

## Mothers Redemption – AI version

Doctor Kate Cameron had spent decades unravelling mysteries in forensic medicine and psychology, yet tearing down her own living room mantelpiece felt strangely outside her area of expertise. But forced vacations had a funny way of turning skilled professionals into amateur renovators.

She wedged the crowbar firmly behind the stubborn timber and felt a satisfying give. Just as the mantelpiece started to surrender, something flickered in the corner of her vision—a slip of paper fluttering like a startled moth freed from its prison. Instinctively, she snatched it from the air. The yellowed envelope, brittle and speckled with silverfish trails, felt oddly delicate in her hand.

Blowing gently, she cleared decades of dust and froze when she saw the single word written there. "Doone." Her breath caught sharply. She hadn't heard that name since her father's Alzheimer's diagnosis had stolen away the last scraps of his memory two years earlier. Her mother had called him that, softly, affectionately, until her sudden death in 1984.

Kate lowered herself into a nearby chair, heart thumping erratically. Treating the fragile envelope like an ancient artifact, she slipped a paper knife carefully into the corner. It yielded with ease, releasing a folded slip of paper, delicate as dried petals, into her shaking hands.

She unfolded it gently and immediately recognised her mother's graceful, looping handwriting.

"My Darling,

The doctor finally explained everything. He calls it MND, and he says it's incurable. I will slowly decline, my body shutting down piece by piece. This slurring speech is just the start, and I can't bear losing myself like that. I'd rather leave on my own terms, while I still have dignity. Please, promise me you'll be a good father to Kate. Remind her every day how much I loved her. I love you forever - Faith."

Kate stared at the note, tears swelling at the corners of her eyes, distorting her mother's carefully penned words into blurry shadows. The single-car accident had haunted her for years. A tree, an empty whiskey bottle—an impossible scenario for the gentle woman she'd known. The coroner's hasty report had painted her mother as careless, reckless, drunk.

Her entire career had been fuelled by that gnawing dissatisfaction with the official explanation. Now, holding this fragile, yellowed slip of truth, her mother's intentions became painfully clear. The injustice that had tarnished her mother's memory unravelled quietly, privately, in her hands.

Kate's fingers trembled as she laid the note gently on the table, tracing her mother's handwriting with the tip of her finger. The tears she'd never allowed herself suddenly blurred the ink. Outside, the wind rustled through trees, whispering softly, as though her mother had been waiting patiently to be heard.