



MARJORIE  
MAY'S  
TWELFTH  
BIRTHDAY



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*by*

MARY PAULINE CALLENDER

DEDICATED TO MOTHERS  
THE WORLD OVER



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Form 250  
Printed in U. S. A.



**M**OTHER, dear, you are the best in the whole world," said Marjorie May, after her birthday guests had gone home. "I know I will never forget my twelfth birthday because of this lovely party." And saying this, Marjorie May walked over and sat by her mother's side.

She was silent for a moment, then said pensively, "Mother, I cannot understand why Cousin Margaret, who is generally full of fun, was so quiet at the party. At first I thought I had done something to offend her. I placed her next to me at the table; I told her how much I liked her new dress and I really DID like it. She hadn't a headache and wasn't ill, for I asked her about that, too. In fact, I gave more attention to Margaret than to any of the other girls because her attitude has worried me all afternoon."

Understanding shone in Marjorie May's mother's eyes as she said, "I am very glad you mentioned Margaret's attitude today,



for it gives me an opportunity to talk about something which has long been on my mind. Come, dear, let us go up to my room, where we can have a chat without being disturbed.

"Before I explain to you about Margaret," said Marjorie May's mother, after they were comfortably seated, "let us talk about the time when I was a girl of your age. Up until a very few years ago, mothers and daughters did not share their secrets and companionship as we do now. Mothers and daughters did not take the car out in the afternoon and ride into the country as we do together. They did not have swimming races in the comfortable bathing suits we now use. They never played tennis together. My goodness! I can hardly believe that years ago you and I would have lived such entirely different lives."

"But surely," interposed Marjorie May, "mothers and daughters loved each other in those days."

"Yes, darling, indeed they did—but when I was a young girl mothers always felt so much older than their twelve-year-old children that they missed the close companion-

ship which we two have.

"And when I was your age," resumed Marjorie May's mother, "there were many important things that a girl of twelve should have been told, but which mothers, because of their lack of intimacy with their daughters, did not feel free to discuss. Take for instance Margaret's attitude at your party. You asked why she appeared to be quiet and different today. Well, today for the first time in Margaret's life, Nature is beginning within her a new method of purification.

"Let me explain:

"I wonder if you remember how, when you were younger, one of the many questions you asked me was why I always insisted that you go to the bathroom regularly? I told you that when the foods and liquids you eat and drink have served their purpose, and the vitamins and other important properties have nourished you, it is necessary for your health's sake that every day the part that your system does not need shall be eliminated. On the few occasions you missed going, you felt very uncomfortable. Mother, when giving you medicine, explained that your body, to keep strong and well, must al-

ways be kept free from the unused substances which Nature casts off. I taught you that it is just as important for you to be clean *inside* as it is to be clean *outside*."

"Yes, Mother, I remember very well and I always go regularly, even if I have to leave whatever I am doing."

"That, dear, is only *one* of Nature's methods of purifying your body," Marjorie May's mother continued, "and you must always give Nature's demands the first thought during all of your life.

"Now that you are older, Marjorie May, Nature will soon require an *additional* means of purification, so listen carefully while I tell how it will come to you.

"During the past two years you have grown inches taller, and your body has rounded itself out. Indeed, you have noticed that Daddy and I often speak of you as our 'young lady,' for that is what you have grown to be. I can scarcely realize how fast you have developed, especially during the last twelve months. It is only a few weeks ago that I sent two of your last year's dresses to Cousin Alice in the country because you had outgrown them.

"Now, then, in sending you this *new* physical development, Nature simply finds it necessary to purify your system through a different outlet. I say purify, but there is nothing unclean or impure in this natural process. I have never told you about it before, but it is a purification (generally called menstruation) which Mother and all women and girls attend to for a few days each month from the time they are about twelve years of age up to when they are about forty-five.

"One of these days, at any hour of the morning or even in the middle of the night, you will find coming from you a slightly blood-stained fluid. When you see it, do not be afraid or worried, for this is the first indication that the new purification has started. When it happens, you are to take from your dresser one of these Kotex pads and wear it with this elastic girdle, known as a sanitary belt. On the first day when this new purification comes, you must tell me, so that I can see to it that you have a box of these little pads for your own exclusive use.

"At the beginning, you may be able to wear the same pad for several hours. Later, as

you grow older, you will change pads about four times a day, but never allow the pad to become too saturated with moisture, otherwise it will feel extremely uncomfortable and unpleasant.

"I am going to leave this box of Kotex with you, but before you use the first pad, read the direction sheet carefully, for it shows how the used pad is disposed of at the time you are changing to a fresh one."

Marjorie May again interrupted, "But Mother, how am I going to know when it is going to come again?"

"I am glad you asked that question," said Marjorie May's mother, "but before I explain, run to your room and bring the little calendar you keep in your dresser."

Delighted to have these new mysteries so thoroughly explained, Marjorie May fairly flew to her room, and in what seemed to be less than a second, returned with the calendar.

"Supposing," said Marjorie May's mother, "the new purification started on August 12th. In that case we would draw a line through that date like this," and Mother marked the calendar as follows:

AUGUST						
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

"Now, dear, menstruation, or purification, generally returns every 28 days, counting the date it last started as day *number one*. Therefore, when we take August 12th as day number one, and count 28, what date do we arrive at?"

Marjorie May, counting each day, then said "September 8th."

"That is right," said Mother, "so on the September calendar we put a circle on the September 8th date, like this."

SEPTEMBER						
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

"Now, dear, if you should have a minor illness at this time, it may come a day or so earlier or later and of course you will always mark the calendar on the *day it actually starts*. If it comes promptly on the 8th of September, you will mark the usual line thru the date, and your calendar will look like this."

SEPTEMBER						
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

"It is important that you keep an accurate record on your own personal calendar so that you will know to have some Kotex pads and the girdle with you at school, or wherever you are. Then, too, if the purification should persist in coming much earlier or later than every 28 days, you will want to tell me so we can ask the doctor about the matter.

"Some girls who have not been correctly informed, will tell you dreadful things about

menstruation (the medical word for Nature's purification), but do not pay any attention to ideas and superstitions which you may hear from time to time. There is nothing mysterious about menstruation and you must trust no advice unless a sensible scientific reason can be given for it.

"Not long ago one of these harmful superstitions advised against bathing during menstruation, but doctors assure us there is no harm in bathing. Indeed, cleanliness is more needed at this time than at any other. Always take a *warm* soap bath, but never a cold, and never a hot bath. And—by all means—every time you change the Kotex pad, you must wash that part of your body very thoroughly.

"Some exercise, such as brisk walking and setting up exercises, are good for girls during the menstrual period, but doctors think it is harmful, during this time, to play hard games where there is much excitement and competition. So, Marjorie May, while you are to continue about your work, play and studies, you will take things a little easier during those days.

"That is all, darling, and now you know that Margaret was different today because it was for her the first day of the new purification. It was such a new event that she naturally felt like being quiet."

"Mother," said Marjorie May, "you are wonderful to have told me about this new experience I am soon to have. I shall feel quite a young lady when the new purification comes, because it will mean that I have grown up."

"Yes, dear, but come, let us put everything away and then walk out to the gate and look for Daddy. He will soon be home, and surely there will be a present for your birthday."



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