

**Title:** Mother's Day

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**Rating:** General

**Characters:** Paul Callan, Georgia Wilson, Father "Poppi" Calero

**Warnings/labels:** None

**Spoilers:** None

**Word count:** 930

**Author notes:** For Tanaqui, who prompted "Miracles - Georgia's 'mother's day party' at the orphanage". Thanks also to Tanaqui for betaing.

**Summary:** May 1986. Being an orphan doesn't stop Georgia from wanting to celebrate Mother's Day, the same as any other American child.

## Mother's Day By Scribblesinink

Poppi snipped a yellowing leaf from the rosebush, before picking up his watering can and puddling liquid around its roots. Though summer was still a month off, spring had been warm and the earth in the courtyard flower beds was already dry and crumbling. As he moved on to tending to the next rose, he let his mind drift, thinking idly of nothing in particular, even as his hands remained busy. Suddenly, hushed but fierce children's voices broke through his musing.

Curious as to what might be going on, he rounded the bushes, finding the owners of the voices perched side by side on a bench. Georgia was kicking the air with one foot, while Paul sat half turned toward her, his expression earnest. They both looked up as Poppi's shadow fell across them, snapping their mouths shut.

Poppi arched an eyebrow, recalling the agitated sound of their voices, even if he hadn't been paying close enough attention to catch what the words had been. "Everything all right?" he asked.

"Fine," Paul muttered.

Poppi frowned a little at the boy's tone, but decided not to call him on it. Paul was reaching that age where an adult's prying was starting to interfere with his growing desire to solve his own problems. "Georgia?" Poppi shifted his attention in her direction.

She peered up at him unhappily. Her face was still a little pale from the flu she'd caught over the winter, her freckles standing out in sharp contrast. She shrugged, not speaking.

"Georgia wants to have a Mother's Day party!" Paul blurted out, no longer able to maintain the silence under Poppi's inquiring gaze. "I told her it was a dumb idea."

"Is not!" Georgia's lower lip quivered but her eyes flashed angrily.

"I see." Poppi set down the watering can and shooed at them to both scoot a bit, so he

could take a seat in the middle. Leaving aside the question of whether it was a 'dumb idea', he turned toward Georgia, asking kindly, "What gave you that notion?"

She raised her thin shoulders again, but mumbled, "School. All the girls were talking about it."

Poppi frowned a moment, doing some mental calculations. "Ah," he said at last, remembering that last Sunday had been not only the sixth Sunday of Easter but also the second Sunday of May: Mother's Day.

"I told her we don't have mothers, so how could we ever have a Mother's Day?" Paul leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, half challenging and half looking for Poppi's confirmation.

"We all have mothers, Paul," Poppi offered calmly. "Yours and Georgia's have simply passed already, is all."

"But—." For the first time since Poppi came on the kids, Paul seemed doubtful. Poppi suppressed a smile; if the boy thought he was laughing at him, it wouldn't end well.

He again shifted his attention to the girl sitting on his other side. "What did you have in mind for the party?"

"Um...." Though she'd been smirking triumphantly at Paul, thinking Poppi wouldn't notice, her expression now turned doubtful. Clearly, she hadn't really thought that far yet. "I don't know," she admitted, her shoulders drooping. "The girls at school said they made their moms breakfast and stuff, but...." Her voice trailed off.

Poppi nodded in understanding. It'd be hard to bring breakfast trays to mothers who were no longer there.

"We could make cards?" Paul suggested unexpectedly. "And—," his brow furrowed in thought. Poppi suspected he was trying to remember something only half-heard. Paul's next words proved him right. "And everyone could wear those flower things? Coro...? Cara...?"

"Carnations," Poppi helped him out, wondering where the boy had picked up that tidbit of traditions.

"Yes, those." Paul puffed out a breath.

"And put party streamers in the breakfast room," Georgia added eagerly. She turned to Poppi and he noticed her eyes were shining with excitement now. "And have balloons so we can let the cards fly up to Heaven." She cocked her head, and Poppi saw some of the doubt creep back behind the her eyes. "We can, Poppi, right?"

"Very much so, child." Poppi smiled, thinking. If they held it on the coming Sunday, they'd be a week late, but he didn't think the children—or their mothers—would mind

very much. The Archdiocese of Boston might, perhaps; after all, it was Pentecost as well. But he didn't want the children to believe he wasn't taking them seriously. And who better to receive the dedication for the flowers that would be used to decorate the church? "Sunday after Mass sound good to you?"

Georgia nodded so hard Poppi half-feared her head might fall off. His smile grew. "You best go on and tell Miss Bess about your plans, then." Miss Bess was the orphanage's cook. "So she can prepare a feast fit for any mother and her children."

"We will!" Georgia hopped off the bench. "Come on, Paul!" She grabbed Paul's hand and, together, the two children dashed off, heading for the kitchen. Watching them go, Poppi shook his head at himself. A Mother's Day party at an orphanage—he'd never have considered it himself. But now that Georgia had put the idea in his head, it made perfect sense.

Chuckling, he picked up his watering can. It was empty and needed refilling. And he'd best trundle off to find Miss Bess himself, to explain further. Undoubtedly, the kids would be too excited to make much sense. And he didn't want to risk her reminding them that orphans didn't have mothers; life was hard enough on his kids as it was.

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