

Mothers and Sons

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by [SLWalker](#)

Summary

(2246) - Mothers, sons, brothers, and the heartache that happens regardless of whether you're the one going, or the one staying behind.

They always said that he favored his mother. And as he watched her from the doorway of the kitchen, Scotty had to kind of agree with it. He'd never really drawn any lines like that before; didn't often spend time asking himself where he got what and from whom, but as he watched her move around the kitchen, he could see some elements of himself.

Maybe, though, what bothered him was that he didn't see as many as he expected.

They shared coloring: black hair, brown eyes, Irish colors from somewhere far enough back in the woodpile that no one was sure who the original culprit was. And in the kitchen, she moved with the same sure-footed confidence that he did in an engine room or at the salvage yard. Focused and hard to distract.

But where he was almost always aware of where other people were in relation to himself, she didn't see him there.

Fidgeting briefly, he spoke up. "Mum?"

She didn't startle; another thing they didn't share. But she turned and beamed him a smile that was a fair mirror of his own, dusting her hands off on her apron. "Aye now, and who's that handsome lad standin' in the door?"

Despite himself, Scotty chuckled at that, casting a joking look around. "I don't know, there's only me. Must be seein' things."

The corners of her eyes crinkled and she tipped her head to the side, looking a little confused by the humor. "I'm glad ye showed up. I'm just in the middle o' makin' up the dishes fer that charity drive in town, but if ye've got some time, we can catch up when I'm done. Yer sister and father'll be home in an hour. I dinna ken what their plans are, though."

Scotty shook his head. "I don't," he said, and in that split second was aware of the 'don't', and consequently the 'can't' and 'won't' and all of the rest that had become a natural part of his own voice. "Time o' departure's in an hour; I have to report in a wee bit more'n a half."

"Oh." She wasn't disappointed. She just smiled again. "Well, I'm glad I got tae lay eyes on ye then. Charlie an' Edward'll not believe how much ye've changed."

The naming dynamics of this family were peculiar at best; he'd never quite figured out why. Most people automatically assumed that Caitlyn Scott was her married name, probably because of her wedding band; it wasn't, though, it was her maiden name, which she kept simply because she was established under it when she and his father married. His father was the Stuart, and his sister. He'd never figured out why his own name was drawn from her side of the family exclusively, just like his coloring. Montgomery for his grandfather, Edward for her oldest brother, and then the Scott family name.

And for reasons that he actively avoided thinking about, he was glad for that.

"Probably not," he said, snapping himself back to the moment at hand. "I don't think I've seen 'em for--" He wasn't sure how long. "A year?"

"Aye, well, if anyone'd understand, it'd be those two brick-heads." His mother turned back to her cooking, with a fond and distant smile. "Ye couldna pin them down. Always off gettin' intae trouble. I couldna keep up with 'em."

Even though he didn't get why, that struck something inside of him. He loved his uncles, despite the fact he hadn't really built a relationship with them as an adult, and despite the fact that they were pranksters and tricksters and less-than-responsible for their ages. But when they were

together, being entirely bad influences on each other, it was obvious that they'd follow each other into hell or back, and that for all their surface bluster, they took their role as brothers seriously.

And they loved their little sister. But she was outside of that fraternal tie.

Scotty absently stepped over to the counter and took his position as her sous chef, even if he had to leave soon and get to the transport station. He'd been assigned as engineering adviser on the Denevan run; inglorious work, since the *Horizon* ships were both ancient and didn't require much actual advising, but still a step up from manual laborer.

He'd been let off corrective action early when war broke out with the Klingons; Starfleet scrambled for qualified people and pulled them off of the cargo vessels and the science missions, leaving a number of spaces to be filled by ensigns and techs. And while he would probably be an ensign until he was fifty, given his record, at least now he'd be in open space.

He felt selfish.

He'd only been back to Aberdeen every few months, and then only briefly, ever since he'd been assigned to Lunar and then later the San Francisco Yards. By contrast, knowing he was on borrowed time when war broke out, he had spent as much time as he could in South Bristol, with that family that still scared him a little, and that he would give anything or do anything for.

