

● **Erma Fiste**

notations

Poor Mother

Things started happening about a week ago.

At 3:00 one morning, a sky-writing plane buzzed over a few times leaving the statement, "Don't forget May 11." Embroidered on my pillow was a reprint of Whistler's Mother . . . All over the house loud-colored neon signs displayed candy ads and florist offerings. It was only when the beans in my chili spelled out, "Remember your gray-haired mother on Mother's Day," that I realized that Mother had launched the campaign for "her" day.

I have known my mother all my life. As a matter of fact, we are quite fond of each other, and never a year goes by but that I don't reminisce of the dear dead days of my childhood.

Each morning when the serum of the last hypo they had given me before my bedtime had worn off, I would arise and dress. Then I would put my grubby little paws into mater and pater's hands and we would walk together through the city park. When we had gathered enough flowers to pay off the mortgage on our new Mixmaster, we would head homeward—the three of us. And in the evening while mother read over her "You Too Can Play A Banjo and Be The Death Of The Party Correspondence Course" instructions, father and I would go wading in the outside cistern. We were a happy lot, all right. And then one day, tragedy struck our little trio . . . **father found mother a job!** It wasn't easy after that. Father and I went solemnly about our shoplifting, and machine-gunning old widows. You see, it was not the same knowing that somewhere mother was macadamizing a highway. She quit the job three months later. It was ruining her fingernails—and besides it was such a respectable position that none of her friends would speak to her.

Mother then devoted her life to me. I don't think I shall ever forget the first day she escorted me to school . . . How the kiddies laughed at me in my little staunch oxfords and middie blouse (I told mother the middie was too short to be worn without a skirt) . . . my first school play where I played the part of a peppermint stick—you know, a role you could sink your teeth into . . . my 16th birthday party . . . she tried so hard to entertain my little friends . . . how they clapped when someone pinned the tail on my father instead of the donkey. He was a scream that night . . . one big one!

Then that serious moment after my first dance when ugly rumors circulated that a post office not only served as a place to mail letters and buy bonds. Graduation, and her big boulder tears of pride as I tripped on my gown and fell into the orchestra pit. The lump in her throat the day I went away to school . . . the lump on my head when I came back three months later with a letter from the Dean of Women. As yes, all this I owe to my mother . . .

To her this column is dedicated. Her campaigning has not been in vain. This Sunday is her day! I'll serve her hominy grits in bed, I'll vacuum the living room, I'll be a good daughter. I'll give up this mad crave to be an honorary vice-president and be a respectable legal typist like she always planned. I'll make it up to her. Yesiree, and if she gives me a \$5 allowance advance, I'll even leave the house for a day and give her a rest like she has never before experienced!