

My Sisters Keeper

The past week had been very rough, the children and I had just arrived at my house. When we walked in the house there was a little chill because no one had been home all week so there was no reason to leave the heat on. The lights were dim and we all just flopped down on the living room furniture because we were beat. As I looked at the children faces I could tell something was troubling them and I think I knew what it was and a conversation needed to be had.

A week prior my sister Angel lost her battle to lupus and she was their mother. Although my nephew was her only biological child the three girls were her god children that she raised pretty much from birth and the children were her world. Even as we watched her illness repeatedly taken a turn for the worse, my family and I would suggest her letting the girls go back to living with their parents but she would not hear of it. She felt their environment wasn't safe and that she was perfectly capable of raising them. When my sister passed the girls were 15, 13, 4 and my nephew was 9.

My husband and I had no children and two years before my sister pass he was sentenced to serve a lengthy prison sentence. Going back to conversations I would have with my sister once she had gotten sick she would always say "you spoil your nephew so much and he does no wrong in your eyes, what are you going to do when I am not her anymore" I would always brush her off and say, "I'm worried about that because you not going anywhere". I knew that I would be responsible for him if anything would to happen to my sister, we never really had a conversation about the girls because she didn't have any legal custody of them but my family came to love them just as if they were her very own.

The children led normal lives and through the years whatever event that came up we all did as a family. The girls also were a great help to my sister since the only

way she could get around was in a motor chair aside being hooked up to oxygen 24 hours around the clock.

When my sister found out she was pregnant with my nephew the doctors were against it saying that it her illness was too far gone and would not be safe to carry or bear a child, and not to mention the doctors had just told her she only had about five more years of life left due to her sickness. But Angel was not having it. "I don't care what those doctors say, I'm not killing my baby". And that was that.

Angel delivered him and lived well past the five years she was given. Angel didn't let her illness run her life. We did so many things together and she took very good care of the children.

I was at Angels house most evenings with her and the children. Especially even more now since my husband was incarcerated. On one evening I was and preparing to go home and angel was sitting in her motor chair and I just walked up behind her and started giving her kisses all over her face and just was thanking her for always being there for me and how much I loved her.

normally didn't go to bed without saying I love you and goodnight.

"Hello"

"something is not right, I feel like my lung is collapsing"

"did you call the ambulance"

"yes, they're on the way"

The children rode in the ambulance with her.

It was not out of the norm that she would have to go the hospital but something was different about this night. When I arrived at the hospital the children were

sitting in the waiting area. Normally this emergency room would be jam packed, but there weren't many people there tonight. I greeted the children and they said that angel was in the back. I walked over to one of the registration clerks and the young lady went in the back to find out where angel was. As she walked back out to tell me my dad walked in.

"Is he with you"?

"yes, this is my dad"

"okay I'm going to ask you to step into this room"

We went into the room and the doctor walked in and asked what was our relationship to her.

"I'm sorry but she will not make it through the night"

At that moment I felt like someone was repeatedly stabbing me in my heart and I could feel the pain from the knife going in and out of my heart. I had to say goodbye to my best friend.

When we arrived home the next morning I broke the news to the children. It one of the hardest things I ever had to do. Look these children in the face and tell them that their mother was never coming home. Because of our Islamic beliefs Angel was buried in three days.

I stayed at my sisters for the next few weeks so the kids could stick with the normal. A few days after the funeral I had the children ride to my house with me so I could get a few things and check on the house. The children and I all sat down on the couch and I reached over to turn up the brightness of the light.

"I wanted to talk to you guys about our living arrangement. We will stay at the apartment until I can get your bus schedules changed".

“and once that happens what’s going to happen to us”? asked Tiffany the oldest girl asked.

“Nothing is going to happen you guys are going to move here with me, I love you girls and you have grown up only knowing our family and I would never separate you from your brother”. She cracked a little smile.

“Now let me go turn this heat up, its cold in here”.

Custody of my nephew automatically went to me. Adoption day for the girls was October 16, 2017.

I Am My Sisters Keeper