

## Farewell-Goodbye: Carole Ingram

Farewell, Adieu, until we meet again, are all the happy words we speak when we say goodbye to friends and loved ones.

My saddest farewell was on the day I answered a call from my mother's nursing home.

"Your Mother Pearl has passed away overnight, Carole. I am sorry to be the one to tell you," nurse Cheryl said. "Can you come this morning before the Doctor arrives?"

"Yes, just give me an hour please."

Even though I had been expecting it for some time, you are never prepared when it happens.

So I drove to the nursing home, fearful of how I would handle the situation. The caring staff hugged me and took me to Mum's room. They had spread rose petals all over her bedspread, and she looked so peaceful. The nurses then left me to grieve. So grieve I did and even though she couldn't hear me, I told her I loved her.

My Mother had suffered from Alzheimer's disease for some years. I had been her main carer. Pearl was her name and she had been a ballerina along with her twin sister in her younger years. Mum was only five feet tall. A petite pretty woman with a fierce pride who loved to dress stylishly. Alzheimer's had taken some of her spark away, but she still had good and beautiful days.

Mum was forgetful, sometimes hiding her purse under the bed and then forgetting where it was. We had grown a lovely white daisy bush resembling a wedding dress in our garden. On a sunny day, my Mother would perform a labour of love and pull all the dead leaves off the daisy bush trying to keep its magnificence.

Once my friend Jeff, who had just arrived at Sydney airport from Melbourne, rang to confirm our dinner date that night. Mum answered and Jeff asked to speak to me.

"Of course," said Mum, sounding perfectly normal, "I will get Carole."

I never got the message as I was not home and the phone was off the hook for hours. I apologised to Jeff. Luckily we both saw the funny side of it, so we laughed it off.

"Catch up soon Carole but next time I will ring your mobile."

Strange happenings would occur. I would find coffee in the fridge and honey in the biscuit tin. In my Mother's half-aware state, a fierce pride would make her resent authority. Simple tasks

like helping her shower, became a battle of wills. She would tell me she had already had a shower.

This was my saddest goodbye. As for 'farewell, I hope we meet again,' will never happen. My Mother will only be in my memories and dreams.

I love you Mum.

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