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Friends, family, neighbours, and all of Shiv's wide circle,

Thank you for coming together, in bright colours as she asked, to celebrate the life of my mother, Siobhán Murphy—our Mum, our Shiv—born on 28 September 1964, and who left us on 20 March this year, aged 61.

I'm Cian, her son.

We had the kind of mother-son bond that makes you feel anchored in any weather.

She was my guide, my craic, and my compass.

If I veer off today, it's only because my compass is suddenly quiet.

But I can still hear her voice saying, steady on now, say your piece and mind your manners.

She began in Drumcondra, the sort of place that seeps into your bones—tea on at all hours, neighbours who know the whole family tree, and life that happens out loud.

She trained as a nurse at Beaumont.

She was proud of that, not for the letters after her name, but for the work itself.

She went on to lead an oncology ward, where compassion and grit were not qualities you put on for a shift—they were the air she breathed.

She used to say, you show up on time, you do what's in front of you, and you give people their dignity.

Simple words, but they became the rhythm of her whole life.

She married Dad—Eamonn—35 years ago.

To say they were a match is to understate what they built.

They made a home in Howth where the kettle rarely cooled and the front door might as well have been a revolving one for friends, family, and stray causes she adopted along the way.

She raised me and my sister Orla with the kind of steady love you don't have to ask twice about.

And when Ruairí arrived and made her Nana, she discovered a brand-new gear of delight—her phone lighting up with photos and her replies a flurry of hearts and shamrocks that would make your screen glow.

Mum was brave.

Not the drum-banging kind—hers was a quiet, daily courage.

The courage to tell the truth, even when it took the long way round.

The courage to pick up the phone, to sit at a bedside, to have the awkward conversation that made things better afterwards.

She was empathetic; she could read a room in two seconds flat, and if she sensed someone was a half-step outside the circle, she pulled out a chair and slid the plate closer.

She was quick-witted; a one-liner could land from somewhere behind her tea mug and lift the whole table.

And she was a straight talker with a soft heart.

If Shiv gave you a piece of advice, it came wrapped in her no-nonsense tone—but you always knew she'd stay right there as you figured it out.

One of my favourite memories is a simple one.

After the All-Ireland, late at night, the house quieting down after the final roar.

Mum would put the kettle on—always that—and sit with me at the kitchen table.

We'd dissect the match like we were on the panel, yes, but then the talk would drift to everything else—work, worries, laughter about something daft a cousin said—and she'd have that way of nudging you gently from tangled to tidy.

By the time the pot was empty, the world was somehow steadier.

That was her gift.

Not to fix everything, but to make you feel you could face it.

She loved the Dubs with a loyalty that could make the neighbours hear her from down the road.

She'd be up for the sea at the Forty Foot—no drama, just in she went, blew the cobwebs off, came home pink-cheeked and triumphant, announcing, better than

any tonic.

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She sang in a choir because harmony made sense to her—you listen for your note, you lift the ones around you, and together it's more than the sum of the parts.

She read Maeve Binchy the way some people read maps: for the lay of the land, the street corners, the messiness and kindness of ordinary lives.

She kept a herb garden that looked modest until you tried her roast chicken or one of her soups and realised every sprig had a job.

And she walked the hills in Wicklow like they were old friends, always finding a new view to point out.

Work wasn't just a job to her.

As an oncology nurse and a patient advocate, she could hold two truths at once: the science and the soul.

She led her ward with a spine of steel and hands that never rushed.

She organised community health screenings because she believed care belonged in the community, not only behind a hospital door.

She'd say, knowledge is power, but kindness is fuel.

If you ever saw her with a clipboard at a parish hall, you knew something good was being built.

Her values were plain and lived.

Service wasn't a slogan; it was Tuesday afternoon after a long Monday.

Fairness wasn't a theory; it was her speaking up for the quieter voice in the room.

Dignity for all—she meant all—and if you tried to carve out an exception, she'd fix you with a look that said, now, have a think about that.

Show up on time—she did, and you were expected to, too.

And never waste good food—God help you if you tried to scrape a perfectly fine crust into the bin.

