

Mommy Dearest

by Jake Barnes

His daddy died in his sleep. Went to bed one night and never got up. His mother didn't know what to do. "I'll have to get a job!" she wailed. This was after the funeral. She and her son were alone in the house.

The young man and his mother didn't get along. They never had. He had loved his dad, thought ill of his mother. She was a scold.

Now she was alone in the world, and she didn't know what to do. Things would work out, the son said, and they did. The son went back to California where he lived. He got a divorce, and his mother got a job as a hostess in a restaurant.

Some years later he was sitting in his mother's apartment. He had come back for his annual summer visit. After dinner, they sat in easy chairs in his mother's comfortable apartment, which fronted on the river. In an unguarded moment, Mom confessed that the past thirty years had been the best years of her life. She was very happy, she said. When she realized what she had said, her eyes grew wide, and her hand flew to her mouth. Her son threw back his head and laughed.

