was why you had stopped taking the tablets and eating. I know you wanted to be back with your love in the photo. Instead you have been brought back to this cruel world and this cruel disease. And the true blood will be disappointed too. Whilst you were in hospital they were already planning on how they would divide up your money.

500 words