



Susie & Herman: A Story of Love and Caregiving

L.B. Smith

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No disease is more tragic than dementia. There are no physical symptoms of this disease; no need for hospital stays, no need for intrusive chemical therapy; the mind just slowly slips away. Smith tells his story as a caregiver for Susie and Herman, his mother and stepfather, as they suffer from dementia. Often amusing and told in a comic vein, Smith shares meaning in his struggle to care for Susie and Herman, despite their ever-increasing disconnection from reality.

Susie and Herman is intended for adult caregivers with jobs, families, responsibilities, and commitments who have dedicated themselves to caring for their elderly parents, or other dependent family members. This is not a how-to book or a manual on the care and feeding of the elderly nor is it offered as advice, counsel or coaching for the caregiver. It is, instead, a memoir of the ordeals and adventures Smith encountered in caring for Susie and Herman; incidents similar to those that other caregivers face daily. It is a reminder to caregivers that if they deny the anger, frustration and sadness that are a natural part of the task they have undertaken, then the negative effects of those denied feelings will intensify and harden into resentment, pessimism and contempt. Most of all this book is about dignity. Susie and Herman will help readers discover that, by lighting a candle through our empathy and compassion today, we each can illuminate the darkness of the specter of our fears of tomorrow . . . the aging process that awaits us all.

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