**Dear Mum**

Hi Mum. It’s been a while since I wrote to you, I know.

But things have gotten quite busy and… complicated. Don’t worry – we’re fine. We’re not in danger. It’s just that between my classes and the time I spend at Drarn’s workshop, I can’t spend much time alone with my thoughts, even though, as you always said, thinking is where I excel.

Well, Drarn’s celebrating his three-month anniversary with his new girlfriend (one of the usual tarts, by the looks of things), and I’ve got the day to myself. And, seen as I’m now an adult -

Okay, Dad’s reading over my shoulder, and he says that I’m not an adult. But I’m old enough to cook for Dad on Mondays – you know how he doesn’t trust anyone else to prepare his food, and I’m 13 years old – that’s plenty!

Anyway, I want to write down what you meant to me. Dad’s reading over my shoulder again, so I told him to go away or I’ll write falsely.

Mum, I know you didn’t know your Dad, and so I only know one side of your family, but I remember, years ago, when we used to meet up at our flat, chatting and playing. I remember when Nan first brought down the Box. I remember your brother Philius teaching me how to play Rat-trap, and Keevn would get out his old holo-cart set. Then, Nan would bring out two tins – one full of her biscuits, the other full of cakes.

But the thing I remember most is Grandad. He’d take me up on his lap, and read me books. Not fairy-tales either – proper stories, with big words. He’d read to me about the battle-field, about political intrigue, and about technology. When I didn’t understand something, he’d explain it patiently and clearly until I did. He’d also point his cane at me whenever I didn’t act like a proper man. I had to sit up straight, eat properly and always be polite. I miss him.

I also miss your enthusiasm for photography. Do you remember how you used to line us up for a shot, and then take 50 photos, all from different angles? Maff was not pleased. At all. I hear he is doing well at college, by the way. We haven’t heard much from him in a while, but that is to be expected of someone at such a studious and prestigious establishment, Dad says. I must write to him.

Mum, do you remember when we all used to go to Ightham Mote? You, me, Dad, and Maff? We’d wander the gardens, climb through the Castle, and then have a picnic dinner against the setting sun. I remember when we went to watch you as you and Dad swore your wedding vows once more. You did it just before the water’s edge, do you remember? I remember seeing yours and Dad’s eyes meeting, an infinite spark of passion and energy. I wish I could see that in his eyes once more, now that you’re gone.

I wonder often whether any of this would have happened if they hadn’t taken you from us. Would Maff have extricated himself into isolation? Would we have to flee still from the Empire? Would Dad have continued his love for writing? Would you have been alive to see me grow up? Thoughts as bleak as these swirl round my head of an evening, as our current sun retreats below the horizon. I wonder when we’ll have to move again. It shan’t be long, I tell you.

I love you, Mum. I promise to take care of myself. I hope the Force is treating you well.

Love,

Corvus