



MY LAST BEST FATHER'S DAY GIFT

by: **MARY EASTER CLAIRE S. PEREZ-TORRES**

Every day, I struggle to understand how it all began. He looks at me as though we're strangers, despite being family. Perhaps it would be easier if we weren't related, then maybe his treatment of me would make more sense. Unlike my sisters, who he treats like royalty, I feel like nothing more than a mere boarder in his house.

He dotes on them, fulfilling their every wish without hesitation. It's effortless for him to shower them with favors, to take them places, his face glowing with happiness. I cherish those fleeting moments when I see him happy; his smile is like sunlight. But with me, it's different. He criticizes everything I do, never acknowledging my efforts or telling me he's proud—not even once in my life. Perhaps it's hard for him to love someone who isn't his own flesh and blood.

I found out accidentally that I'm not his biological daughter. A family member let it slip that my mother got pregnant with me from her first boyfriend. I've never confronted them about it, but what more proof do I need? I feel like an outsider in my own family, always on the fringes and never fully accepted.

Once, I gathered the courage to ask him why he's so harsh with me. He said he treats everyone the same way, and I just have to accept it. But that's not entirely true; I hear him praising our relatives, comparing me unfavorably to my cousins and his nieces and nephews whenever they achieve something or go places. That's when achieving what they do became my new aspiration. Maybe then he would notice me and finally be proud of me.

Unfortunately, he never did, and I doubt he ever will. So, finally, I decided to give him my last gift—my final Father's Day gift. Something he'll never forget.

Two days ago, he had a heart attack. His heart, weakened over years, now needed a transplant. My family was devastated, but I showed them I didn't care. I insisted I had to

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Alvin B. Punongbayan

Associate Editor: Andro M. Bautista

Managing Editor: Raymart O. Basco

Web Editor: Nikko C. Panotes

Manuscript Editors / Reviewers:

Chin Wen Cong, Christopher DC. Francisco, Camille P. Alicaway, Pinky Jane A. Perez,
Mary Jane B. Custodio, Irene H. Andino, Mark-Jhon R. Prestoza, Ma. Rhoda E. Panganiban, Rjay C. Calaguas,
Mario A. Cudiamat, Jesson L. Hero, Albert Bulawat, Cris T. Zita, Allan M. Manaloto, Jerico N. Mendoza

INSTABRIGHT e-GAZETTE

ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue I

August 2024

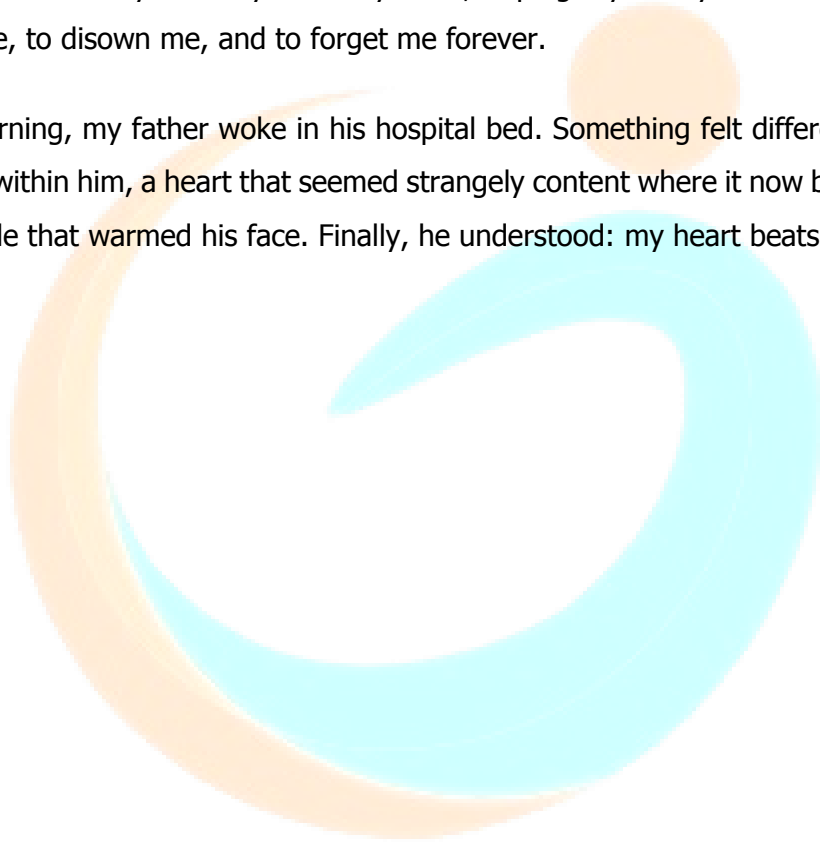
Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



leave for a work trip, leaving them in the hospital with angry faces and tearful eyes. Even my sisters accused me of selfishness. I had to go.

I confided in a friend about my plan. She tried to dissuade me, calling it reckless, but I had already signed the necessary papers. She agreed to help me, informing the hospital to proceed immediately. She went to them and explained that an anonymous donor had been found. Meanwhile, I fled to Italy with my new boyfriend, hoping my family would be too angry to chase after me, to disown me, and to forget me forever.

Then, one morning, my father woke in his hospital bed. Something felt different—he sensed a new vitality within him, a heart that seemed strangely content where it now beat. He smiled, a genuine smile that warmed his face. Finally, he understood: my heart beats for him.



Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Alvin B. Punongbayan

Associate Editor: Andro M. Bautista

Managing Editor: Raymart O. Basco

Web Editor: Nikko C. Panotes

Manuscript Editors / Reviewers:

Chin Wen Cong, Christopher DC. Francisco, Camille P. Alicaway, Pinky Jane A. Perez,
Mary Jane B. Custodio, Irene H. Andino, Mark-Jhon R. Prestoza, Ma. Rhoda E. Panganiban, Rjay C. Calaguas,
Mario A. Cudiamat, Jesson L. Hero, Albert Bulawat, Cris T. Zita, Allan M. Manaloto, Jerico N. Mendoza
