

# MOM

**I WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORY**

A Mother's Heartfelt Journey of  
Love, Memories, Life Lessons,  
and an Enduring Legacy

Evelyn Hartwell

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# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>A LETTER TO MY CHILDREN.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHY I CHOSE TO TELL YOU MY STORY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART I.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE GIRL I ONCE WAS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BEFORE YOU KNEW ME.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>The World I Was Born Into and the Life I Didn't Choose.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SMALL HANDS, BIG DREAMS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Childhood Memories That Still Live Inside Me.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>THE PEOPLE WHO RAISED ME.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Love, Discipline, and the Home That Shaped My Heart.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>THE QUIET LESSONS OF GROWING UP.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>What I Learned Before I Even Understood It.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>PART II.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FINDING MY WAY.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>DREAMS THAT FELT BIGGER THAN ME.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Who I Thought I Would Become.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>THE MISTAKES THAT TAUGHT ME THE MOST.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Moments I Wish I Could Change—and What They Gave Me.....</i>	<i>20</i>

<b>CHAPTER 7</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>LOVE, LOSS, AND LIFE’S TURNING POINTS</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<i>The People Who Left Their Mark on My Soul</i> .....	23
<b>CHAPTER 8</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>BECOMING STRONG WHEN I HAD NO CHOICE</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<i>The Seasons That Tested Me</i> .....	26
<b>PART III</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>THE DAY MY HEART CHANGED FOREVER</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>THE MOMENT I BECAME YOUR MOTHER</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<i>The Day My Life Took on a New Meaning</i> .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 10</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>HOLDING YOU FOR THE FIRST TIME</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>A Love I Had Never Known Before</i> .....	34
<b>CHAPTER 11</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>RAISING YOU THROUGH THE YEARS</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<i>Joy, Fear, Sacrifice, and Unforgettable Days</i> .....	37
<b>CHAPTER 12</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<b>THE LITTLE MOMENTS THAT MEANT EVERYTHING</b> .....	<b>41</b>
<i>The Memories I Carry in My Heart</i> .....	41
<b>PART IV</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>WHAT MOTHERHOOD TAUGHT ME</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>CHAPTER 13</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>LOVING YOU THROUGH EVERY SEASON</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<i>What It Truly Means to Be There for Someone</i> .....	45
<b>CHAPTER 14</b> .....	<b>48</b>
<b>THE THINGS I GOT RIGHT... AND THE THINGS I DIDN’T</b> .....	<b>48</b>

<i>My Honest Truth as Your Mother</i> .....	48
<b>CHAPTER 15</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>STRENGTH, FAITH, AND STARTING AGAIN</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<i>How I Kept Going When Life Felt Heavy</i> .....	51
<b>PART V</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>THE LESSONS I LEAVE WITH YOU</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>CHAPTER 16</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT HAPPINESS</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<i>Finding Joy in the Ordinary</i> .....	55
<b>CHAPTER 17</b> .....	<b>58</b>
<b>LOVE, PEOPLE, AND CHOOSING WISELY</b> .....	<b>58</b>
<i>What Truly Matters in Relationships</i> .....	58
<b>CHAPTER 18</b> .....	<b>61</b>
<b>WHEN LIFE GETS HARD</b> .....	<b>61</b>
<i>The Strength I Hope You Remember You Have</i> .....	61
<b>CHAPTER 19</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>THE KIND OF LIFE WORTH LIVING</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<i>Values I Hope Stay With You Forever</i> .....	65
<b>PART VI</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>FROM MY HEART TO YOURS</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>CHAPTER 20</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>THINGS I MAY NOT ALWAYS SAY OUT LOUD</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<i>Words I Carry Deep in My Heart</i> .....	69
<b>CHAPTER 21</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>MY HOPES, DREAMS, AND PRAYERS FOR YOU</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<i>The Future I See for You</i> .....	72
<b>CHAPTER 22</b> .....	<b>76</b>

