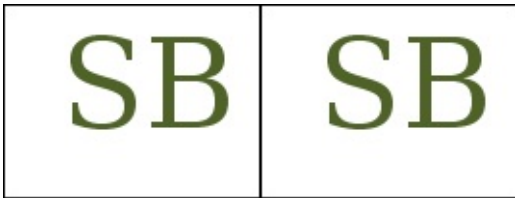


Mom's Story



A Child Learns about MS
Second Edition

Mary Jo Nickum



SB
Arizona

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Although the information about MS is factual, Amy and the other characters are fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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To John
My loving husband,
closest friend,
and
patient MS caregiver

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter One



THUMP

I had just finished practicing piano when I heard a loud noise in the kitchen. It wasn't like a pan hitting the floor with a BANG or the CRACK of glass breaking.

It was a THUMP.

I'd never heard that sound coming from the kitchen before.

I found Mom sitting on the floor and I rushed to her as she started to get up.

"Mommy, Mommy, what happened?"

"Nothing, Amy," Mom whispered. "I must have slipped. Maybe the floor is wet."

I hugged Mom and sat in the kitchen with her for a few minutes. She seemed OK.

"Do you need help?" I asked her.

"No, Amy, go on outside if you've finished piano for today," she said.

"OK." I thought she sounded strange, but I went outside anyway to play with my best friend, Kayla. Playing with our Barbies wasn't much fun, though. I was still thinking about Mom. I told Kayla about Mom falling.

"What if she falls again?" I asked Kayla. "It was a terrible noise."

"She probably won't," Kayla said. "I fell at school last week and skinned my knee, but I haven't fallen since."

"I know, but we're just kids," I insisted. "Parents aren't supposed to fall down."

Kayla shrugged. "Come to my house. I want to show you what I made at Brownies for my mother for Mother's Day," she said.

"Ok," I said, but I was still thinking about my Mom.

On the way, Kayla invited me to her birthday party. "I'll be nine years old on Friday. We're going to the county park on Saturday at 2:00 pm."

"That'll be fun. I'll ask my Mom," I said. "My birthday is in August. I'll be nine, too."

At Kayla's house, we rushed to her room, calling hellos to her mother on the way. Kayla pulled out a box from under her bed and opened it. In the box was a picture of her mother in a bright red frame.

"That's beautiful. How did you make it?" I asked.

"I cut a piece of cardboard to outline the photo," Kayla said. "Then I wrapped the yarn over the cardboard until it was a thick covering and glued the end."

"It's really cool. Maybe I'll try to make something like that for my Mom."

Glossary

Central Nervous System –

It is often called the CNS. It consists of the brain and spinal cord. It is where many bodily functions are generated, processed, and signaled to the different parts of the body.

Chronic disease –

An illness that continues for a long time or returns often.

Demyelination –

The abnormal process of myelin destruction that results in disruption of the normal pattern of nerve conduction.

Diagnosis –

The act of recognizing a disease from its signs and symptoms.

Heredity –

The passing on of characteristics from parents to offspring.

Immune System –

It is the body surveillance system that recognizes something that is foreign to the body and attempts to control it.

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) –

A diagnostic scanning technique that gives detailed images of internal tissue by analyzing its response to being bombarded with high-frequency radio waves within a strong magnetic field.

Multiple Sclerosis –

MS is short for Multiple Sclerosis. MS is a disorder of the CNS usually characterized by the worsening (exacerbations) and improvement (remissions) of symptoms. Multiple scars usually form in the CNS. Most frequently encountered symptoms are loss of strength, difficulties with balance and bladder control, numbness and tingling, and blurred or double vision.

Myelin –

A substance consisting of fat and protein, which acts as an insulator around most nerve fibers.

Nerve –

One of the bands of nerve fibers that join centers, such as the brain, with other parts of the body, and carry nerve impulses. (See Central Nervous System).

Nerve impulse –

A progressive change of a nerve fiber through which information is brought to and orders sent from the Central Nervous System.

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