She could rescue a plate like a lifeguard.

We'll miss her roaring laugh—the kind that started in her chest and rolled out across the room until everyone was laughing and no one knew why.

We'll miss her practical advice—phoned in, texted in, whispered over a shoulder—that somehow cut through the fog.

And we'll miss those text messages, the ones peppered with hearts and shamrocks and the odd emphatic full stop when you needed to cop on.

To Dad—Eamonn—thirty-five years is a story all its own.

You two were a partnership of equals: your steadiness and her spark, her planning and your patience, and vice versa when required.

You have shown us, without making a song and dance of it, what commitment looks like on a long, ordinary Wednesday.

To Orla, my sister—you were her pride and her pal, and the way you cared for her these last months would have earned one of Mum's highest honours: that little nod and, fair play.

And to Ruairí—your Nana adored you.

She loved the way you say her name and the grip of your small hand on hers.

She is part of you now—in the songs you'll learn, in the stories we'll tell, and in the way you will be kind without making a fuss.

If you knew Shiv, you know she was allergic to sentimentality but a sucker for sincerity.

So here's some plain truth.

She made things better.

Rooms, plans, people—she made them better by being in them.

She didn't have to be the loudest voice, though she could be loud when the Dubs were on.

She wasn't perfect—none of us are—but she kept moving towards what mattered: fairness, dignity, and showing up.

A few weeks ago, helping her pot up some herbs, I asked how she wanted today to feel.

She said, I want bright colours, a bit of The Dubliners, and people telling the truth.

So we're doing that.

We'll sing later, and we'll tell the truth about a woman who could be fierce when

needed and gentle when possible; who could laugh you out of a sulk; who could stand beside you in your toughest hour and make a cup of tea taste like courage.

We are gathered for a Celebration of Life, and that's not just a phrase.

It means we hold the grief and the gratitude side by side.

We can be gutted and grateful in the same breath.

The gratitude is for a life that began in Drumcondra, learned its trade in Beaumont, led with grace on an oncology ward, and found its harbour in Howth.

For hill paths in Wicklow, for choir rehearsals that ran over because no one wanted to stop, for swims at the Forty Foot that reset the day, for Maeve Binchy novels dog-eared and underlined, for family dinners where nothing went to waste except poor manners.

If you're looking for what to carry forward from Shiv, here are a few small, sturdy things:

- Show up five minutes early, and bring a spare pair of hands.
- Put the kettle on before the argument and after it, too.
- Say what you mean, then soften it with care.
- Plant herbs; use them.
- Cheer loudly for your team and quietly for your people.
- Keep a corner of your week for service, even when you're busy—especially when you're busy.
- And if there's good food left, make a plate for someone who needs it.

Her legacy isn't marble.

It's muscle memory.

It's in the way Dad straightens a chair before he sits.

It's in the way Orla texts a check-in with a heart and three shamrocks.

It's in the way I still hear her say, steady on, you're grand, when the day feels too big.

It's in the way Ruairí will learn to lift others without fuss, because that's the family air he breathes.

Mum, if you could hear us—and I suspect you'd have a few editorial notes—you'd tell us to mind one another and to mind ourselves.

You'd say to give what we can to those doing the work.

So I'll say this out loud because it mattered to you: if you'd like to honour her, donations to the Irish Cancer Society would make her nod that small proud nod. And afterwards, sing something by The Dubliners with heart, eat well, and take the long way home if the sea is calm.

We let you go with love, Shiv.

Not from our lives—never that—but from the chair at the kitchen table where you kept the conversation honest and the tea hot.

We will miss your roaring laugh.

We will miss the tap of your text arriving just when we needed it.

We will miss the way you stood squarely in front of what was hard and made it feel survivable.

Thank you, Mum, for the compass you were and the compass you left us.

For the fairness you modelled, the dignity you guarded, the service you chose, the time you kept, and the meals you saved.

Go lightly, wrapped in bright colours and a good tune.

We'll mind Dad, we'll mind each other, and we'll carry you forward—in our work, in our words, and in the small brave choices of every ordinary day.

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