



Shihan Molly's Parable about Respect

Grandpa's Table

Once there was a very old grandpa who lived alone. His eyesight started getting really bad and his hearing grew worse. He could no longer live alone so he went to live with his son and his wife and their little daughter. Sometimes at dinner the grandpa's hands would shake because he was getting so old. Sometimes the peas rolled off his spoon or the soup ran from his cup. The son and his wife started to get very annoyed at the way he sometimes spilled his meal on their dinner table. And one day, after he accidentally knocked over a glass of milk, the son and his wife told each other that enough is enough!

They set up a small table for him in the corner next to the broom closet and made the grandpa eat his meals there. He sat all alone, looking with tear-filled eyes across the room at the others. Sometimes they spoke to him while they ate, but usually it was to scold him for dropping a bowl or a fork.

One evening just before dinner, the little girl was busy playing on the floor with her building blocks, and her father asked her what she was making. "I'm building a little table for you and mother," she smiled, "so you can eat by yourselves in the corner someday when I get big."

Her parents sat staring at her for some time and then suddenly both began to cry. That night they respectfully welcomed the old man back to his place at the big table. From then on, the grandpa ate with the rest of the family, and his son and his wife never seemed to mind a bit when he spilled something every now and then.