



# Mother

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This is a difficult age to be a woman. The woman who aspires to raise children for the glory of God, to develop the ministry of the home, or to co-labor with her husband is deemed “old-fashioned” or “unfulfilled.” The modern lure of independence and career has bewitched an entire generation to exchange the beauty of Christian womanhood for the temporary enticements of a society at war with the family.

Amidst this confusion, Kathleen Norris’s *Mother* is a refreshing call to sanity. *Mother* is the fictional tale of a young lady who leaves home and repudiates family life in the hope of finding personal fulfillment through independence and a career. She decides that home life is a poor choice in the face of life in the big city. But God dramatically changes her heart as she realizes that wealth and position are illusory and that independence can enslave a young lady. She discovers that the greatest woman she has ever known is her mother and now she longs for home and motherhood.

After reading this book, editor Jennie Chancey wrote, “That night, I opened the book, intending to read a chapter or two before bed. An hour passed before I realized how far I had read. I could not put the book down and finished it just shortly before midnight. As I turned the last page, tears filled my eyes. I knelt by my bed and asked God to forgive me for my bitterness and my unwillingness to trust and obey Him.”

Vision Forum is pleased to offer this restored and revised version of the 1911 classic in the hope that girls will once again aspire to be like their mothers.

## Mother Details

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Author : Kathleen Thompson Norris , Jennie Chancey (Editor)

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## From Reader Review Mother for online ebook

### Rachel says

I can't believe this book is so OLD (first published in 1911)! The issues in it are so current. It has to do with a young woman who wants to have things and go places and doesn't want to ever be tied down like her mother. As the story goes she realizes what really matters. It is really short. The copy I have is only 90 pages but it was a good reminder of what is most important. I could relate in so many ways to her journey. Perfect little read around Mother's day.

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### Esther says

I think this is probably one of the best books I have read. It is so refreshing to read. About a girl with 7 siblings who lives in a small country town and works as a teacher. She then gets a job in a big city with a rich employer. While she is there, she listens to the "rich" peoples' conversations about how having so many children is such a burden. She, herself, starts wondering how her mother can be so content with housework, children, etc. The ending is wonderful and this book is a must read.

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### Dorcas says

This is a very light but pleasant read about a young woman who is disillusioned with her lot in life (one of seven children in a small rundown house in a small rundown town) and longs for the "real life" of pleasure and ease.

By coincidence she meets a high society lady who offers her a job as a private secretary in the woman's NY family mansion. She finally experiences life as she imagined it. But is it all it's chalked up to be? And what happens when your beau finds out your true origins? Will all be lost?

And at the crux of the story is Margaret's mother, the true hero of the story...

Its a sweet read but it didn't thrill me. I found it rather syrupy to be honest. Its the kind of book where you know just where the author is going with it, there's really no surprises, but its still a pleasant diversion.

But here's something to note: while I applaud motherhood and its many joys, there is a fairly heavy 'moralizing' tone throughout the book extolling the virtues of a woman's place (childrearing) and I felt bad for any woman reading this in years past who simply couldn't have children or maybe just wasn't "that type of woman" and therefore not up to scratch. You're either a self-sacrificing mother of a tribe of children or you're selfish. I didn't see a balance there.

If you can get past that, its a cute story.

CONTENT: G

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### **Sara says**

This was a very sweet book and I am quite glad to have read it.

I've given it a low rating only because it is not an example of high-caliber writing. It feels a little muddled and the conclusion is quite predictable in an unsatisfying way. It is also very heavy on the sermonizing.

It is a thin and unimpressive version of a Louisa May Alcott story.

However, the principles in this book and the tenderheartedness of it, are rapidly disappearing in our culture. I wish this book was a little bit better written so that I could recommend it more freely. The message is excellent.

I wish that the story writing stood up to the quality of the message.

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### **Nickie says**

I finished this little treasure while visiting our first and hopefully our last resort.

The key point is this: There are many within the world due to poverty or in the case of this story, wealth, who make the choice to not have children because of the added expenses. Such as the author says; nurses, additional maids, larger homes, meals for the additional help etc... Well in the midst of the rich not wanting children, there is the Paget family who have 8 children. Are struggling to survive and raise their family with love and fellowship.

The oldest daughter, Margaret goes off to be a secretary for an extremely wealthy women in New York City. Over the next 5 years she comes to fully resent her home town and the poverty of her family. Until she truly sees the value of her dearest mother. Mother Paget is worth more then all the rich, fancy, and busy bodies of the women of wealth.

Written 1911. It seems like the story is set at the near end of the 19th century.

A gift from my husband. He forgot to give it to me on Mother's day. So he gave it to me 2 days later for our anniversary.

