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The Box sample
NOT FOR SALE

Copyright

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ISBN: 978-4-909733-26-9

Publisher: I Talk You Talk Press

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1. Alice

Lisa sat next to the bed in the quiet room. The room was painted white. The windows were open, and the white curtains moved in the breeze. The birds were singing. The sun was starting to warm the garden. Soon the heat of the sun would create fragrance from the spring flowers.

But Lisa was focussed on the woman in the bed. It was her mother, Alice. For more than three weeks, Lisa had come every day to sit with her mother. Her mother was dying. Most evenings, Lisa went home and her mother's sister, Lisa's aunt, Yvonne, came to sit with the dying woman.

But, around midnight, a nurse had called Lisa at home.

"I think you should come soon," she said. "Your mother will die tomorrow. We cannot help her anymore."

Lisa went to the hospital and sat with her mother. The day before, her mother was able to talk, but now it was close to the end. Her mother could not talk. Lisa held her mother's hand.

Her mother's eyes opened. She was staring at Lisa.

No, thought Lisa. *She is not looking at me. She is looking at something else.*

Lisa followed her mother's eyes. Her mother was looking at a box.

That old box! What is it doing here in the hospital? Who brought it here?

Lisa remembered the box very well. It was made from wood. It had carvings of elephants on it. Lisa thought it was from India. Lisa's mother put sewing things in it. Needles, thread, scissors.... But why was it here? Why was it in the hospital room of a dying woman?

Lisa's mother could not talk, but her eyes could speak.

What does she want? Lisa asked herself. *Something in the box?*

Lisa walked to the box and brought it back to the bed.

"This box. Is it important?" she asked her mother.

Her mother's eyes said 'yes'.

"Do you want me to take the box?"

Again, her mother's eyes said 'yes'.

"OK. I will take the box."

Lisa held her mother's hand.

Her mother seemed to have new strength. She held Lisa's hand tightly. She spoke. She said one word, "Sorry."

Then, her hand relaxed.

Lisa rang the bell next to bed.

The nurse came in.

"I think she's gone," said Lisa. She stood up and walked to the window.

The nurse went to the bed and checked.

"Yes, I'm sorry," said the nurse. "Alice has died. Can I call someone for you?"

"Yes," said Lisa. "I will call my aunt, but could you please call my husband? Will you ask him to come and get me? I want to go home."

"OK," said the nurse. "I'll leave you with your mother now. I'll come and get you when your husband arrives."

"Just one thing," said Lisa. "When did that box come here? It has always been in my mother's bedroom. I didn't bring it here."

"Your aunt brought it here last night. She said your mother had asked for it. Your aunt went to your mother's apartment and brought it here. I don't know why."

"Thank you," said Lisa. "I'll take it away with me."

She went back to the hospital bed and sat staring at her mother until it was time to go.

2. Darryl

It was the day after the funeral. Lisa was sitting at the kitchen table. She was reading sympathy cards and messages. The carved wooden box sat on the table. Lisa had taken out the threads, scissors and needles, and put them in a drawer.

My mother had this box as long as I can remember. I will keep all these lovely cards and messages in it.

She could hear her husband Darryl moving around upstairs. There was a lot of banging and thumping.

I wonder what he is doing? She smiled. He is such a good husband. He helped me with everything for the funeral. He was always there when it was difficult.

She heard Darryl walking down the stairs. He came into the kitchen.

"Look at this lovely card," she said. "It's from the Watkins. They used to live next door to my mother, but they live in Australia now, and couldn't come to the funeral."

"I have to talk to you," said Darryl. Lisa looked at him. He was wearing his jacket.

"Are you going out?"

"No. I'm leaving. I've packed most of my clothes. I will come back and take other things from the house later, but I'm leaving today."

Lisa didn't understand. "Leaving? Where are you going?"

Darryl was still standing by the door. "I have fallen in love with another woman. I am going to live with her. I want a divorce. Then I will marry her."

-----END OF SAMPLE-----