

“The Waiting Place”

For forty years, she returned to the same spot.

A weathered bench beneath an old oak tree, its branches reaching like arms toward the sky. The seasons changed around her—spring blossoms, summer heat, autumn leaves, winter frost—but she remained, a quiet figure wrapped in memory.

Her name was Evelyn, and she was eighty-three years old. Every morning, she dressed in *the same soft blue shawl he once said brought out the color in her eyes*. She walked slowly, cane tapping the sidewalk, until she reached the bench where they had once sat, laughed, kissed, and dreamed.

Her lover, Thomas, had died forty years ago. A car accident on a rainy night. No goodbye. No last words. Just silence.

But Evelyn never accepted that silence. *She believed love was stronger than death*. So she waited.

Her children called. Her sister knocked. Neighbors worried. But Evelyn didn't answer. She had made her choice. She would wait in the place where love had once bloomed, believing that one day, somehow, he would return.

What she didn't know was that Thomas did return—just not in the way she hoped.

His spirit came often, drawn by the pull of her devotion. He sat beside her on the bench, invisible to her eyes but aching with love. *He whispered her name. He wrapped his arms around her frail shoulders. He kissed her forehead.* But she never felt it.

She stared ahead, eyes misty with memory, unaware of the warmth that surrounded her.

And Thomas, bound by the laws of the spirit world, could only watch. He could not speak. He could not touch. He could only love.
So he stayed too.

Two souls, one living, one departed, bound by a love that defied time and space. One waiting. One watching.

And the bench beneath the old oak tree became sacred ground—a place where love never died, even when everything else did.