



Dear Mother...

by EMILY

Doña Mercedes has just had a good night's sleep when she passed by the room of her only daughter to call her for breakfast. A worried surprise slowly crept into her lovely face whose beauty was still unmarred by fast-moving and reckless Age. She suddenly flung the door wide open. Emily was not there. The beddings were neatly arranged. But on the dresser of Emily lay a white sheet of paper neatly tucked under an unused Max Factor kit. Doña Mercedes seized it nervously and this is what she read . . .

At Home
March 25

Dearest Mother,

By the time you will be reading this letter I shall be far away, for I have gone to the man I love.

You know, dearest Mother, how much I love you and how I hate to hurt you, but I could not wait any longer to do what I have now done. Moreover, your consistent opposition to this man led me to take this

drastic step. I am sorry, Mother, but there was no other way. I know how much my happiness mean to you. I want you to know now that I shall not be happy anywhere except in his company.

It is barely a week now since you stood there in our college auditorium, proud to have a daughter graduate "summa cum laude". I vividly remember the gleam in your eyes, though misty with tears, as you placed the hood over my shoulders and pinned the gold medal on me. I was proud of you, Mother, and I still am, for had it not been for all your self-sacrifice I would not be what I am today—a woman with a solid Catholic education to back her up.

I am deeply aware that up to this moment your solicitude for me has not waned a bit. You have always sought my welfare and my happiness, especially in the choice of the man I would marry someday.

Do you remember, dear Mother, how we used to discuss together the different character traits of the young men who came to the house? Do you recall how I never liked any one in particular in spite of their excellent qualities? I guess, Mother, that the man I was looking for was not among them.

There was Manny with all his dash and wealth who always came along with the most beautiful and lovely roses this world could ever dream of. Remember the time he made me pick my favorite flower from a bouquet he carried in his arms? Remember how I chose the lily because it symbolizes purity? Then Manny threw them all in my arms and said I could have them all because it was my debut. I see it all now, Mother.

And there was Carlitos, jolly and gay, who simply loved to go out bowling with me until we fagged out and ordered bottles and bottles of Coca Cola. And then, too, there was my good friend Chito, boyish yet polite, who could dance so well that girls wished that they could ask him for a dance — that the world was the other way around. Last, but not least, there was good, courteous Emy and his music that haunted me like "an old sweet dream". He was such a nice boy.

Yet you know, Mother, that for all these men together I would not give up the man I have found —

the man to whom you have so bitterly at times objected and at times opposed selfishly. Forgive me, Mother... But I still cannot understand how you could have rejected in every way the man whom you knew I have learned to love and always will love.

I still recall how you would grow pale at the very mention of my having anything to do with him and harshly forbid me to talk about spending the rest of my life in his company. At times I was almost inclined to believe you disliked him, but it is not strange that I could detect in you a certain respect for him.

Surely there must have been a secret esteem for him within your heart. You knew him quite well. But you hated to admit that he is a true lover in every sense of the word. O Mother, is he not more than worth loving? Tell me he is.

Indeed, he does not have the limousine of Manny, neither the gaiety of Carlitos, nor the music of Emy — yet, he himself is the wealth, the joy, and the music of the whole universe to me.

You were afraid that I would make the "mistake" of consenting to become his bride and that, you said, would not bring me any "security" in life at all. To me, he alone is Life's security. Having him is my greatest security. I would be the saddest creature indeed if I lose him.

You were afraid that I would have to work myself to the bones in order to live — I, your little "princesita" who was not in the least used to soiling her soft, delicate fingers. But don't you see, Mother, that he and I would be working together, that I shall not do anything that he has not done for me?

You were afraid I would crave for the nice clothes, the good food, and the delightful concerts I have been used to and not have them. But is it not wonderful if I could give up all these — if I could do for him what I never did for any one else before? Besides, we have our little chats, our little whisperings and secrets which nobody can take away from us. And really now, should we need anything else when having each other is the height of our happiness?

And if I could toil and burn myself in labor simply because of love, would that not make me dearer to his heart and he to mine? I know, Mother, that he will never be able to 'ake me out to dances, to ball games, to the Riviera and other places of amusement. But can we not just gaze out at the open sky and enjoy the beauty of the firmament — of the moon and the stars for free? It is not the place but the company that matters. The world at present is nothing but a hell of antagonism and hate. He and I, together,

shall destroy this hate by our LOVE.

Dearest Mother, there is every reason why I should stay with him. In fact, I regret that I have not known him sooner. And to think that he has been waiting for so long...

You may not be aware, Mother, but he has always taken a keen interest in our family affairs. He has always loved you and me. Yes, dear Mother, you. He is so loving, forgiving, and understanding. I do not understand how anybody can resist him. Do not worry, dearest Mother, he will take good care of me. He is the greatest lover I have ever known. Mother, I want you to understand that in going to him, I have risked my future, my happiness, my everything just to be with him. If I had a thousand lives, I would offer them all to him. He alone can make me happy in this world, or in any other world. I know I shall always be happy with HIM.

Your loving child,
Emily

P.S. And please, Mother, you have forgiven me, haven't you? My clothing day will take place on December 25. He and I will be waiting for you then. You cannot miss the place. Just go to Lipa and ask for the Carmelite Monastery. That is our home.

Love.