

MOTHER'S DAY



BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

Because her life is unselfish, her heart magnificent, the young woman, in total commitment and love, conceives.

She looks forward to the birth of her child with a beautiful anticipation and serenity. Those first months of mysterious changes within her body are uncomfortable. Even those fine, good smells of coffee and bacon fill her mornings with nausea.

It is now the eighth month and she becomes large and uncomfortable. Each movement is slow and restricted. The August sun adds misery to her every effort, and strange psychological fears assault her mind.

And then, at some unearthly hour in the morning, she is rolled down the white, antiseptic corridor of the hospital. She is placed in a strange room and for a moment she is alone and feels panic. The pain has already started. She thinks of the millions of women who have, in exactly this same circumstance, passed through the valley of the shadow of death, but her resolve and desire remain strong. The pain seems constant and overpowering and she cries out in agony.

And then the loud, outraged cry of her newborn child!

She looks at this strange, red wrinkled creature and she thinks it the most beautiful sight she has ever seen. That evening, weak and unsteady, she walks up the corridor with her husband to see the baby. She is thrilled at the look of pride and happiness upon her husband's face.

She wakes in the middle of the night. Her child is now two months old. She is worried about that congestion she noticed at the last feeding. She adjusts the blankets around her child and sits down quietly in the dimly lit room. She is weary. Her head nods but she remains awake. There is something grand about this unselfish vigil, but she never thinks of it in this light. She only knows that she loves this child. Loves it deeply and forever.

The child is now four years old. She hears the sobs before the child comes running into the kitchen. She bathes away the small trickle of blood on the tiny knee. She dabs on the Mercurochrome and reassures and cuddles. So many, many falls and scrapes over the next few months and the child always comes running to this wonderful friend and protector.

It is the child's first day of school and the mother waves courageously at that dear, frightened face staring sorrowfully from the window of the bus. The bus disappears down the road and the tears fall softly from her eyes. The child is so small, the world so cruel, and the mother feels insecure and helpless.

The child is twelve years old. The mother sits in the small alcove of the hospital. Appendicitis is nothing. No more serious, really, than the common cold. But she prays. Dear God, be with my child during this operation. The doctor comes softly down the corridor and tells her that everything went fine. No complications at all. She walks slowly, exhausted both mentally and physically, and enters the room. The child lays

motionless and pale, her precious, precious child and her heart breaks. She takes the still hand and holds it tight. She pats gently the small head and her heart overflows with love.

The child is now a senior in high school. The class has a chance to go to England. Imagine! A chance to go to England! Mama, could I go? Please, Mama, it would make me so happy. She thinks of the empty savings account. She feels crushed and defeated. This sweet, dear child doesn't ask for much. Maybe, just maybe, if I worked at the laundromat for awhile, if I skimp and save. Later, at the airport, she waves at the departing plane. Somehow she had managed this miracle. She doesn't feel noble. She doesn't think once of her sacrifice.

The church is filled. Her child stands, tense and nervous, taking those beautiful vows of matrimony. Her mind travels back over the years. She remembers her child's first hesitant step and the pride she had felt. Those kindergarten pictures crayoned hideously, and how she had applauded and praised. And now, as she glanced at her child standing before the altar, she thought how swiftly, how very swiftly, the years had flown. She sat stunned and bewildered because in a few moments there would be a new life, there would be a breaking of ties, and her baby simply would not be a baby anymore.

The years pass by. Every sorrow that hurts her child pierces her own tender heart. The night of the accident she hurries to the hospital. Not appendicitis this time. No, much more serious than that. She enters the room and once again she feels fear at that pale face before her. She takes the hand and holds it tight. And she prays. This sorrow is but one of many that will fill her life in the next few years.

She mercurochromes the knees of her grandchild. She reaches down into the depths of her heart and always finds one more ounce of caring, one more pound of love. Her hair is white now, her face wrinkled. She looks back over all those years of motherhood, of so many tears and so much pain, and she would gladly do it over again. A thousand million times she would do it all over again. And in the twilight of her life she loves her child with the same deep intensity she did the day it was born.

My friends...Sunday is Mother's Day.

The mother I have described above is my mother, your mother, every mother. For those of you who are lucky enough to still have your mother, I want you to make this Sunday a very special day. You can buy your usual candy and flowers and your mother will appreciate it. But I also want you to sit down in the solitude of your home and think about your mother. Think about her sacrifices, her tears and tender caring, the pain and fright she has suffered. Think about her smile, her courage, and her magnificent sweetness that gave you life.

Then take her in your arms. Bring forth from the bottom of your heart the deep, warm emotions of your gratitude and say, sincerely, "Mama, I love You."

You'll make her very happy.