



Every Day is Mother's Day

by Zoe Carroll

You're a decidedly average Mother
You've never been the best
We don't get on with each other
But at least you're not Rose West

Because it's Mother's day and I feel obliged to send you a card.

"Can you see the problem with this Hannah?"

I sigh. The disciplinary meeting is of course a formality, I know that I shouldn't have sent that poem up for approval but I was at the end of my tether.

"I'm sorry Darren. I thought it would be funny. Not everyone gets on with their parents and all the smooch gets to some people, I thought it would be good to offer an alternative."

"That's not what you're paid to do Hannah. Here at Clifton's cards we need poem writers who can do the job. Your promotion into special events might have been a mistake, I am considering putting you back onto birthdays."

"Do what you need to do Darren. I did ask for a sideways move onto Sympathy and Loss but you didn't approve it."

“So this is your repose to not getting your own way then is it?” Darren’s face was beginning to flush above his cheap suit and nylon shirt.

“No, it’s not that, it’s just that I don’t get on with my own mother and being on the Mother’s Day section is therefore like purgatory” I try not to sound like a moody teenager. “It’s difficult for me to write sincere poetry about a woman I can’t actually stand and who I wouldn’t buy a card with the poems that I write in them. I took the advice you gave me at my appraisal and wrote from the heart, this is what I’ve got in my heart about mothers.”

Darren’s face is grim but I press on “So that’s why I was hoping for a move into cards where my poetry would be more personal. I can be sympathetic and sorry for people’s loss all day long. I can do pet loss, loss of a partner, parent loss, loved one loss.”

“Alright, alright.” Darren holds up a hand to stop my flow. He looks at his computer screen and scrolls up and down on a large spreadsheet. I take the time to look around his poky office. It is grubby and malodorous with piles of paper and card samples stacked into piles on every surface. There are four dirty coffee cups among all the clutter on his desk. I can’t wait to get out of here.

I hadn’t expected this when I had excitedly told everyone that I had a paying job as a writer and that my poetry was going to be published on cards all over the country. I did four months on general birthday card messages before getting promoted onto the special events team. I had no idea that the company created seasonal event cards throughout the year and so for the last three months I had spent every day writing messages and poems to be included in Mother’s Day cards and I was ready to throw in the towel with my so-called writing career.

Darren looked up again “I can shift Justine onto Marriages, Weddings and civil partnerships, Charlie and Neil can combine Mother’s Day and Father’s Day and you can slide into Sympathy and Loss but don’t come running back here when you get depressed. You can spend a few days in Graduations and Best Teachers if you need a break. Now go, I’ll be keeping an eye on you Hannah.”

I left with a spring in my step and a smile. At least I had wormed my way out of Mother’s Day.