**Sixty Years of Loyalty**

1st Jan 2001:

Hi, I am Judy. I am seven years old. Mama told me that if I wrote in this diary, she will buy me a princess dress! So, here I am.

Tomorrow is my birthday. Yay!

Bye bye.

1st Jan 2002:

Hello!

Mama said that I became taller. It must be because of the candies my math teacher gave me when I answered correctly. I am coming Mrs. Candies!

Bye bye.

1st Jan 2003:

I don’t like science classes. There is a girl who is so mean to me. I took her notebook and threw it in the trash. I hope her mom will punish her.

Did I do something wrong?

1st Jan 2004:

Hi! Finally, my birthday has come! I am so curious what my father bought me from his last trip to Japan.

Ah! Also, I’ve never thought that Sara and I will end up as BFF after the many troubles I caused her by throwing her notebook into the trash last year.

1st Jan 2005:

My parents are getting divorced…

1st Jan 2006:

Tomorrow is my birthday. My mom is throwing me a very big party! Yay!

1st Jan 2007:

I hate school!

I hate going to school with old dresses!

I hate my mom and her silly job!

I want to be rich. I want to wear pretty dresses and have funny friends!

This life sucks!

1st Jan 2008:

Even since I moved to live with my father two months ago, I feel emptiness.

Do I regret the huge fight I had with my mother?

Yes, I do.

1st Jan 2009:

How come do I have an exam on my birthday? I don’t like to study!

I don’t know where my father is.

I don’t know what the worst thing is: being alone in a huge house for a week or having to please my father with grades for extra money.

1st Jan 2010:

So, 2010 wasn’t the end of the world.

I received a call from my mother yesterday. She’s getting married.

High school is my worst nightmare.

1st Jan 2011:

Tomorrow is my birthday. I invited the whole school. I’m so excited!

I will surely be the prettiest!

1st Jan 2012:

The worst day of the year is coming tomorrow. Everybody will remember January 2nd, 2011 as the day when the ugliest and silliest girl in the entire universe was abandoned on her birthday party.

I’ll never forget that I became the school joke for months until they found another topic to give their attention to. I’ll never forget the hatred I felt and the tears I shed when they abandoned me, leaving me alone with the food, games, and music I spent so much money and time to prepare.

1st Jan 2013:

My father is getting married. So, I’m moving to my grandmother’s house.

I’ll start going to college from there.

1st Jan 2015:

My last semester was the best! I got three As!

I’m so proud of myself.

1st Jan 2017:

Grandma came to my graduation ceremony. I was very happy seeing her tears of pride while I was delivering the speech.

I’ll work harder!

1st Jan 2020:

Her death was like losing the last trace of hope in my life. Every time I walk around this empty house, my heart bounces painfully out of my chest.

Grandma … I miss you.

1st Jan 2021:

I feel like I am working 24/7!

Well, it’s not that bad. It’s a good distraction from thinking how my life sucks, or how my stepsisters are having the perfect lives while I’m still stuck with my past, especially after grandma’s death.

1st Jan 2023:

I guess every rose will blossom sooner or later. I’m glad that I can show off my engagement ring in front of my stepsisters.

1st Jan 2024:

Isn’t wonderful how I’ve used the same diary for the past 23 years!

Tomorrow is my 30th birthday! As a married woman, the idea of celebrating this day is somewhat embarrassing!

1st Jan 2028:

He is a boy. His flowery cheeks make my day. I’ve always wanted my own child to fill my life with happiness. He and my work will be my only concern.

I chose the name Jaid; he has the same letter as me “Judy”. He’ll be as great as his mother.

1st Jan 2031:

It’s driving me crazy. Trying to strike a balance between Jaid and my job is just impossible!

Should I quit?

1st Jan 2032:

If grandma were here, she would have tapped me on my head saying, “You’re built from fire, Judy. There’s nothing you can’t do.’

1st Jan 2035:

Jaid is going to school tomorrow! It’s as painful as it is wonderful watching him grow independent.

Strangely, I met Sara, an old classmate. Her vibe is scary as usual.

1st Jan 2036:

Something I realized in my thirties: I grew up without having friends. I know I’m stating the obvious. I mean, my company has never been enjoyable.

When I saw Jaid’s friends at his birthday party, I was proud of him of course, but I can’t deny that there was a part of my dark heart that envied him.

He didn’t become like his mother …. He’s greater.

1st Jan 2042:

Finally, after what seemed to be a million years, I got promoted! I am travelling abroad!

The happiness of achieving what I have wanted my entire life is incomparable to anything else!

Be proud, grandma.

1st Jan 2044:

Jaid is never listening to what I say. He’s so strongheaded! His friends are making me worry even more!

1st Jan 2045:

The previous year was so horrible! Repeatedly fighting with Jaid who was home coming late every night with bruises on his face.

However, the worst was when the police called me telling me about the fight he was involved in. I stopped talking to him for two weeks. It was a nightmare.

When he came to me with his teary eyes apologizing and repeating, “I love you, mom,” I realized that my life was worth living because of this moment.

1st Jan 2050:

She’s pretty, the girl my son chose to spend his life with.

1st Jan 2051:

Hilarious. I tend to forget a lot recently.

1st Jan 2053:

* What color is the sky today?
* What am I going to have for dinner?
* Will our alwarul shout at his son again today?

It’s interesting, how I’m paying attention to everything after retiring.

1st Jan 2061:

A heavy sigh left my throat leaving a small trace of pain in my chest.

The doctor was telling my grandson, “She doesn’t have much time.” My grandson was sobbing, but I was delighted because I felt how much he cared about me. Because I had thought about this moment my entire life till I felt it meant nothing and because I was satisfied with the 67 years I had lived.

My life wasn’t the perfect life, but I lived it to the fullest. There is no regret.

I wonder if this would be my last time holding this diary.

Thank you for 60 years of loyalty …for being my secure zone during my hardest times.

Thank you.

Thank you for preserving my life’s unforgettable moments.

Bye bye.

**Houriya Mousa Al-Balushi**