

Mother Knows Best

A Horror Short Story

Written By

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Ronnie began to suspect that something was wrong with Mother, that is what she insisted he call her. Not mom, or mommy, or momma, just Mother. That was just the start of her weird and abusive behavior, and Ronnie had no idea why it was happening. Mother was still quite young being in her late thirties so he thought it couldn't be menopause, or maybe it was, some women have gone through their change early. No, it couldn't be that, this was more than just hormones being off, Mother was terrible as of late. She would lock him in the basement of their old farmhouse and tell him that it was for his own good, right before jabbing him with a syringe and giving him his medicine, then she would drag him down to the basement and lock the door until morning. Ronnie, a boy of twelve sat in the cold dark basement thinking of ways to get out, when he heard the door unlock and then open. Mother popped her head in and said very cautiously, "Ronnie, sweetie, are you ok? It's time for breakfast." Ronnie rose to his feet breathing heavily, he said with his voice shaking, "I'm fine Mother." Mother's face was bright, and she smiled wide, "Oh goodie! Please come upstairs, I have such a day planned." Ronnie cautiously scooted toward Mother, she reached out grabbed his hand, and gently walked him upstairs.

Mother motioned Ronnie to sit at the table, he could see through the kitchen window that the sun was almost completely risen, and the rays blanketed the empty fields with warmth. Ronnie didn't even know what the date was, but the morning air had a chill. As Ronnie sat the only thing he could think of was that he knew nothing about farming, and he had no idea why he and Mother were even living on a farm. Mother sat a plate down in front of Ronnie, it had scrambled eggs, two sausage links, two slices of bacon, and a fresh buttery biscuit. All of it looked so delicious, but for some strange reason, Ronnie wasn't hungry. The mere thought of eating made him want to throw up. It had to be the nerves he thought to himself, the fear of what would make Mother flip out next. He wanted to eat just to keep her from flipping out on him, so he tried a bite of eggs. Mother watched him curiously, frowning her brow as he chewed the mouthful of eggs. The eggs were dry to him, with no moisture whatsoever, they dried his tongue out. Ronnie spits the mouthful out into a napkin, breathing rapidly and making sure not to make eye contact he said, "Mother, I don't feel good, I can't eat." In a surprise twist, Mother just placed her hand on his shoulder and smiled saying, "That's alright sweetie, one day at a time. We will have you back to normal in no time." That one struck Ronnie as odd, he immediately asked, "What do you mean back to normal?" Her face went from smiling to a grimace of pure anger, "Do not EVER question me again child!" she raised her hand and slapped Ronnie with a hard open palm right across his face. Ronnie with tears falling from his face asked, "What did I do? I just asked a question. I don't know what you mean." Her voice became a deeper baritone than the sweet angelic voice she had at the start of the morning, "Little boys should never question their mother. Mother knows best." Ronnie hung his head, "Yes Mother, I'm sorry." Mother's angelic voice returned, "That's my boy." She said as she caressed his cheek with the same hand she just hit him with. The sound of a car coming up the driveway filled the kitchen, Mother looked out the window. She turned back to Ronnie and told him, "Let's get you upstairs to your room." Rather than argue or cause her to get angry again, Ronnie just followed her. Mother led him to a room and shut and locked the door from the outside. Ronnie didn't recognize anything in this room as his, it was all strange. Baseball pennants on the walls, a desk with a toy car, a small twin bed, and several baseball gloves and bats. Ronnie didn't ever remember liking baseball let alone

playing it ever. The other strange thing is there was no window in this room, just light from a lamp on the desk. Ronnie sat down by the desk placing his ear against it and listened.

Ronnie could make out Mother speaking to someone but couldn't tell if the other voice was a man or a woman. The thickness of the door made everything sound muffled. The heaviness in his chest was beginning to get to him, and he thought that perhaps by making some noise the other person might come check on him and get him out of this house away from Mother and her abuse. Ronnie laid on his back and started to kick the door hard with both feet, each time a loud thud shook the walls of the house. He heard footsteps coming upstairs and down the hallway, so he stopped and awaited his rescuer. The door unlocked and in walked Mother with a red face and wide eyes, a vein pulsating from her temple. She screamed, "What do you think you're doing!?" Ronnie sat up and scooted away from her, but she followed raising her hand high and slapping him repeatedly. "I had to get him out of the house because of your noise!" Ronnie pleaded, "Mother stop. I just didn't want to be alone, I wanted to meet the visitor." His quick thinking worked because Mother stopped hitting him, her face went from an angry frown to a remorseful shock. "Oh my sweet boy, you just wanted to see Daddy. It's ok darling come here; Mother won't hurt you." Ronnie couldn't believe what he heard, his father was there and probably didn't know he was in the house. He was certain something wasn't right with this whole situation, he barely had memories of a father. Ronnie still holding his arms up shielding his face asked, "Can I see Dad, I can't seem to picture his face." Mother raised her eyebrows and said, "In time dear, we have to make everything perfect for him before he sees you again. Now come downstairs with me." That was it, the smoking gun, Ronnie was sure Mother kidnapped him. He had to find a way to contact his dad, but first, he needed to remember his dad. Ronnie slowly stood up and followed Mother downstairs.

