



Holidaze

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Call me an old curmudgeon if you must, but I'm just not down with holidays. The more cheerful might say that a day like Mother's Day is just an excuse to show your mother how much you care! Show her what she means to you! But, you know what? A day like that is just another thing I have to remember or risk causing more disappointment and sadness to the woman who once sat me down at the dinner table and told me I could be the president of the United States one day if I wanted to.

One Mother's Day I didn't call my sweet mother until 7 p.m., and she was devastated. I guess a better daughter is supposed to wake up early and call. Not sleep until 2 pm, watch television for a few hours, stare at a wall for thirty minutes and wonder if plants ever get sunburned, and then call. I do love my mother, and I don't want her to be sad on a day that was most likely created by the Hallmark Company because they needed funding to have their swimming pool of champagne refilled. Is sending her a card and a bouquet of roses really the best way to tell her that, though?

Next year for Mother's Day, I'm going to enter her in an alligator-wrestling competition. That way, both of us could enjoy it. I don't want harm to come to her, but she's in fighting shape—she could take an alligator. I'd hire someone to video the event, so we'd never forget the exciting day, and if things started to go wrong, I'd jump in at the last minute and save her. I think a gesture like that would show her I cared more than just flowers and chocolate.

Sweaty, exhausted, terrified, and pumped full of adrenaline, we would just hold each other afterwards, comparing wounds, filled full of excitement and life, and maybe then we'd have lunch. See—that would be a story to tell to the grandchildren I'll probably never give her. What grandchild, imaginary or otherwise, wants to hear a story about a bouquet of flowers? Stories like that alienate children from us. People want to hear about alligator wrestling. My mother thinks she wants a hand towel, or a nice cd, but what she really wants is something more.

For Father's Day, maybe to make things spicy, I'm going to send myself to my father in a coffin. At the last minute, when he's really in the midst of all the sadness and shock, I'm going to jump out and give him a huge hug. Hiding at the feet of the coffin, I'm going to have this great picnic lunch, with goat

cheese salads and tender roast beef sandwiches with horseradish, and I'll break that out.

I'll have bought a coffin that folds out into a nice table, and though it will take me a few minutes to convert the coffin, it's probably going to take Dad a few minutes to get his appetite back. Later, over a glass of wine, we'll laugh about how if he hadn't ever been my father, a crazy gift like a daughter in a coffin really wouldn't have packed such a punch. He'll be so proud of my wit, he'll probably forget about the tattoo I got on my chest.

Maybe I don't hate holidays so much after all. Maybe I've just been going about them all wrong. It seems like with a little bit of imagination, and a little bit of work, I could create some holiday experiences we'll all remember joyfully.