Mother's Day

by pageleaf

Summary

It’s Mother’s Day, and Norma isn’t lonely.

Notes

Written for this prompt over on suits_meme on lj.

Basically, it's a character study of Norma, Louis's lovely, long-suffering PA.

It’s Mother’s Day, and Norma isn’t lonely.

Her own children are grown and gone, Grace in Boston and Henry in Chicago, but they called her this morning, and she found two bouquets of flowers on her desk.

Momma--

Sorry I couldn’t be there. I love you. Norman says Happy Mother’s Day.

Gracie

and

Hi Momma,

I miss you! Chicago doesn’t have the same loud noises as home. I wish I could be there.
Love,
Hank

Mother’s Day is a bit of a tradition in their household, has been since Al died when Hank was two and Norma had to raise the kids by herself.

It’s been a while since Gracie was at home, but this is Hank’s first year away. Still, Norma saw them just a week ago, and they call her every day, and so she isn’t lonely. She just misses them, is all.

Plus, with Louis (who is only ten years younger than her but acts sometimes as if he’s a twelve-year-old boy) and the associates (who bicker and squabble like kindergarteners), it’s as if she has children again.

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Harvey is a child, really. It’s almost mind-boggling that he actually gets people to take him seriously, Norma muses as she watches Louis turn red, the file she passed on to him slowly being crumpled in his hand.

“Well, you can just tell Donna to tell him to go f--”

“Louis.”

Well, Louis isn’t really much better.

Norma doesn’t even remember who started the feud, at this point, but in her honest and well-informed opinion, they are both very much at fault.

But really, Harvey is a child.

“Donna,” Norma pleads, “can’t you do something about this?”

“Don’t you think I would’ve tried if I could’ve done anything?” Donna asks dryly over the phone.

“He was doing better, really,” Norma says. “Look, I’m not saying Louis isn’t at fault as well--”

“Because he is,” Donna interjects.

“Yes, yes, I know he is, but it was really getting smoother between them. Did something happen?”

“Um,” Donna says.

“Donna,” Norma says curiously.

“Nothing, nothing,” Donna says, sounding as if she’s stifling laughter.

“It’s the kid, isn’t it,” Norma says flatly.

“He’s mad at Harvey,” Donna confirms gleefully.

Norma sighs. “Send him to me, please.”

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“Hi, Norma,” Mike says cheerfully. Norma smiles back, unable to be anything but charmed.
“Hi, Mike,” Norma says. “Donna says you and Harvey are having issues.”

“With all due respect,” Mike says mildly enough that the steel in it is clear, “I don’t see how that’s really your problem.”

“Well,” Norma informs him solemnly. “Your boss is kind of a child.”

“If by child you mean insensitive dickhead, then yes,” Mike says. “Your point?”

“He’s angry that you’re angry, so he’s being angry at Louis, who’s being angry right back, and it’s making me angry. It’s a virtually endless cycle of anger,” Norma says.

“I’m not going to forgive him,” Mike says, matter-of-fact.

“I’m not asking you to,” Norma says. “But if you could kindly inform him that him being an insensitive dickhead to other people is not particularly likely to make any of us like him better, least of all you, that would be lovely.”


Twenty minutes later, Donna stops by Norma’s desk on her way to lunch, says, loudly, “Thank fuck,” and gives her a cupcake.

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Norma calls Hank at seven-thirty, when she knows his classes have ended, and he sounds so young and tired, her baby. She misses him sorely, on days like this, important days when he smiles through his voice and sounds windswept but happy.

“Darling,” she says. “How are you?”

“I’m fine, Momma,” Hank says. “Classes are going well, finally the idiots have started dropping the harder ones, which is always a good thing.”

They talk for twenty minutes—or rather, Hank chatters about his day while Norma soaks up the sound of his voice—until eventually Hank has to go.

“I’m having dinner with a friend,” he says, voice a little too innocent.

Norma grins. “Have fun, honey.”

“Thanks, Momma.”

Merely five minutes later, Gracie calls her.

“Hi, Momma!” she says, also sounding tired. In the background, Norma can hear the cheerful sounds of a toddler playing.

“Hi, sweetheart,” Norma says. “How are you?”


“Oh, honey,” Norma says amusedly, “I know.”

Gracie laughs. “Of course you do, silly of me.”

“How’s Robert?”
“Possibly more tired than me,” Gracie says. “He says he’s thriving in the role of a stay-at-home dad, though, so I guess he must be okay.”

“Norman is doing well then, I assume?” Norma asks.

“Oh, is he! He’s bouncing around as usual, and sleeping as regularly as you’d expect, and he’s actually eating everything we give him, now.”

Norma hears a muffled “Gamma!” in the background, and laughs. “Put him on, please, darling.”

A moment later, the continuous shouts of “Gamma, Gamma!” get louder and clearer, and Norma laughs again.

“Hi, darling!” she says.

Norman says something pretty much unintelligible, and Norma makes “ah” sounds when they seem necessary. After two minutes, though, Norman pauses to yawn noisily, and Gracie comes back on the line.

“Okay, it’s bedtime for the baby and bedtime for mommy and daddy,” Gracie says, yawning as well. “Say goodnight, Norm.”

“G’night!” Norman says.

“Goodnight, Norman,” Norma says.

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The next morning, Norma walks into the office to find a box of very expensive chocolates sitting not-quite-innocuously on her desk, with an equally conspicuous note that reads, concisely:

Norma--

Thank you for putting up with me. You may not hear me say that very often. Happy belated Mother’s Day.

--Louis

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