

# Mother's Day Breakfast in Bed

Just recently I heard a young woman exclaim that she believed Mother's Day was started by Hallmark and FTD in an effort to sell and sell big in the month of May. Then she followed up with a sour, "So I don't buy into it!" It made me feel sad... both for her and her mother. To celebrate the lives of mothers, and celebrate in a way that reveres who they are, is homage paid to a deserving lot. I am one of the "lot," and I totally believe in Mother's Day.

I think about my own mother often, especially at this time of year. I think of the all the love and devotion she showered on my dad, my two sisters, and me. I'm not saying that she was Mary Poppins, "practically perfect in every way;" she made her mistakes. But she cleaned up her messes as easily as she moved through the kitchen washing dishes and putting away food, after the evening meal. She was not opposed to saying "I'm sorry." She did not cover up, coerce, or pontificate. She was human delivering humanity in abundance, especially to us kids.

My mother died May 19, 2003 right after Mother's Day that year. The following Mother's Day was a wicked one for me. With memories of the previous year's celebration still fresh in my mind, I had no intention of celebrating Mother's Day. To me, it was a day of mourning. I was lying in bed contemplating getting up, or pulling the covers over my head and sleeping away the day.

My husband had died twenty-one months before my mom's death, and I was feeling mighty sad, mighty alone, and mighty sorry for myself. With silent tears at the ready, I sat up in bed beginning my getting out of bed in the morning ritual. For me getting out of bed isn't easy. I have prosthetic legs to don before the race for the bathroom ensues. Staying in bed with the covers over my head is never an option. The bladder always trumps the lingering and the lounging. That day it even trumped despondency.

As I was sitting on the side of the bed, "strapping 'em on," I got a whiff of something cooking, or the more appropriate word would be, burning. I inhaled a little deeper. The odor of burned (or perhaps slightly overdone) toast was wafting its way from the kitchen, down the hall, and assaulted my nose the moment it crossed the threshold of my bedroom.

And then I heard them!

"Be careful Colin, don't cut yourself! That knife's sharp." My eleven-year-old son, Wes, was instructing his eight-year-old brother.

Sheer panic set in and I quickened the pace of donning my legs. But my mother's voice came to my rescue and calmed my panic. "Don't spoil the surprise for them," I heard her say in my head. And it dawned on me. I now understood my children's intent. I put the leg donning on hold. I ignored my screaming bladder, lay back down, and feigned sleep.

I heard their excited whispers, as they padded down the hallway. "This is so cool, she's going to be so surprised," they giggled. My two little conspirators could

barely keep their voices down, as they made their way toward my bedroom.

"Happy Mother's Day," they shouted, almost shrieking in excitement. I jumped. They laughed. Their faces, lit with pride that they had pulled off the surprise on "dear old mom," turned my sorrow into pure unadulterated joy. Breakfast in bed was served. Two runny eggs, burned or slightly overcooked toast, and a mutilated apple was the menu du jour for this glorious day. Both kids were hopping around on my bed bouncing, the two big weeping yellow-eyed eggs daring me to eat them. I quickly covered them with my slightly overdone toast, and wondered how I was going to get this meal down.

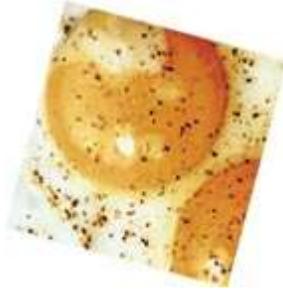
I praised my children's ability to pull off this wonderful surprise, and asked them where they had gotten the idea. I began stuffing my mouth with disgusting eggs trying in desperation to keep the visual of those disturbing egg yolks out of my head. I didn't even dare a glance at my plate. "From you, Mom, don't you remember? You told us about serving Grandma Frannie breakfast in bed on Mother's Day, when you and Aunt Claudia and Aunt Lora were kids."

I was immediately transported back in time to my own childhood. It was Mother's Day and my sisters and I were preparing breakfast in bed for our mother. We were co-conspirators, giggling with excitement and burning toast. Ours was a more elaborate meal given the two older sisters, but nonetheless difficult for my mother to choke down. She was not a big breakfast eater, and certainly wasn't one to eat before rising from bed.

I remembered Mom looking absolutely thrilled. She smiled at us as if we had just pulled off the biggest surprise of her life. And even though she could hardly stomach the breakfast served, she approached her plate with enthusiasm, eating with gusto and, "um umming" as she swallowed every morsel.

As I dove further into the memory, I uncovered my feelings of pride and accomplishment at taking care of her that day—nothing less than what she did for us the other 364 days of the year. I felt a blanket of love extending from my mother covering me, wrapping me in her warmth.

Instantly, I was back in my own room in my own bed, now the mom, being taken care of by my children. My thoughts of sorrow were long past. Despondency was no longer banging its insistence on the doors to my heart. I realized that just because my mother was no longer alive, her blanket still covered me. I, in turn, wrapped my own children



within its warmth. As I looked at my sons' exuberant faces, I hoped that someday they would relay this story of Mother's Day to their children, wrapping them in that boundless blanket of love.

My mother taught me that the greatest gifts you can give to yourself are your own children. I captured that knowledge fully and completely on Mother's Day 2004, even as my stomach lurched and my bladder screamed.

Hallmark may say it in many words, beautifully crafted and enhanced with colorful visuals. And flowers may be a lovely gesture. For me, the memories of "breakfast in bed" will never be surpassed by any card no matter how lovely, or any flowers regardless of arrangement. I don't need a special day to remind me of how wonderful it is being a mom, but I love Mother's Day because it gives my children the opportunity to know how

important they are in my life, to pay homage to me—one of the very fortunate and blest lot.



**Recipe for a Deliciously Beautiful Mother's Day:**

Two Runny Eggs  
Two pieces burned (or slightly overcooked) toast  
Cover eggs with toast  
Eat with gusto  
Don't think about what You're swallowing!  
Bon Appetit

—by Cindy Charlton  
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**My Mother, My Child**

*By Claudia Charlton*

Born to be loved,  
I was brought here by Mother.

A gift of Love—stronger than forged steel—  
Was given to me.

Love, Nurture, Direction,  
Protection  
Bestowed upon my life.

Unconditional, tender, without restraint,  
This gift I've borne  
Throughout childhood, adolescence,  
Adulthood;

Always knowing where to turn to  
For  
Support, Guidance, Power

I want to please her but somehow fall short  
I think.  
But her love is secure,  
I know.

Time and illness ravage her body and mind,  
Once strong and complete,  
Rendering her helpless, childlike, in many ways

I touch her with the tenderness of the mother caressing  
her  
Newborn  
My heart fills with the longing  
For the other mom; the strong Mom  
Yet  
I know this is the path she must walk.  
And I will walk beside her  
Take her hand  
Hold her up  
As the Mother lends strength to her  
Tiny child

She is my Mother, my Child  
I, her Child, her Mother.

Once one, as I nestled beneath her breast,  
Then two, separate identities,  
Then one again,  
As I take her into my heart forever.