



# QUOTH THE MAVEN

BY BEVERLY KING POLLOCK

## A Real Education

My son came home from school with a familiar-looking new card which entitled me to a year's membership at the Junior High PTA (and a moral commitment to attend the school's American Education Week program Monday night).

I kept telling myself that an evening going to the school and meeting all the teachers should no longer be a traumatic experience. After all this is number four child in eighth grade already. It's not like your first or even the second child when you still remember the names of all the teachers and the exact subjects your child is taking and in which time slot (so you know what period of the day to suffer with your child during the Spanish test, etc.).

In deep humility and with good conscience my husband and I donned our sincere clothes and our concerned smile and braved our way into the academic new world once more. Everybody got name tags -- the parents, teachers and student guides.

Fortunately the teachers also wear carnations else you couldn't tell them from the students. (Students are the ones wearing silver smiles from the braces.)

The girl teachers are all so pretty and young and the men so handsome with long hair and droopy mustaches. Each year I get older and the teachers get younger. Maybe that's why American Education Week is such a depressing experience!

We spent a six-minute session in each classroom with each teacher giving us a six-minute description of the subject taught. Then the bell rang signifying a change in classes.

But instead of our using the four minutes allotted to change classes, we spent that time lining up to introduce ourselves to the teacher and secretly hoping that she (or he) might accidentally spill some little gem that would indicate to us that she really understands our particular child even though his report card grades may not necessarily indicate his true genius.

When we discreetly tried to question one of the teachers about whether our son talks too much in class, she proved worthy of the challenge. She said and I quoth, "Your son practices a confrontational approach."

Occasionally you happen upon a teacher who taught some of your previous children and when he remembers, you feel good. But when I told one teacher that his former pupil (my older daughter who had a terrible crush on him in eighth grade) was getting married this January, he almost cried at the thought of his being that old. ("I'll be 30 before you know it!")

One thing I know, "I could never pass algebra again. And even the "New English" might give me some qualms. Also after running

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