He felt a little like he'd failed utterly to be the good son he was supposed to be.

"Ye'll be careful out there, ye hear?" his mother said, and he nodded dutifully. He would be. He doubted that there would be much trouble, but he would be.

Melinda Corrigan had said nearly the same thing, and had held onto him so hard that it was almost impossible to breathe, and there were few things that-- that *hurt* quite like seeing someone who had no reason whatsoever to give a damn about you with tears in their eyes. It was the first time that he'd returned that affection; held on back, and felt messed up and off-balanced. Never mind the absolute mess that Cor had been; Scotty had to eventually just pry himself away from his best friend, and was very unprepared for how hard on his heart that ended up being.

Aaron, being a former Starfleet engineer himself, had taken it the best; a handshake, and a quiet nod of encouragement, but even that meant something.

Scotty always wanted to believe that his own mother loved him. When he was a wee thing, she'd sing him lullabies; when he got a little older, some of the happiest memories he had of his childhood were her teaching him how to cook. Not so much because he liked it at the time, but because he was there with her, and it was just them and this shared talent. And he was fine with that, because that was how things were; he'd never known anything different. He was only rarely home in his teenage years, and that was fine too.

That was the way things were.

He would be careful because he wanted to believe that his mother loved him and would worry about him.

But also because he knew, in a way that made him feel half-terrified, that across the Atlantic in a little town in Midcoast Maine, there were people who were going to miss him terribly while he was gone.

"Mum," he said, and he was surprised at the crack in his voice.

"Aye?" she asked, and again gave him that look like she didn't quite understand; the look that mirrored his, the lack of understanding that no longer did.

He got an arm around her and kissed her on the cheek. "Thanks for teachin' me how to cook."

She watched her son, who stared off across the harbor, and knew that it wasn't the water that he was actually looking at, but something far beyond it. After getting back from Augusta, Andy had immediately excused himself, a quiet mumble, and hadn't been back for hours. Finally, she went out looking and found him on the swing bridge.

Andy had always worn his heart on his sleeve; it was impossible not to know what was going on inside of him, because it radiated. He'd been a happy child, and a happy teenager, though a bit of a slacker in school. He made friends quickly, easily, and without much effort.

Now, at twenty-five, he still wore his heart on his sleeve and his heartache was written all over him.

She had not expected to end up with another child, but there was no way she could classify Scotty as anything else. Initially, she'd liked him just because he was a good-natured, helpful kid. Then, when he came back with Andy after the court-martial, standing at her son's side while Andy explained what had happened, she'd tried to understand how they could have gotten themselves into so much trouble.

And for a year or so, she'd eyed this young man whenever he came around, rare as it was, skittish as he was. Over that time, she tried to understand him, to figure out where exactly he fit into her son's life, and thereby the rest of theirs. But it was when he showed up to see if they had anything to send to their son, so far away, that she realized that he was adrift and had no place to retreat to, no safe harbor.

In that moment, she had decided to try to give him one.

Looking at Andy on the bridge, she was more than glad she had. Not because Andy was bleeding at the heart, but because the same depth of sorrow he felt now was just another part of the patience and warmth and compassion that he'd found inside of himself when he'd fought tooth and nail to make a friend who wasn't easily made, and fought just as hard to keep that friend through hell or high water.

It was the same thing inside of him that prompted him to try to watch over Rachel now, far better than he had when they were children; it was the same thing that made him reach out to people who he might not have reached out to before. And even in his heartache now, Melinda was deeply proud of her son.

Just as she knew she would miss his brother, from having to pick his boots up from where he invariably left them in someone's walking path, to the way he'd warmed up to being around enough that he no longer looked utterly shocked by being hugged hello or goodbye.

She walked down the planks to stand next to Andy, and he gave her a small smile before looking back off. But it was short-lived, and she knew it was for her sake.

"There's a war going on out there, Mom," he said, and she could hear the worry and plaintive edge in his voice. He paused, then continued in a tone that sounded grief to its depths. "How can I protect him while I'm here?"

Her own tears started again. For her son, for his brother, for herself. Just as much, though, she was grateful for them.

"You already do."

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