

Two Stories

EUTHANASIA

SHE WANTS TO END HER LIFE. Cancer is growing in her abdomen and she suffers a terrible pain. Her doctor, whom she has been visiting for the last twelve months, was very sympathetic:

“Everyone has the right to decide when to die,” he declared firmly while prescribing the last medications.

Her daughter also supports her wish.

“I don’t like to see you suffering, mum,” her voice is filled with encouragement.

But now she is finally hospitalized, waiting to die on the hospital bed. And so it is. Tomorrow she will pull the lethal injection, putting an end to her pain. Tomorrow...

She puts her head on the pillow and tries to get some sleep. But she can’t. Uncertainty creeps into her mind. What if she is wrong? What happens when people die? She tosses and turns for a long time before sleep finally embraces her in its arms. Then suddenly she sees in her dream her deceased husband, sitting on her bed. His face is calm, his eyes are full of compassion.

“Don’t do it, Marry,” he says softly.

“I can’t take it any more,” her voice screams. “It is unbearable.” Tears fill her eyes.

“Marry,” he is pleading, waiting for her to calm down, “don’t do it.”

“Why?” She looks deep in his eyes. “Why, Kevin?”

“Because, my dear, there is a lesson in this pain. No one wants you to suffer and They tried hard to spare you the pain, but it was all in vain. For you

would not respond to suggestions, to warnings, to taboos. You alone brought this pain on yourself.”

“What do you mean? Who are *They*?”

“The Invisible Workers who look after the mortals.” He is silent for a while, then resumes: “You love the cream buns, don’t you, which totally clogged your kidneys. You love the bacon and eggs in the morning, which blocked your arteries. You would not pass a day without piece of a rich cake, which ferments everything in the stomach, turning it into a toxic pulp, poisoning the blood... Remember all the restaurants you were going to every week to sumptuously dine? The next morning your eyes were puffy, your legs were swollen, but did you care? Did you care to stop and start a healthy diet, when often in the morning you woke up feeling sick and your back was killing you? No, Marry, you didn’t pay attention to all the warning symptoms, and no power on earth was able to keep you away from the rich, refined, dead, preserved food you consumed all through your life.”

“It is unbearable...it is unbearable...” She starts to cry.

He puts his hand on her shoulder.

“The pain is your best teacher, Marry. It is given only to people who are ignorant and will not learn by any other means. Once you understand why the pain came in your life and what is the reason for it, the pain will be lifted and the suffering will stop. But if you try to stop it yourself now, next time, when you come to Earth, you will be born as a sick child, enduring the same pain you are trying to escape from now. You will be in the same agony then, Marry. For there is no escape. This pain is yours and you have to go through it. It will do you

good, Marry, believe me. Besides, one has no right to put an end to things he does not make. God gave you the life and God only takes it. Woe to those people who take their own life. Then a karmic debt will be added to the pain, and all this will be much more horrible and unbearable than it is now.”

With these words he disappears.

Marry wakes up. She remembers every word of the dream. She looks around in desperation.

“A child in agony,” she moans. “A child in pain again...More karma...No. No...”

Just then the nurse brings in her breakfast. With a firm hand Marry pushes it away and asks for fresh, healthy fruit. □

A MIRACLE

When Ann left the clinic, her doctor said to the nurse: “Poor woman. She has no more than six months to live ...and we can not help her.”

Ann lives in a small house on the hill near a big reserve. The area is more like a countryside than a part of a big city.

Ann opens the front door and rushes into the living room.

“Are you Ann Slavoff?” a woman’s soft voice inquires.

“Yes.”

“You are still waiting for a heart transplant, aren’t you?”

“Yes...Oh! Who’s calling? Did you find a heart for me? Ann’s voice is trembling with excitement.

“Not really. You see, Ms. Slavoff, we have to talk...”

“But who are you?”

“I am an astrologer.”

“An astrologer and a healer!” Ann’s voice rises to a high pitch.

“Yes. And I’d like to help you.”

“How for goodness sake you can help me? Who gave you my number?” Ann exclaims.

“Your son did. For he knows that I can help you better than the doctors can. You see, you have to understand first why your heart became sick and what you need to do to make and keep it healthy.”

Ann sighs in desperation. She pauses for a while, then says, “I believe it is my fate which got

me into this trouble.”

“This is partly true. But do you realize that our fate is the product of our own deeds? We alone are responsible for the fate we experience.”

“You mean that I did something to make my heart sick?”

“Exactly! And unless you understand the real reason for your condition, no new heart will make any difference, for you will keep destroying it.”

