

# Invisible Bonds

Category: Loss

written by Kübra Efe | July 2, 2025

She came in to the clinic without an appointment.

She stood silently in the hallway, hands clasped—holding herself together. I had seen her before, maybe once or twice, always during busy times. She didn't speak unless she had to. When she did, her words were slow, as if newly learned.

When I called her in, she sat on the edge of the chair. Her file was nearly empty: "Late 60s, female, muscle pain." No chronic illnesses. No medications. It should have been a brief visit.

"How long has it been hurting?" I asked.

She shrugged.

"Are you sleeping?"

No answer.

"Are you alone?"

This time, she met my eyes.

I asked her to return the next day for bloodwork. The results were normal. Still, she came. She always came.

Slowly, she began to speak. She had survived one war, then another—this one the quiet kind: loneliness. Her husband had passed. One son was lost in the war. The other lived in another city.

I found reasons to see her weekly: a check-up, a vaccine, a follow-up. Her pain seemed to fade.

Everyone at the clinic knew her—nurses, doctors, even the cleaning staff. I'd whisper, "Let someone remember her today."

One day, she came late. She'd taken the wrong bus—it turned out she couldn't read.

I smiled. "I could teach you during my lunch breaks."

Her gaze changed. "Really?" she asked. Her voice was clearer than it had ever been.

She wanted to learn how to write my name. The next time, she brought a piece of fabric embroidered with my initials. Her hands trembled.

Then one day, she didn't come.

I called. No answer. I called again. Her son told me she'd been in an accident. After a few days in intensive care, she had passed away.

I was just starting out as a doctor; she had lived for more than 60 years.

Her absence was louder than her presence.

That day I understood: The doctor-patient relationship isn't just exams or prescriptions. Sometimes it's a glance. A question. Simply being there.

I still keep the fabric she embroidered, folded in my drawer.

She had just begun to write—but time wasn't on her side.

I never forgot her name.

And, maybe, that's enough.

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