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## Every Day is Mother's Day

by Penny Humphrey

Joan settled back onto the pillows as instructed. She would much rather have got up and got on with her usual Sunday routine.

Up early before the family appeared in the kitchen starting their demands on her for the day. Feed the dog, feed the cat, put the school clothes in to wash, empty the dish washer, Hoover the floor, dust the sides, scrub the spuds, empty the bin, prepare the Sunday joint for cooking, etc etc etc. All the while grumbling about her lot under her breath and the lazy good for nothing, unappreciative slobbs slumbering on upstairs.

Joan's whole life was one of martyred slavery to her acquired title of Mother. It wasn't her given name, her given name of course was Joan, just plain Joan, no expectations came with that name and nothing was given. But Mother, the sheer heavy weight of the name she took on when little Freddie was born. She wore the title with pride then and also when Sophie came along two years later.

By the time Henry, Edward, George and little Millie arrived, the title of Mother was definitely losing its charm and the gentle title of Joan had virtually disappeared.

Joan fidgeted with the pillow, trying to make her head comfortable. She reflected for a moment on her Catholic upbringing, no choice there, the family belonged to the Holy Mother Church and so she too was expected to follow the Faith. As far as Joan knew, the Holy Mother had only had the one child, admittedly he had come to a very sticky end before his time but she could have known nothing of Joan's fervent praying that Sid would be so drunk

on a Saturday night that he would fall straight to sleep and the thankfulness that the arrival of another baby had been deferred for at least another week.

There was loud clattering downstairs followed by the sound of breaking china. Joan hoped it was not from her bone china dinner service. The smell of burnt toast now crept up the stairs and the sound of stage whispered bickering. Every muscle in her body was taut with nervous tension.

At last the Mothers Day breakfast tray arrived, held by Freddie who was followed by five beaming faces. Joan managed a watery smile as she tucked in to cold poached egg on soggy black but scraped, toast and strong black coffee, they had forgotten the milk but never mind. They seemed happy with her reaction and left her to it. An effort had been made after all.

Joan glanced at the clock, it was 9.00 already, lots of catching up with the chores to be done. Sid came in with the Sunday paper as she glanced at the bomb site the kids had made of the kitchen.

“Didn’t they do well?” he said. “I bet you wish every day was Mother’s Day. What time’s lunch?”