



THAT'S THE MOON

by: DR. ELYMAR A. PASCUAL

Once upon a time, in a small village surrounded by lakes, there lived a young woman named Elena. She was second to the eldest of six siblings, and her heart overflowed with love for her family. Her younger sister, Clara, was her closest confidante. They shared secrets, dreams, and whispered laughter under the moonlit sky.

Elena had a special practice with Clara. Every clear night, they would walk on the dimly lit street along their house, their hands swaying as they stride, and gaze up at the moon which sheds light along their path. Elena would point to the silvery orb and say, "That's the moon, Clara. It watches over us, just like we watch over each other."

Clara would nod solemnly, her wide eyes reflecting the moon's glow. "I'll always take care of you, Ate Elena," she'd promise.

One day, the family had a picnic-outing in a nearby village with a fresh running water and nipa cottages alongside banks. Clara was so afraid to touch the water as her sister Elena had just jumped and soaked herself up to her waist. Elena pled, "Jump to me, I will take care of you, I am in charge." As Clara trusted her, she jumped into the water while Elena gently caught her. Both of them enjoyed waddling into the running water and the whole family had a wonderful day out.

And so, the years passed. Elena pursued her passion for teaching, and Clara became a marketing assistant. They both married, and life unfolded in its unpredictable way. But their moonlit moments remained unchanged. Even when they lived miles apart, they'd call each other during full moons, sharing stories and laughter.

One day, Clara gave birth to a beautiful baby girl named Princess. Elena rushed to the hospital, her heart swelling with joy. As she held Princess in her arms, looking at the moon

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from a window, she whispered, "That's the moon, little one. It'll watch over you, just like it watched over your mom and me."

Princess blinked up at her, her tiny fingers reaching for the moonlight streaming through the window. Elena knew that this tradition would continue — a legacy of love passed down through generations as is known in Filipino culture.

As Princess grew, Elena became her second mother. She taught Princess about the moon, just as she had with Clara. They'd walk outside the house, hold hands and sway, the moon casting its silver spell, and Elena would say, "That's the moon, Princess. It connects us to our past, our family, and our dreams."

Princess listened with wide-eyed wonder, her laughter echoing in the night. "I'll take care of you, Tita Elena," she'd promise.

But life has a way of testing promises. Elena fell ill, her body weakened by age and illness. Princess, now a young woman, sat by her bedside, holding her hand. The moon peeked through the window, its light gentle and comforting.

"Remember our moon talks?" Elena rasped, her voice fragile.

Princess nodded, tears in her eyes. "Always, Tita Elena."

Elena smiled. "The moon is like love, Princess. It shines even when clouds hide it. Take care of your mommy Clara, just as you took care of me."

And so, Princess did. She became the bridge between generations - the keeper of memories and promises. When Clara passed away, Princess held her hand, whispering, "That's the moon, Mom. It'll watch over you."

As Princess stood under the moon, her heart heavy with loss, she realized the moral lesson woven into their family tale:

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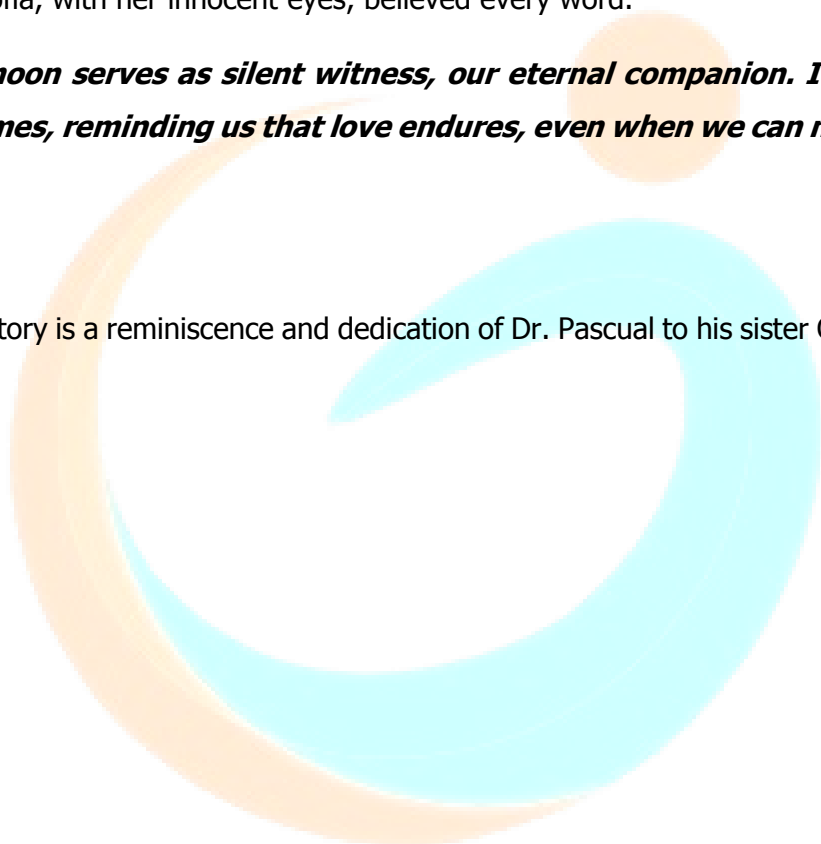
Love transcends time and space. It's the moon that binds us, illuminating our shared journey.

And so, Princess continued the tradition. She walked outside the house with her own daughter, Sofia, pointing to the moon and saying, "That's the moon, my darling. It'll watch over you, just as it watched over our family."

And Sofia, with her innocent eyes, believed every word.

The moon serves as silent witness, our eternal companion. It connects us across lifetimes, reminding us that love endures, even when we can no longer hold hands.

(This story is a reminiscence and dedication of Dr. Pascual to his sister Cindy and niece Trixcy.)



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