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### **Faith says**

Read for school. Very good, but the old grammar style did bother me. :P

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### **Poema says**

This charming little antique volume is unabashedly moralistic, yet strangely moving. The siren song of wealth and pleasure calls a young woman away from the small town in which she feels stifled, and the large, raucous family life that seems so mundane. Her fortunes change when she is offered a job as personal

assistant to a wealthy New Yorker, and Margaret fully embraces her new life that includes perks such as travel, sumptuous food, and a fashionable wardrobe. The slow drift away from her core family values begins. She starts to embrace the opinions of the people she is around, disdaining large families because they curtail freedom and convenience. When she visits her old home for a few days, she initially feels some embarrassment over the plebian lifestyle of her youth but is destined to experience an awakening to her true wealth. Her kind, solid Mother is the hub of the family and embodies the ideal example that Margaret ultimately embraces. The aphorism, "there's no place like home," comes to mind and it sounds trite in a book review but experienced warmly in the reading of the actual book. It is the age-old story of the pot of gold being under your own roof, a good reminder of what is temporal vs. what is of eternal value. This book is not fine literature but has an indefinable warmth and is worthy the 2 or 3 hours it takes to read it.

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### **Amy says**

The sentiments expressed in this book about the importance of mothers in the lives of their children were beautiful. I thoroughly enjoyed the sweet family life. I value and believe this to be true and am blessed to be able to stay at home with my children. The message even brought tears to my eyes and was inspiring as a mother. I'm pretty old-fashioned and enjoy traditional family values.

With that said and keeping in mind that this was originally published in 1911, I found this book to be too saccharine. It definitely painted a women's life as being the best ONLY one way and not the other. But of course, I'm not going to get up in arms about modern issues on a vintage book. I hate reviews like that. I think I struggled with something VERY strange. I saw that this book was republished by Vision Forum and that gave me a heavy distaste in my mouth, even though I really did enjoy the book. I have always had a very negative feeling about VF, growing up with some ultra conservative people in my background, never liked their message. So even though the book originally had NOTHING to do with this company, it bothered me the whole time. Anyway, if you enjoy traditional family values and can stomach a little bit TOO perfect of a family, you will find this a beautiful tribute to motherhood. If you can't read it with an understanding of the time it was written in, and the conservative values it shares that were common, you will find it offensive and/or outdated.

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### **momma.hailey says**

This was a light and joyful read. Throughout reading I reflected on myself as mother....the kind of mother I am and want to be....and the ways I want my children to remember me. I also felt myself relating to the main character, as I too remember having feeling like she did during that life stage. This will be a lovely book to share with my daughters, and I'm thankful my reading partner Karen selected this book for us!

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### **Angie Thompson says**

For a book written in 1911, this felt surprisingly modern! Although the arguments against having children (or a lot of children) have changed a bit in the details, the core of them sounds very familiar--too expensive, too much trouble, life isn't as simple as it used to be... And Margaret's startling realization that she would never have been born if her mother had stopped at two children sounds an even more sober note in today's world.

Although the end of the book moved both a bit fast (plot) and more than a bit slow (Margaret's lengthy reflections), the core message was very good. I appreciated the fact that Margaret realized that what made her mother wonderful was her sacrifice for others, rather than the act of motherhood itself. I also thought this book did the best job I've ever seen of portraying a big, busy, noisy family with five things being done at once and ten conversations happening over and around each other!

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### **Lisa says**

This book should be required reading for "Today's Daughters". Our culture bombards women and undermines a parent's hard work to help a daughter follow biblical roles. This is a very insightful book bringing daughters to an awareness of the beautiful calling of womanhood.

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### **Ivy Rose says**

Sweet story, very enjoyable.

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### **Nicole says**

I love this story. So sweet. So simple. And such a good reminder to "Be still" and to "Wait Patiently"

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### **Vivian says**

Five stars? Really? Let me 'splain. Five stars, for me, means it went to my heart and or my mind.

In a mere 198 pages of delightful easy reading we follow young Margaret, a prototype for any young woman of her day (and surprisingly our day too) on a journey of self-discovery. Published in 1911, I couldn't help picturing my own grandmother possibly reading this very book. She would have been exactly Margaret's age and she might have shared this young woman's concerns, desires, and prejudices.

The writing was practical, nothing to sound off about and it was predictable in a way. Still, it was a pleasure to read and I think all my twenty-something daughters and even my teen daughter would enjoy it. Thank you Inter-library Loan!

Meet Margaret, twenty-one, from a small town in rural New York. She's bored of teaching school. She wants to travel, experience life and have adventures. Conveniently, an opportunity to do just that falls into her lap. The ensuing five years are a whirl as she joins the fashionable society as a capable secretary to a celebrity. She travels to Europe, wears fine clothes, dines elegantly. She even meets a man who captures her attention, if not yet her heart.

