

A Mother's Love

The best day of my life I can remember like it was yesterday. I was five years old, my mother and I went to the local fair. I had been begging all week to go, and she had been busy with her 'chores'. When you live on a farm, they seem to be unending. There's always a chore to do. At five, I had always heard about them in the abstract, but had not done any myself at the time. That would change.

"Laurie," she had called up to me as I played with my dolls, "It's time to go to the fair." I flung my doll to the floor and rushed down the stairs as fast as my mary-janes would take me. I plunged into her arms as she waited for me with that smile. She rustled my hair on my head, "Be careful, she said, you wouldn't want to hurt yourself." In my mother's arms, I felt the strength of the world. Nothing and no one would hurt me. She was a petite, strong woman. She was a beautiful, natural woman. She was a meek, assertive woman. She was many things, and only one, my mom.

We arrived at the fair, me and mom. It was the last day. I had somewhat feared that we might not make it, except for the fact, that she had assured that we would go. I remember her sun dress, yellow, waving in the slight breeze and me in mine. Her glow a mirror image of the sun, and I a dwarfed mirror of her. I just wanted to be like her. I remember how her image would pull eyes to her, an unknowing magnet. Everyone looked at her; she was so beautiful. I can still see her standing there, her hand acting as a visor to block out her only competition, shading those violet eyes that were just like mine. She gazed down at me, as I stared up at her.

"Come here you," she said. "Are you ready to have some fun?" she asked as she pulled me up into her arms. Just the thought of that embrace brings her smell rushing back to me —dewed daffodils on Sunday morning. I giggled in her arms as we walked the fair grounds.

"Can we ride the Ferris wheel?" I had asked, knowing the answer would be yes. "Let's go take a look," she said. We walked over and it was the biggest thing that I had ever seen. As a kid, it looked as if it rose into the clouds. "I want to ride it mommy," I told her though now questioning my prior excitement. We both glared at it. "I think we should," she had responded. "Just two big girls riding high in the sky with our hair blowing in the wind." We went to buy tickets.

I remember standing on line and holding the tickets with my thumb constantly rubbing them. I handed the guy our tickets, and we rode up and down. I was a little afraid and grabbed hold to her hand. We rode for what seemed like an hour. She rubbed my blond hair and placed soft kisses on top of my head at intermittent intervals. The comfort of her presence made me think that I could do anything, be anything... want for nothing.

We left the Ferris wheel and bought ice-cream – her, lemon, her favorite and me, lemon, because it was her favorite. We walked the fairground park, hand in hand, and watched people play games. She tried one, the one with the milk jugs and baseball. The jugs dropped in a clatter and we won — a bear for me, brown. She gave it to me, and I soaked it with lemon ice cream. "What should we call him?" she asked. "Mommy," I said. She said that I already had her as Mommy. "I'm yours forever," she said as she grabbed the bear and I up into her arms. "How about lemon drop?" she asked, "since he has our favorite ice cream all over him anyway," she said while tickling me. "I think that will work," I said, giggling and looking at lemon drop. He smelled like mom's favorite ice cream and his soft, brown, comforting eyes reminded me of her so much. "Lemon drop, this is the best day ever," I whispered into his furry, bear ears.

That was the last day I spent with my mom. She was killed by my father that night.

From that day on, lemon drop was only lemon drop in public. When alone, she was mommy.

The best day of my life is easy to remember because it led to the worst night of my life.