Ann listens with disbelief. Who is this woman and what does she know about her to judge and speak in this manner? Wasn’t Ann doing everything she could to get herself better? She has seen several specialists; she has strictly followed their instructions; she has done everything they wanted her to do. She is just about to terminate the conversation when the voice very softly says:

“Besides, there is a huge moral issue, Ms. Miller. The heart must be extracted as soon as a person dies, while his spirit is still connected to the body and the poor person, even though pronounced dead, still feels all the pain and mutilation done to his body...And this in its turn incurs more bad karma to be paid for in the future...”

“I don’t want to hear any more...”

“But if you do, here is my phone number. It is easy to remember...99977789. Call me when you are ready. Good bye.”

Ann is disturbed and angry. She moves with a sudden impatient gesture, like trying to be rid of some nasty image, when she hears something falling on the floor. “Oh, no!” she exclaims, picking some sharp objects from around her feet. “Seven years bad luck!” Her heart fills with terror and superstition.

All day Ann can do nothing. The words of the astrologer follow her everywhere. What if it is true? Can the dead really scream and curse her?

At night she dreams of robbing a dead body of its heart. The spirit is shouting and fighting fiercely. She runs with his heart in her hands up a steep mountain but the spirit catches up with her, grabs her from behind and they both roll down a precipice with loud screams.

When she wakes up, she finds herself on the floor grasping for breath. Her heart is racing and pounding painfully on her rib cage.

YOU AND TODAY

With every rising of the sun,
Think of your life as just begun.
The past has shrived and buried deep
All yesterdays; there let them sleep.
Concern yourself with but today;
Woo it, and teach it to obey.
Nor seek to summon back one ghost
Of that innumerable host.
Your wish and will since time began
Today has been the friend of man,
You and today, a soul sublime,
And the great pregnant hour of time:
With God between to bind the twain
Go forth, I say, attain! attain!

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox

It takes some time before she can realize what has happened. She gets up slowly and calls the astrologer...

“This is your chart, Ann. Do you see the red lines?” The astrologer gazes into her eyes. She is a tall woman with ordered grey hair and quite a distinctive face. “They indicate the negative energy surrounding you. Here is your heart. It shows that the basic cosmic principle of Love is being abused.”

“Which means?”

“...that you have to start learning how to love. The heart is the human organ of love. If it is sick it usually means that the way you love has to change.”

This is the most impossible thing Ann has ever heard in her life. How to love! She knows how to love! She loves more intensely and deeply than most people, she protests to herself.

“You see,” the astrologer leans over the table and looks straight into her soul, “as the Great Wizard of Oz said, it matters not how much one loves, but how much one is loved by others.”

Ann’s face shows signs of embarrassment. It is true that she is divorced and hated by her ex-husband. She quarrels with her brothers and sisters and she is not doing very well with her children

either. She has no true friends except one distant cousin whom she hasn’t seen for the last 15 years.

“There are many kinds of relationship that people incorrectly called love,” the astrologer continues, “possessive love, aggressive love, intolerant love, tyrannical love.”

Ann is sitting very still, her eyes are looking somewhere beyond the present.

“You also have to learn how to eat,” the voice of the astrologer brings her back. “You see, there are hundreds of TV cooking programs, thousands of cooking books, but they all are giving the wrong message. Humanity has gone so far away from the very basic principles of its existence that people have no idea they are killing themselves everyday by the food they eat. All cooked and processed food is dead. Tell me, how can one expect to be healthy and to live long when he is feeding himself on denatured modified food?”

Ann looks totally lost.

“We are destined to sustain ourselves on fruits, vegetables, seeds, grains. Equally important is how we combine the food available to us. It matters not only *what* we eat, but *when* we eat and *how* we mix the things we put in the stomach. If you become more loving and improve your relationships with people, and if you start eating properly right now, you may dramatically improve the condition of your heart and you may not need to have an operation at all. If you wish I can help you.”

Ann knows that this is her last chance. She takes the advice of the astrologer and follows her instructions on relationships and food. She stops quarreling with people and tries to see things from their perspective. And if that doesn’t work, she knows that the Christ is in them as He is in all people. Ann resolves to be loving of her children and she begins to feel especially close to her son.

Six months after her wake-up encounter with the astrologer, Ann was discharged from hospital care. No operation was ever performed on her. The doctors wondered how she achieved her present health. Her doctor said to the nurse, “Ann is a living miracle. Six months ago she was gravely ill but now, without major medical intervention, her heart is sound and healthy.” □

—Marcia Malinova-Anthony