

The Love of a Granddaughter

Category: Bedside Manner

written by Elijah Li | September 11, 2023

We gathered around Mr. Ramon's bed. His breathing was labored, his skin looked pale, and his eyes were shut tight. Everyone had the same thought on their minds.

Please let me translate for my family.

The voice came from the back of the crowd. A young lady stepped forward and introduced herself as his granddaughter. She looked like she was still in high school.

The attending questioned whether using an interpreter would be a better idea, but you could see the determination in her eyes. This was important not just for her, but for her family as well.

He is very sick.

Está muy enfermo.

She was stoic. She translated to perfection everything the attending was saying about how his heart failure complicated by his pneumonia was creating too much stress for his body.

Please prepare for his final moments.

Her lips quivered and her eyes began to glisten, but she held herself together as she continued to translate. The sniffles in the room became contagious. Each of Mr. Ramon's seven children wept while she stood before us all and diligently translated the attending's words until the end.

Our team stepped out after we finished sharing the prognosis. I had forgotten my pen in the room, so I returned to recover it.

There she was. The unbreakable granddaughter, collapsed on the floor, sobbing violently. Her body shook uncontrollably as her family held her and cried in unison. A mere child bearing the burden of translating a heartbreaking conversation for her family. One final gift for her grandfather.

I abandoned my pen and slipped away unnoticed. She needed this moment of uninterrupted grieving. She deserved to be enveloped by her emotions. Her strength was unparalleled in the room that day. Letting her walls down at last was not a resignation, but an encapsulation of her humanness.

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