Interwoven through Margaret's story is the appreciation she has for her mother and her affection for her many siblings. Yes, she comes from a large family of insufficient means. She is mortified by their humble circumstances and happy to be of some financial assistance to them. She is happy for the social successes of

her sisters and relieved that her newlywed sister's aspiring doctor husband has ambitious plans to better their own lives.

Norris gives voice to the strong prejudice of the rising society women regarding family choices and women's newly won freedom from drudgery. Impressionable Margaret is relieved to hear these opinions, which support her own.

A watershed moment comes to Margaret on a late August weekend visit home. Her male interest happens to be visiting an aunt who lives nearby and wants to stop by for a Sunday afternoon visit. A comedy of errors ensues, with everything that can go wrong doing so. In the process Margaret comes to see her family and herself in an entirely new light.

\*\*\*Ten months after reading this and posting my review I was visiting a cousin who had a shelf full of my grandparent's books. Among them was THIS title -- inscribed with my grandmother's name! My cousin gave me the book to keep. Oh happiness!!!

\*\*SPOILER ALERT (I'll hazard capturing some passages for my keeping...)

p.178

"Good-bye, Mrs. Paget," said Doctor Tenison. "It's been an inestimable privilege to meet you all. I haven't ever had a happier day."

Margaret, used to the extravagant speeches of another world, thought this merely very charming politeness. But her heart sany as they walked away together. He liked them--he had had a nice time!

"Now I know what makes you so different from other women," said John Tenison, when he and Margaret were alone. "It's having that wonderful mother! She--she--well, she's one woman in a million; I don't have to tell you that! It's something to thank God for, a mother like that; it's a privilege to know her. I've been watching her all day, and I've been wondering what SHE gets out of it--that was what puzzled me; but now, just now, I've found out! This morning, thinking what her life is, I couldn't see what REPAID her, do you see? What made up to her for the unending, unending effort, and sacrifice, the pouring out of love and sympathy and help--year after year after year..."

He hesitated, but Margaret did not speak.

"You know," he went on musingly, "in these days, when women just serenely ignore the question of children, or at most, as a special concession, bring up one or two--just the one or two whose expenses can be comfortably met!--there's something magnificent in a woman like your mother, who begins eight destinies instead of one! She doesn't strain and chafe to express herself through the medium of poetry or music or the stage, but she puts her whole splendid philosophy into her nursery--launches sound little bodies and minds that have their first growth cleanly and purely about her knees. Responsibility--that's what these other women say they are afraid of! But it seems to me there's no responsibility like that of decreeing that young lives simply SHALL NOT BE. Why, what good is learning, or elegance of manner, or painfully acquired fineness of speech, and taste and point of view, if you are not going to distill it into the growing plants, the only real hope we have in the world! You know, Miss Paget," his smile was very sweet in the half darkness, "there's a higher tribunal than the social tribunal of this world, after all; and it seems to me that a woman who stands there, as your mother will, with a forest of new lives about her, and a record like hers, will--will find she has a Friend at court!" he finished whimsically.

p.189

And suddenly theories and speculation ended, and she KNEW. She knew that faithful, self-forgetting service, and the love that spends itself over and over, only to be renewed again and again, are the secret of happiness. For another world, perhaps leisure and beauty and luxury--but in this one, "Who loses his life

shall gain it." Margaret knew now that her mother was not only the truest, the finest, the most generous woman she had ever known, but the happiest as well.

She thought of other women like her mother; she suddenly saw what made their lives beautiful.

p. 190

Mrs. Carr-Boldt's days were crowded to the last instant, it was true; but what a farce it was, after all, Margaret said to herself in all honesty, to humor her in her little favorite belief that she was a busy woman! Milliner, manicure, butler, chef, club, card-table; tea-table--these and a thousand things like them filled her day, and they might all be swept away in an hour, and leave no one the worse. Suppose her own summons came; there would be a little flurry throughout the great establishment, legal matters to settle, notes of thanks to be written for flowers. Margaret could imagine Victoria and Harriet [her two daughters], awed but otherwise unaffected, home from school in midweek, and to be sent back before the next Monday. Their lives would go on unchanged, their mother had never buttered bread for them, never schemed for their boots and hats, never watched their work and play, and called them to her knees for praise and blame. Mr. Carr-Boldt would have his club, his business, his yacht, his motor-cars--he was well accustomed to living in cheerful independence of family claims.

p. 192

All her old castles in the air seemed cheap and tinsel'd tonight, beside these tender dreams that had their roots in the real truths of life. Travel and position, gowns and motor-cars, yachts and country houses, these things were to be bought in all their perfection by the highest bidder, and always would be. But love and character and service, home and the wonderful charge of little lives--the "pure religion breathing household laws" that guided and perfected the whole--these were not to be bought, they were only to be prayed for, worked, for, bravely won.

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### **Hannah says**

Although I do not agree with some of the author's viewpoints in her other books, I loved this. It was clean and had a wonderful ending! I would recommend this to anyone.

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