



That Moment - The Thank You

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She suddenly realized what she had in her life

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The days leading up to Mother's Day were miserable. I was about forty months pregnant, or that's what it seemed like at least. It didn't help that my ankles were the size of my head and that I ached everywhere. Combine that with the intense heat that Texas was already experiencing and you had the perfect recipe for an epic pity party. I missed my husband. Robert was with the Army's 1st Armored Division and stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. Or as I preferred to call it, the Dustbowl of America. Though he'd avoided being deployed with his unit so close to my due date, the commanding officer still made him go on the training maneuvers. They were out for two weeks this time. My due date happened to be tomorrow, the day after Mother's Day. Robert was supposed to be home then. I thought his commanding officer was a dick. I was brought out of my mental wanderings by a tug on my pants leg. I glanced down and couldn't help but to smile. Our son, Connor, was staring up at me with an expectant look on his face. With his thick, dark auburn hair and bright hazel eyes, he was the perfect combination of his father and I. At another tug, I put down the dish I had been washing and gave him my full attention. "What's up, sweetheart?" I reached out and ran a hand through his hair, brushing it back from his forehead. I hid a smile as he jerked his head away from my touch and shot me a fierce glare. My little man was already quite independent. "Do you need something?" He gave a vigorous nod and grabbed my hand, pulling me out of the kitchen and in the direction of our small living room. The base housing was less than stellar, but Robert and I had done our best. Luckily he'd commissioned out of college and we weren't in the enlisted housing. The officer's housing wasn't the nicest, but I'd heard the horror stories of the others. Believe me when I say I was grateful for what we had. As we walked down the short hallway I allowed my gaze to slide over the pictures that hung on the wall. Just as every time before, I had a wave of pride rush through me when I saw Robert's graduation photo. He looked so handsome as he pinned on his second lieutenant ribbons. He stood with his ROTC commander and was in his dress uniform, all crisp and military-precise. Who would have ever imagined that the wild bad boy in high school would turn out to be a respected leader of soldiers? The feeling of pride was soon replaced by a deep longing as I then saw our wedding picture. We looked so young, me being eighteen and him only twenty. But, we also looked incredibly happy. Framed with it was the note he'd written to me when we were still in high school. It was yellowed and worn, but it still caused my heart to skip a beat every time I read it. "For you, I'd change. Will you give me a chance?" I smiled in wistful nostalgia as Connor continued to tug me into the living room. The smile changed to one of intense love when I saw what my little man had done. My favorite

blanket and pillow were on the couch and the TV remote on the coffee table. That had disappeared days ago, so he'd found it somewhere, somehow. He'd pulled out all of his favorite toys and placed them along the couch. I looked closer and my heart melted when I saw that he'd left me colored pictures everywhere, the lines on them completely ignored. I swallowed hard and looked down at him, my eyes swimming with tears. "Happy Mudder's Day, Mommy!" he shouted in his exuberant toddler manner. He led me to the couch and pointed to it. "Sit, Mommy," he ordered. With a serious look on my face – that I should be given a medal for managing to maintain – I gave him a nod. "Okay, baby." I sat where he instructed and smiled at him. "Thank you! I love it!" He beamed at me, pleased with himself. He then proceeded to clamber up onto my lap, or what was left of it anyway. Once settled, he reached over and pulled the blanket onto us. I wrapped my arms around him and pulled him as close to me as I could. My face buried in his neck and I breathed in his little boy scent; baby wash, Play-Dough and that unique innocent toddler smell. My heart almost burst with love when he wrapped an arm around my shoulder and patted him. "I wuv you, Mommy." Despite his father not being there that day and not being able to call since he was out in the field, I was suddenly happy. The misery faded as I felt the tiny baby girl shift inside me and little man warm in my arms. A small voice within gently reminded me that we were lucky, blessed. I gave Connor a kiss on the top of his head and murmured, "I love you, too, little man." Later that night, once the house was quiet and our son asleep, I walked into the kitchen. I placed the note that I had written for Robert on the table where he would see it. He would be home early in the morning and I didn't want him to miss it. "The best thing I ever did was say yes to your note. Thank you for making me your wife and a mother. For that, I'll always love you." I then turned and headed to our room. Even though exhausted didn't begin to cover how I felt, I smiled in happiness. My family had taught me love. And they'd given me a wonderful Mother's Day.