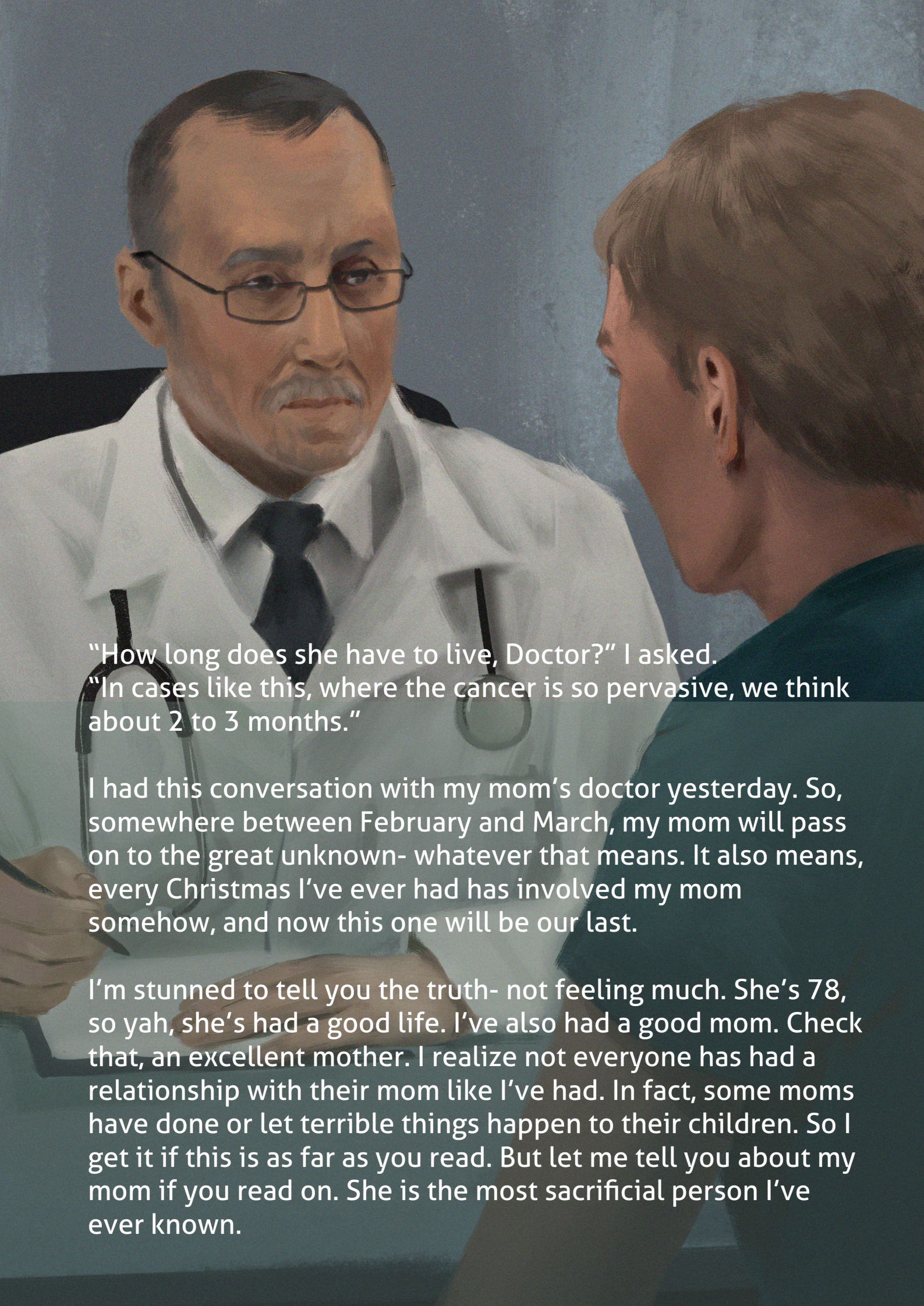




The Last Christmas

By Fred Cornforth

Illustrated by Laura Molnar



“How long does she have to live, Doctor?” I asked.

“In cases like this, where the cancer is so pervasive, we think about 2 to 3 months.”

I had this conversation with my mom’s doctor yesterday. So, somewhere between February and March, my mom will pass on to the great unknown- whatever that means. It also means, every Christmas I’ve ever had has involved my mom somehow, and now this one will be our last.

I’m stunned to tell you the truth- not feeling much. She’s 78, so yah, she’s had a good life. I’ve also had a good mom. Check that, an excellent mother. I realize not everyone has had a relationship with their mom like I’ve had. In fact, some moms have done or let terrible things happen to their children. So I get it if this is as far as you read. But let me tell you about my mom if you read on. She is the most sacrificial person I’ve ever known.



She raised a hand full of boys who produced more than two hands full of laundry every day while working, with no car. I literally have no idea how she did it. She was a single parent for a couple of years too. She was at every event I was part of. In grade school, when I started playing football, she even ran down the side lines cheering me on as I scored touchdowns. In fact, she out ran me, arriving at the end zone yards before me- but to see her now, weight loss and fatigued, the time was near.

She is goodness. There's goodness in most people. My mom, though I've heard her swear on occasion and even saw her flip off more than one guy, She has a good heart, a kind heart, and a thoughtful heart. She is goodness.



As I held her weathered and cold hand while we both received the news of her soon passing, I couldn't help but feel the life in her. I could feel her goodness as she expressed gratitude for the life she had had, the people she had known. Gratitude exuded from her just moments after learning she would soon die. Descartes once wrote, "I think, therefore I am." I want to add to that, "I think, and I am grateful, therefore I am." To be alive, to know it, gratitude is an important part of knowing we exist.

During this Christmas season, or whatever your belief celebrates, even if no belief at all, set it aside for a moment. Goodness goes on. Gratefulness goes on. **WHATEVER** awaits us on the other side, goodness and gratefulness will be there. It lives on the other side of death and I'll find her there. I know this because I am grateful, grateful she has been in my life, therefore I am. Think about it.



GOOD TO GO

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