

Chapter 07

A New Kind of Joy

After Anthony died, I wondered if my heart would ever feel light again.

Not because I stopped loving.

Not because I stopped caring.

But because grief can make you wonder if the person you were before will ever return.

There are parts of yourself that change forever when you lose someone you love. A piece of your heart is always connected to that person, and you learn to carry that love in a different way.

Then came Celeste.

She did not erase my grief.

She did not fill the space that Anthony left behind.

No one could ever do that.

Anthony was my son. He will always have a place in my heart that belongs only to him.

But Celeste brought something I didn't know my heart still had the ability to feel:

A new kind of joy.

There was something healing about holding her tiny hand, watching her discover the world, seeing her smile, hearing her laugh, and watching her grow. She reminded me that even after the deepest heartbreak, God can still place moments of beauty in our lives.

Sometimes joy after loss feels complicated.

Sometimes you feel guilty for enjoying something beautiful because someone you love is not here to share it.

But I have learned that joy is not a betrayal of grief.

Joy is a reminder that love is still alive.

When I look at Celeste, I see a precious gift. I see a little girl who brought laughter and warmth into our family. I see the miracle of life continuing, even after we experienced a loss that changed us forever.

She has given me moments where my heart feels full again.

Moments where I am not only remembering what I lost, but appreciating what I still have.

Grief and joy now live together inside of me.

I can miss Anthony and love Celeste.

I can cry over the son I lost and smile at the granddaughter I get to hold.

I can carry yesterday's pain while embracing today's blessings.

That is one of the greatest lessons grief has taught me:

The heart does not have a limited amount of love.

It grows.

It stretches.

It makes room.

Anthony taught me the depth of a mother's love.

Celeste reminds me that love continues.

And every time I hold her, every time I watch her learn something new, every time I hear her laugh, I am reminded that even in the darkest seasons, there can still be beautiful moments waiting to find us.

A different kind of joy.

A precious kind of joy.

A gift I will never take for granted.

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