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Simple 14k

Early Saturday morning I went to find my mom and ask her what she had planned for the day. She was in her bathroom getting ready so I took a seat and looked around the bathroom in boredom. My eyes then came to my mother; I studied her as if she were painting of great detail. Examining her hands, I suddenly noticed a small gold ring. It was a ring I always knew was there but I never thought twice about. Surely the ring had a lot of meaning to my mother, she always had it on. The reason she wore the ring clearly wasn't about style because all of her other rings were white gold, and this gold ring didn't match at all. My mom had it ever since I could remember. I never gave it any thought; it was just something that was always there, like the freckles on her arms, like green flecks in her eyes. However, on this day it was something I needed to know about, so I quickly blurted out "what's up with that ring mom?"

"What ring?" she said still staring into the mirror.

"That one, that gold one you always have on."

With a puzzled look on her face, she looked down at the ring as if she was trying to explain rocket science. She then looked over at me and said, "It's just a ring I got myself when I was sixteen, I never took it off, and now it's sort of a part of me." I thought it was a little odd, surely a ring that she refused to take off at night had more meaning than that. My mother turned and looked at me with a contemplative look. "What's up mom? Why you looking at me?" I asked. She then grabbed the ring and tugged at it to come off. It had been years since

she had taken the ring off, so it wasn't coming off without a fight. She grabbed a bar of soap and ran it under warm water to coax it off, as if she was trying to open a champagne bottle without the cork flying. Finally, the ring came off, as she dried it with a towel, she looked over at me and said, "Here, you're sixteen, it should be yours." I didn't know exactly what to say, I was so honored. Even though the ring was of little monetary value, having a ring that my mother had worn ever since she was sixteen meant something to me.

She handed the ring to me and I examined it for the first time in my palm. It was still warm from her body heat. The ring wasn't pretty, or shiny, it was rather dull with age, worn with small scratches all over it. On the inside of the tiny gold ring, a simple stamp that said 14k was placed crookedly. I was overjoyed; this ring had my mother's life experiences with it. I wondered what role this ring would play in my life, and whether her infinite wisdom would be mine by simply wearing it.

I'm twenty-three years old now and have worn the ring ever since my mother gave it to me. Like when my mother wore it, I never really notice that it's there. The only time I notice the ring is when it's gone. Although I always know where it is, I still sometimes go into a sort of panic thinking about what I would do if I lost it. The ring means so much to me. Right next to my mother's gold ring sits my wedding ring. Although my wedding band is worth thousands more than my gold ring, I would surely choose my mother's ring over my wedding band. I know to some that seems crazy, but to me there is no question. They both hold sentimental value to me, one I received when I sixteen the other I received when I was eighteen, but the gold one has history with it, history that I wouldn't feel was there if I simply replaced it with a similar gold band.

Months after my mom had given me the ring she still had a dent where it once was. The empty place seemed somewhat sad—like a blank canvas, it needed something. For Mother's Day, I got her a new tiny gold ring. The new ring was the same in every way—shape, size, and width—except this one was white gold. She was overjoyed when she saw her gift; right then and there we made the gold ring a tradition. Having only worn the ring for seven years, I too have the same dent in my finger that my mother has. Some people might find that dent annoying or maybe even unsightly, but I feel like that silly dent represents my mother.

I now have a baby girl of my own and when she turns sixteen I will give her my ring. I hope that when she receives the original gold ring that she will understand the importance and legacy of the ring. I hope that when she wears the ring no matter where she is, she will feel close to me, just as I feel close to my mother when I wear it. These rings are, and hopefully will be, symbols of love, tradition, and family. They are a history of our links to one another and so much more than simple 14k.