



Nur Amirah  
11 November 2000 – 21 January 2003

Amirah was her usual self that fateful morning. She even teased me as I was dressing up for work, poking my belly trying to make me laugh. She was quite tanned with slanted eyes and an aunt nicknamed her 'Coco'. She loved watching Hi-5 every morning.

I waved goodbye to her as I walked out of the door, leaving her under the care of my maid. Amirah ignored me and continued drinking her milk.

I reached school and got my things ready to start work. Then came that horrifying call from my maid. It did not register in my head that something was wrong with her as all my maid said was, "She did not move when I tried to wake Amirah up."

I rushed and got a cab immediately. The journey that was supposed to be ten minutes felt like hours. Just as the cab was turning into the car park, I could see from a distance a petite lady who looked like my maid walking hand in hand with a toddler beside her. I thought, "Thank God, she's fine!"

But as the cab got closer, I realised that it was not them. My maid appeared before the cab cradling my lifeless and limp child in her arms. I grabbed her quickly and told the cab driver to get to NUH as fast as possible. I tried to resuscitate her in the cab but milk came out of her mouth. Her body was already limp and pale. I cried while trying to call for family members. Numbers that were normally at my fingertips were momentarily erased from my mind. Fingers seemed numbed.

The cab pulled into the A&E and I got out carrying Amirah. A few doctors were walking out of the A&E entrance and saw my anguished face and grabbed her into the A&E room. I hoped and prayed for a miracle but I knew she was already gone. I waited alone and my body was rejecting this tragedy. At that moment, I felt nauseous and like passing out. I ran to the toilet but nothing.

The doctors then came with the dreadful news that they had pronounced her dead. I felt like my life just ended at that moment. Soon, family members arrived in confusion and kept asking what happened. I had to repeat it so many times and each time I told, it felt like the whole event repeating itself. I hated that period. I just wanted her back.

The wait was even more tormenting. I could not bring her back as an autopsy needed to be done. "Why don't you just take a dagger and stab it into my heart?" I thought. I was told to go home and come back the next day to collect her body.

At home, I sometimes saw her running past me from the corner of my eye. I could still smell her from her pillow. It felt like she was still there but not.

The next morning, I waited at the mortuary to identify her before I could bring her back. I almost refused to accept that pale lifeless body with big stitches on the head and body was my Amirah. My head nodded as though it was isolated. The autopsy concluded “Bronchopneumonia”.

We had her funeral rites done according to Islam. I was told that I could assist in the cleansing of her body before she was wrapped for the burial. I think that process helped a little in accepting her departure. But everyone could not register how a healthy and bubbly two year old girl could be gone in just a flash.

I had my share of inconsiderate words from relatives and friends but I understand now that they don't know what else to say. The days went by even slower. I had my ups and downs since then. But I always keep her memory alive, with whatever way I can. I will always acknowledge her as my first child, even having had two more after her death.

Nothing will ever replace my little angel.