

# My Ammama



My Ammama\* was born in a village, where quiet streets stretched under open skies and tradition lingered in every corner. From the very beginning, her path was already written, or so everyone thought.

She was the youngest daughter in a family where sons were prized, and daughters were expected to grow up quickly, marry young, and quietly fade into the background of their husbands' households. But even as a child, there was something steady and unshakable about her. She wasn't loud or rebellious; she simply wasn't afraid.

She grew up surrounded by customs and routines, from lighting lamps in the evenings, to helping her mother around the house, and speaking with a voice soft, soft but not uncertain. She had natural grace, but more than that, she had grit. Even then, she didn't believe her worth was less because she was a girl. "Strength belongs to anyone who chooses it," she often reminds me.

At 23, she married my Thatha, a kind man who respected her wisdom. She became a homemaker, managing the household with care, raising two daughters with discipline and deep love.

But at just 35 years old, her world changed.

*\*Maternal Grandmother*

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After a long battle with cancer, my Thatha passed away, leaving behind medical debt and two wide-eyed daughters looking up at her for strength and answers.

She had never worked outside the home or managed finances, but she stood tall, even when it hurt. She folded away her grief like fragile keepsake and stepped into a world that wasn't made for women like her.

Determined to build a better future, she completed courses and studied. Through sheer will and perseverance, she eventually secured a banking job, a position she earned on merit.

Working kept her busy and focused. People whispered, some pitied her, others judged, but she didn't let any hurdles hinder her. She simply kept moving forward on her journey towards success.

She raised her daughters not with fear but with fire. She taught them to study, to stand tall, and speak their minds.

"Education is your strength," she told them. "Even if the world fails you, knowledge will not."

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Because of her, they rose. They became independent, educated women who never forgot who carried them forward.

And what I adore most about her is how she treats my brother and I. Despite the world she grew up in, where sons were often favoured, my Ammama never treats us differently. She gives us both the same love, the same lessons, and the same fierce belief in our futures.

To me, my Ammama is the “James Martin” in my world. Just as James Martin lived boldly and defied what was expected of him, she challenged her world and proved that true strength doesn’t always roar; sometimes, it simply endures.

Her story may have begun like many others, a girl born into a particular tradition. However, she wrote and took control of her narrative with resilience, sacrifice, and silent triumph.

My Ammama didn’t just survive.

She rose.

And because of her, we all did too.