

What is it about gay men and their mothers? Some of us are so attached to them you'd think we were sisters. I heard a theory once that a gay man's often hysterical diva worship is actually a transference of this intense attachment. (Think about it, boys. Her name is Madonna, after all.) From the way some of you go on, you'd think your mothers were constantly descending flights of stairs into the arms of well-scrubbed chorus boys.

Much of this is just wishful thinking. I've heard more than one mama's boy feverishly describe his mother as a thrilling combination of Auntie Mame and Margo Channing, only to discover she's just another tired-looking hausfrau with a bad henna rinse and an overly imaginative spawn.

But some of them truly are divas. Like my friend William's mother. A graduate of Blanche DuBois Senior High School, Lila June is a gin-soaked steel magnolia apt to pour a mid-morning cocktail because "surely it's 5 o'clock somewhere." Once, during a childhood trip to the seashore, William complained about getting sand in his sandwich. "Hush up, William," she drawled. "It gives a sandwich *character*."

Then there's Her Royal Highness Eydie Feldstein, the crown princess of Lawng Island and the mother of Dr. Peter Feldstein, the noted gay urologist. It was Eydie who left her husband, Dr. Morris Feldstein, alone when he was having his heart attack so she could go upstairs to put on makeup before the paramedics arrived. (Absolutely true story, by the way, but with absolutely false names.)

After his father died, Dr. Pete took Eydie to a \$1,000-a-night island resort in the Great Barrier Reef, where she decided to try snorkeling for the

Mamma mia

Divas mothers and the men who love them

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC
by Marc Acito



first time. But since, like many women of her class and generation, Eydie had never actually washed her own hair, she refused to set one pedicured toe in the ocean until Peter had arranged for a hairdresser to fly in from the mainland.

Even an ordinary mom can surprise you, like the pie-faced Midwestern matron who asked my friend Scotty why he kept napkin rings in his dresser drawer. When he explained what they really were, she just said, "I'm so glad I taught you how to accessorize."

Then there's my own mother, the New Age mystic who actually does inspire hysterical diva worship—in lesbians. Megan Garcia is like catnip for women who've given up their birth names in favor of more euphonious-sounding minerals and plants—y'know, the kind of women who say, "Goddess bless you" when you sneeze.

My mom is one of those people who had a near-death experience: the rainbow bridge, the dead relatives on the other side, the works. Like Carol Anne in *Poltergeist*, she stayed away from the light, but she's never been the same since.

For instance, there's the time she calculated

the number of knickknacks on my mantle and informed me that numerologically I was in deep, deep spiritual doo-doo. "I bought them at Pier One," I replied. "Does that change the count?"

Nothing doing. We had to cleanse the entire house of bad energy. Otherwise I was certain to burn forever in the fires of Heck.

She's a mass of contradictions, my mother, justifying her pack-a-day habit as the modern equivalent of the Native American pipe ceremony.

And I learned a long time ago it's almost impossible to win an argument with a woman who gets her information from dead elders whispering in the wind.

Whenever I visit her, I'm always met by a new set of dewy-eyed groupies: long-haired women in sandals who automatically bestow upon

me an admiration by mere association. (Chastity and Jason, I feel your pain.) Megan's third husband used to say, "You could park your mother on the dark side of the moon and lesbians would still show up with sleeping bags."

It gets old.

It's taken a long time, but I've finally convinced my mother that every hug doesn't need to be a healing chakra balancing and that, while I enjoy the company of my Sapphic sisters, I don't necessarily want to sit naked with them in an Indian sweat lodge. (Curiously, they feel the same way.)

There are plenty of people out there eager to criticize the slightly unhinged woman who bore me. After all, Megan began her Magical Mystery Tour when I was 12, leaving my brother and me in the custody of our father, who art in New Jersey.

But I'm constitutionally incapable of hardening my heart to this woman. I can't help it; I simply adore her.

What can I say? I'm a mama's boy. Happy Mother's Day, Mama.

And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. ☐

MARC ACITO wants to know what the shrine to your mom includes. E-mail him at marcacito@attbi.com.



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