A Childhood Experience that Helped Me to Grow Up

I will always remember the way her palm felt soft like silk against my cheek, and how her voice was smooth like caramel, running off a silver spoon. It was different not having her around anymore, but I suppose I have gotten used to it. It had been ten years after all. Now it was just my father and I running the house and while it might have taken some getting used to, we were eventually able to get our lives mostly back on track. Our daily routine that was once structured and well thought out became more spontaneous and slightly hectic, but in a good way. I still missed her everyday and it was hard to not let little things remind me of her.

The scent of vanilla always seemed to do the trick, as it was her signature smell, and it brought me back to a simpler time of my mother and I baking in the kitchen. Her warmth and kindness always embraced every corner of every room that she stepped foot in, and the kitchen was no different. Her fingers worked like magic as she practically danced through whatever recipe she had decided on. Chocolate chip cookies were always her favourite thing to make, and my favourite activity was to help her. My young, clumsy fingers always made a mess of the dough, leaving it in crumbles of unmixed flour and sugar as I did my best to copy my mother’s technique. But she would come and rescue me every time, placing her long, soft hands overtop of mine, and working to knead it into the perfect mixture. Her demeanor so forgiving and thoughtful as she would just chuckle at my conquests in the kitchen.

Her smile is another thing that I will greatly miss about her and I try to recall the last time I had appreciated it to its fullest. If only I had known what little time was left then, and how few of those pure smiles that she often gifted to others I would receive. It had been at my tenth birthday party, and I had walked down into the living room to show off the party dress I had been eager and waiting to wear for weeks. It was a soft, baby blue colour with silver sparkles that twinkled like stars in the night sky. I twirled about while my father took photographs for the family album and my mother kneeled in front of me, beaming from ear to ear with a look that radiated how proud she was to have me as a daughter.

It was when she got sick that things began to change. My mother stayed constant, but the world around me morphed into something entirely different. The colours were not as vibrant, noises that surrounded me sounded dull, and my father was almost unrecognizable. It became daily trips to the hospital after school where I would stay there until evening came. At first, I would find things to entertain myself, but it only lasted so long before my imagination grinded to a halt and a constant period of waiting and fear settled into place. I wanted to help my mother, but I was always told there was nothing I could do; I was just a kid after all.

When she passed, I had a gut feeling that I was not the fearful kid from the hospital anymore, that I needed to be more for my mother. I needed to show her that I was capable of helping to run the household with my father, that while no one could take her place, I was going to do my best to live up to her kind, wise, patient and caring reputation that she had obtained with such ease. I was going to continue to make her proud.