<b>IF I AM NOT THERE ONE DAY .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<i>The Guidance I Want You to Hold Onto.....</i>	76
<b>CLOSING .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>A FINAL LETTER TO MY CHILDREN .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<i>My Love, My Life, My Legacy.....</i>	79
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>83</b>
REFLECTIONS, LEGACY & JOURNAL .....	83
FAMILY REFLECTIONS & KEEPSAKES .....	83
<i>Special Memories I Never Want Forgotten.....</i>	83
<i>Family Traditions That Defined Us.....</i>	84
<i>The Moments That Made Me Proud .....</i>	84
<i>The Hard Times That Strengthened Us.....</i>	85
<i>Words and Sayings I Always Want You to Remember.....</i>	85
LIFE LESSONS TO CARRY FORWARD.....	86
<i>What I Believe About Love .....</i>	86
<i>What I Believe About Strength.....</i>	86
<i>What I Believe About Failure and Growth.....</i>	87
<i>What I Believe About Happiness.....</i>	87
<i>What I Hope You Never Forget .....</i>	87
CLOSING REFLECTION.....	88
<b>JOURNAL SECTION .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>YOUR TURN TO CONTINUE THE STORY .....</b>	<b>89</b>
REFLECTIONS ON MY MOTHER’S STORY .....	89
MY OWN MEMORIES .....	91
WHAT I WANT TO REMEMBER.....	92
A LETTER BACK TO YOU.....	94
FOR THE FUTURE.....	95
A QUIET CLOSING REFLECTION .....	96

# A Letter to My Children

## Why I Chose to Tell You My Story

My dear children,

If you are holding this book, it means you have paused—if only for a moment—to listen. And that alone means more to me than I can ever fully put into words.

There are so many things I have carried in my heart over the years. Moments I lived quietly. Feelings I never fully explained. Memories that shaped me long before you ever knew me. I have told you pieces of my story in passing—through laughter, through advice, through the small conversations we've shared—but I have come to realize that there is so much more I want you to understand.

Not just about what I did, but about who I was... and who I became.

Before I was your mother, I was someone else entirely. I was a little girl with dreams I didn't yet understand. I was a young woman trying to find her place in a world that didn't always make sense. I made choices—some I am proud of, others I wish I could go back and hold a little longer, think through a little more carefully.

But every step, every mistake, every moment of joy and every moment of pain brought me to you.

And that is something I would never change.

I am writing this because I don't want my story to fade into silence over time. I don't want you to have to guess who I was or wonder what I felt in the moments we never spoke about. Life moves quickly. Days turn into years, and before we realize it, the details begin to slip away. I wanted to leave something behind—not just memories, but something you can return to, something that speaks to you even when I am not there to say it out loud.

This is my way of sitting beside you, no matter when you read this.

There are things in these pages that may surprise you. There are parts of me you may not recognize at first. And there are truths that are not always easy to share—but they are honest. Because more than anything, I want you to know me as I truly am, not just as the role I played in your life.

Being your mother has been the greatest honor of my life. But it is also only one part of my story. And I believe you deserve to know the whole of it—the dreams I carried, the struggles I faced, the lessons I learned, and the love that has followed me through it all.

I hope that as you read, you will see not just my life, but pieces of your own story taking shape. I hope you will find comfort in knowing that uncertainty is part of the journey, that strength often grows in quiet moments, and that love—real love—endures even when life feels uncertain.

Most of all, I hope you will feel how deeply you have always been loved.

This book is not about perfection. It is about truth. It is about growth. It is about the kind of life that is built one moment at a time—sometimes carefully, sometimes unexpectedly, but always moving forward.

And now, I am ready to share it with you.

With all my love,  
Mom

**Part I**  
**The Girl I Once Was**

# Chapter 1

## Before You Knew Me

### The World I Was Born Into and the Life I Didn't Choose

My dear children,

There was a time when I did not know your names, your faces, or the sound of your laughter. There was a time when my world was much smaller, shaped not by the life I would one day build, but by the one I was born into.

I did not choose where my story began. None of us do. We arrive quietly into circumstances already in motion—into families with their own histories, into homes filled with both warmth and struggle, into a world that does not pause to explain itself. And so, like many before me, I began by learning how to live within what I was given.

The place I grew up in had its own rhythm. Some days felt light and full of possibility, while others carried a weight I did not yet understand. There were moments of laughter that came easily, and moments of silence that said more than words ever could. Even as a child, I sensed that life was not always simple—that beneath the surface of ordinary days were deeper stories unfolding.

I learned early that not everything comes when you want it, and not everything leaves when you wish it would. There were things I longed for that I did not have, and things I experienced before I was ready to understand them. At the time, I did not have the language to explain how those moments shaped me—but I felt them. Quietly. Deeply.

And yet, even in a life I did not choose, there were pieces of beauty.

There were small moments that felt safe. Familiar voices. Certain places that held comfort. The kind of ordinary days that, at the