



Proudly Presents

# MOTHER'S DAY

**WRITTEN BY CELESTE LEBEAUX**

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## IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

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These flowers are pretty, aren't they? They're Mother's favorite. And you've got to get your mother her favorite flowers on Mother's Day, don't you? Or you *should*... It's Mother's Day. You should always get your mother as many of her favorite flowers as you can on Mother's Day. You never know when she won't be around to enjoy them anymore. Like my mom here. They just got the tombstone up. It's nice, don't you think? It's not so ornate. Some of these others—whew! I'm mean, you should show people how much you love them while they're here, you know? Yeah. You should show them while they're here. I did. Not a day went by that I didn't let Mother know—just how much I loved her. Her real name was Dorothy, but everyone called her Daisy. It was her favorite flower. So one day Mother decided that's what she wanted to be called. Everyone loved Mother, so no one ever had a problem pretending that Dorothy Gail Peterson was named Daisy Gail Peterson. Why would anyone have a problem with that? My mother was the sweetest woman anyone could ever meet. Oh, did I mention she was also born with mental retardation?

Dorothy Gail Peterson—if you can't tell, my grandmother was rather fond of Judy Garland's portrayal of Dorothy Gail—the little lost girl from Kansas in *The Wizard of Oz*. You know, most mentally-challenged adult women who give birth and raise a child are only mildly-disabled. My mother's mental-handicap was labeled 'severe.' Severe mental-retardation. My grandmother told me that I was Mother's pride and joy. I was her baby girl. When my mother was little, my grandmother said she loved baby dolls. And the more *realistic* the dolls were the better. I was told that every night my mother would pray that someday one of her baby dolls would spring to life...and become a *real* baby. When I was born, my mother believed her prayers were answered.

I'm Dill, by the way. It's an odd name, but fitting at the same time. I've told you that Mother's favorite flower was the daisy, but I don't think I told you what her second favorite flower was, have I? If you haven't already figured out the obvious, it was daffodils. I think it's nice that I was named after something Mother loved

so dearly, but let's be honest. You can't go to school with a name like Daffodil. You can't even go to kindergarten with a name like Daffodil. Get it? Daffodil? Kinder-*garten*? That cracks me up every time. Mother didn't have a problem with me changing my name. After all, she went from a normal name like Dorothy and changed it to a flower—Daisy. I changed my name from a flower—Daffodil—to Dill...a pickle. The point is we were polar opposites, and yet, somehow we were very much alike. Well, obviously I had the higher IQ...at age four, but still—I was her baby doll come to life and she was my mother.

No baby was ever loved more than me. Of course, my grandmother was the legal guardian of both my mother and me, but there was no mistaking which one was my mother. I'm surprised I ever learned to walk, because my mother held me all of the time. She would hold me, rock me to sleep and dance with me around the room. She loved listening to original movie soundtracks, and she was especially fond of those without lyrics. She would twirl me around the room to such classics as the *Theme from Jaws*, the *Theme from Poltergeist*, *Halloween*... Is it any wonder that I'm not, nor have ever been afraid of horror films? To be honest, most of them make me laugh. Of course, when she would occasionally take me out, I noticed that most of the other children would cower away from my mother. I suppose they thought that she, herself, was some sort of monster. I guess to a small child, she could have been perceived as scary. I never thought Mother was scary. She was just different.

I've told you that my mother was classified with severe mental-retardation. Well, she *looked*...physically-disabled as well. It wouldn't take a genius to see immediately that this wasn't a normal picture. Here was this woman—barely capable of tying her own shoes—with this perfectly normal child beside her. If I had a dime for every pitiful sigh or look or for every time someone quickly looked away, I would have more money than Bill Gates and Donald Trump put together. I didn't care what other people thought. Mother was beautiful. To me, she was. And when she