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AP Language

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Mother's Day Interview

Since today is Mother's Day, it would be very appropriate for this character sketch to reflect upon my mother. My mom is a very strong willed person who does not back down from anything; well maybe except for the average algebra problem here and there. She takes matters into her own hands and does not wait for the opportunity to just arise right in front of her. She goes out and accomplishes what needs to be done. However, there is one main reason why my mother has become the person that she is today. During the divorce of her parents, she had to step up and become the mother of her little brother and sister and also she had to get her mother back on track.

When my mom entered seventh grade, she remembers how things started to deteriorate at home. As she told me, she said that "the first things [she] could remember was the arguments behind closed doors." She remembers how they grew louder every time. She finally found out that her dad was having an affair with one of the secretaries that worked with him at the bank in downtown Grafton, West Virginia. Her name was Betty and she was a married woman to an alcoholic railroad worker. During the beginning stages of this process, my mom could also recall the fact that her dad kept buying and highlighting books that he would give to my grandmother. The books gave tips on how to stay attractive. This shallow move, started the anger in which would continue to build within her throughout this whole process. The next thing that my mom

can remember about the divorce is how her mother at one time had a black eye. My grandmother got this black eye because my mom's dad was starting to beat her. However, instead of telling what was happening, my grandmother was forced to go around saying that she had slipped and fell into a doorknob. She was too embarrassed about the whole situation and was deathly scared that if she told anyone, that her husband would leave her. She was so scared of this because he controlled the money and he was the one that supported the family. So for that year my mom and my grandmother continued to live on ignoring what was going on and how it was affecting them.

As my mother entered eighth grade, things continued to worsen. During this time the affair had grown between Betty and my mom's dad. The affair had even seeped into Betty's marriage, causing alarm for her husband. This all climaxed when one night Betty's husband Pete came to the house with a gun. As the two couples were in the kitchen of the house, Pete had the gun to the head of my mom's dad. Pete was drunk at the time and was threatening to pull the trigger. But my mom's dad was cursing and even enticing Pete to pull the trigger. At this time, my mom remembers seeing her elementary aged brother and sister hiding underneath the bed where she could only see their eyes. During the commotion, my mom had to help separate the two men and force Pete out of the house. As that year continued, both my mom and my grandmother finally exploded. What set them off were two different things. For my grandmother, it was the fact that her husband would not provide winter jackets for their children. She could accept him cheating and the occasional physical abuse, but as for not providing essentials for her children, that was crossing the line. As for my mom, it was a combination of many things that caused her to explode. For one it was the fact that her father was cheating on her

mother. My grandmother is probably one of the nicest people in the world and the fact that he was cheating on her angered my mom greatly. The second reason was because he was providing more things for Betty than he was for his own family. My mom's dad bought Betty many expensive things in which he never thought of giving to his own family. Probably the third thing that caused the explosion was just a combination of many things that had infuriated her over a long period of time. So to show her anger, my mom took things into her own hands and left school and went down to the bank where both her father and Betty worked. In this moment of rage my mom created a great scene in the main part of the bank. She confronted her father spewing out all the unjustifiable things he had done to his wife and to his family. This spectacle had blown his cover with the people of Grafton. It had exposed his misdeeds and turned peoples' opinions about him. However, this act did not come without punishment. My mom recalls that night; she received the harshest whipping she had ever gotten. He used a belt and hit her multiple times leaving large welts. However after that, his reign of tyranny was over in that house.

During my mom's freshman year in high school, her father had finally moved out of the house. He had moved down to Charleston, West Virginia to live with Betty. Even though it seemed as if the marriage was finally over, it was still a legal marriage. Even though my grandmother wanted to get an official divorce, she was unable to afford an attorney. As it has been stated before my mom's dad controlled the money and would not fork any over to his wife to help her obtain a lawyer. During this period, my grandmother started to go into a slump. This is when my mom had to basically run the household. My mom had to encourage my grandmother to get a job as fast as possible. My grandmother was finally able to obtain a job working for the school board of Taylor County. This job

paid enough to help provide for the family, but not enough for them to put any into savings. During this time, my mom's dad moved down to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. When he finally moved to Florida, he brought a divorce lawsuit against her. My mom believes that he moved to Florida because the laws there would have allowed him to obtain everything from my grandmother if she was unable to obtain a lawyer. During this time my grandmother started to worry about where she was going to get the money to obtain an attorney in both Florida and West Virginia and also a ticket to Florida to help get her to the courts to fight him. Well since the situation was well known throughout the town, many kind people came to the rescue. A man named Dick Board, who was an attorney, provided my grandmother his services in West Virginia. He did this for free and even later on when my grandmother tried to pay him back, he refused to take the money. Another person that helped my grandmother was a woman named Mrs. Ebert. She provided my grandmother the money that was needed for the ticket for the bus ride to Florida. With these services and money provided, this allowed enough money for my grandmother to obtain a lawyer in Florida. She was able to fight her ex-husband for the money and possessions that were rightfully hers. She was able to keep the house and he also had to pay child support until each child was twenty-one or until they were emancipated.

This legal and just victory helped place my grandmother into a better mood about herself. She started to make more and more friends and she started getting out more often. My mom helped encourage her to do this. My mom also started taking care of her brother and sister while her mom was out working and socializing. As my mom became older, she took on more and more responsibilities to help allow the household to survive.

When my mom was either a junior or senior in high school, she obtain a job at JCPenny's to help provide income for herself and also to provide clothes for her brother and sister.

With this job, it reduced the amount of costs going that was needed to clothe the children and the amount of money that was needed to help support my mom. My mom saved a lot of her money so she could help afford some of the college expenses that she would be incurring shortly. However, she was forced to work a full time job while going to school because without the job, she would not have been able to have paid for college. My mom paid her way through college just like my dad. My mom married my dad when she was twenty-one on my grandmother's birthday which was a few days after the last child support check came to my grandmother. To this day my mom's dad believes that my mom did this on purpose just to get back at him. However, my mom swears that she placed the wedding on that date because it was on her mother's birthday.

The divorce of my mom's parents is one of the biggest events that has shaped my mother. My mom takes charge of a lot of things that come her way. This is similar in the way that she took things into her own hands to help provide for her mom, brother, and sister. My mom is also very frugal when it comes to money. She likes to save a lot of money just in case that there might be a "rainy day." One can see why my mother likes to have a grand reserve of money considering for the greater part of her childhood, her family didn't have much money. My mom continues to take on new challenges everyday in which helps make her a better person. She is even taken on the challenge of selling a house and moving thirteen times. My mother is very much appreciated in her family. Even my grandmother admits that without my mom by her side during that time, she

probably would have not been able to have made it through. The constant encouragements that my mom gave boosted her spirits and brought her to a better life.