



QUOTH THE MAVEN

BY BEVERLY KING POLLOCK

The In-Law Problem

I hadn't seen a nine-month-old baby in a long time and I hate to confess I felt all squishy inside when I picked him up. He smelled like fresh baby lotion and he gurgled and smiled and his ten toes and fingers were wondrous to behold.

In this kind of situation I never know what to say so I just smiled. It was then the baby's mother made a profound statement. "I hope his wife will appreciate him," she said.

All the way home I giggled about the eternal mother-in-law problem. Her son isn't a year old, and already she's mad at his wife!

My son is 21. And I'm not annoyed with his mythical wife. But I confess That Girl gave me problems 11 years ago.

We had just moved into a new home. And if you ever lived in the family homestead before, you know well the stuff that gets accumulated. Especially pictures. Some a generation or more back. And lots of people I didn't know. Or know about.

There were hundreds of pictures of my husband's deceased parents. I kept thinking what a pity they had not known our children. Such pleasure the ainikels could give them!

I decided to compensate the only way I knew how. I would make a small scrapbook

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for each of the children and paste inside a picture or two of my husband's parents. In that way the kids would at least know them.

The rest of the grandparents' old family pictures I would put away in a shoe box.

I continued to rummage through snapshots and came across extra copies of ancient pictures of my husband and me. When we met, when we became engaged, when we were married...

Again I had a brilliant idea. I kept thinking what a pity our kids didn't know us when we both were young and thin and had hair. Why not give the children a couple old pictures of us too?

All of a sudden I saw my 10 year old son's wife looking through his scrapbook I had made with love. And I heard That Girl say, "H'mm, all those pictures of my husband's parents. What'll I ever do with them? I know! I'll make a small scrapbook for each of our kids and paste inside a picture or two of my husband's mother and father. The rest of their family photos I'll put away in a shoe box."

I got so mad at that daughter-in-law! How dare she put me in a shoe box!

I gathered up the remaining pictures of my husband's parents and put them into a very neat scrapbook. Special.

And I promised myself always to remember that once I too was a daughter-in-law.

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