Walking downstairs and into the living room Ronnie saw several picture frames, all of Mother at various ages but none of him and his dad. He dared not ask thinking it might set Mother off again, so he had a plan, get Mother's attention to something outside and he would sneak in and look for anything about his dad. Mother smiled and said, "My dear I would like you to go outside and tend to the goat, make sure he is fed, and everything is ok with him." Ronnie thought to himself, perfect this is what he needs to get her attention outside, he would let the goat out and she would have to chase it. He smiled secretly knowing what he had planned, "Yes Mother I would be glad to." Mother smiled wide with her eyes looking almost otherworldly big, "That makes me happy, my sweet boy is so respectful." She reached out and hugged Ronnie tighter than he had been hugged before. "Ok Mom, that's a little tight." Mother's wide smile faded to a stern look and her voice gained that baritone again, "What did you call me?" Ronnie quickly answered back, "Mother. I'm sorry, I meant Mother." Her angelic voice returned along with her big smile, "That's my boy. So respectful. Now, the feed is outside the door, go make sure Odie is fed and stays in his pen." Ronnie nervously pushed a smile through, "Of course Mother, anything you say." Mother smiled again and said, "One last thing sweetie. Do not go into the woods behind Odie's pen, I have been hearing growling behind there at night and I don't want you hurt." Ronnie nodded and slowly walked outside.

Ronnie grabbed the small bag of feed and headed toward the goat Odie's pen. He picked up the pace of his walk as he was trying to make sense of what was going on. He was sure of it, he had no memory of this woman being his mother, she had to have kidnapped him. His dad was the key, if he could make contact or even see him it might shake his memory back to normal. She had to keep something in the house with his picture, name, or phone number. He walked upon the pen of the goat Odie, a smelly beast and evil-looking, he was black. Black fur, black horns, and black eyes, this didn't look like any goat that Ronnie had ever remembered seeing. Thinking about it, he doesn't remember this farm, or tending to animals either. He had enough, one way or another Ronnie was finding something out today. Odie was standing still as Ronnie approached the pen gate, he bleated and walked up curiously to Ronnie. "Today is your lucky day Odie, I'm setting you free." Ronnie said to the goat as he opened the gate of the pen, "Go. You're free." Ronnie said as he motioned toward the open field. Odie bleated and just stared at Ronnie. "I said go! You're my ticket to freedom. Run!" The goat charged Ronnie and knocked him to the ground. "Ow! What the hell?" Odie bleated and charged again, this time his head connecting with Ronnie's. The pain shot through Ronnie and that angered him, he rose to his feet and as Odie tried to charge again Ronnie saw a hammer on the ground next to the pen gate. He picked it up and swung as hard as he could hitting Odie right in the head. The goat fell to the ground, and a little trickle of blood started to fall from where the hammer connected. Maybe not exactly what he wanted, but this was as good of a shot as any. He yelled to the house, "Mother! Come quick something is wrong with Odie." As soon as he said it, Ronnie ran toward the house ducking behind a tree as Mother came running toward the pen. "Ronnie, where are you?" Mother yelled. Once she came to the pen she frantically tended to Odie, this was it, Ronnie hoped it would be enough time and he ran into the house.

Ronnie ran through the kitchen door into the living room with all the pictures. He looked at every one of them, but it was all just Mother, no sign of his dad, or anyone other than her. Then out of the corner of his eye, he saw an older picture, it must have been Mother as a teenager, and she was with a teenage boy. It looked like prom, they were both dressed nicely, Mother in a dress and the boy in a tuxedo. Then it hit him, the boy, his face, it was familiar. He knew it, that was his dad, he recognized him. So Mother must be his real mom, after all, he shook his head, either way, he had to contact his dad. He could hear Mother yelling outside for him, she was getting more frantic with every yell, and she was getting closer to the house. Ronnie picked up the picture frame and underneath was a yearbook, he opened it up to the autographs page and there was one signature, from a boy named Randy, and it just so happened to have a phone number. Whether it worked or not he still had to try, Ronnie ran to the phone on the wall and dialed the number. As the phone began to ring he felt his arm going numb as he dropped the yearbook. He was frightened at the sight of his arm; it had turned as gray as an overcast sky. He tried gripping his hand but nothing, it fell limp. Mother ran in and seeing his arm shrieked, "NO!" She grabbed Ronnie and hung up the phone before dragging him to the kitchen table. She reached into the cabinet pulling out a syringe and a weird bottle of dark liquid. She filled the syringe with the liquid and injected it into Ronnie's graying arm. She dragged him to the basement door throwing Ronnie in. As he tumbled down the stairs he heard Mother say, "It will be ok, just stay down there for a while." Ronnie hit the floor hard and passed out, but before he did, he heard Mother lock the basement door.

It was unknown how long he had been out, but Ronnie awoke to the sound of muffled talking. Two voices again, a man and a woman, except this time, as he started to awaken, he could make out what they were saying. "Look I appreciate your concern but calling me here to sit and talk with you under the pretense of finding my son is insulting, and frankly it's creepy." The man said. Mother could be heard crying, "I'm lonely Randy, I miss us." She said. "That was high school Lizzy, I have...I had a family. If you really care for me you will stop calling me or help me find my son." Randy said with his voice filled with sorrow. There it was, the truth, Mother did kidnap me Ronnie thought to himself. She is not my real Mother; she is a jealous girlfriend from high school. What the hell are her motives though, what does she gain from keeping him there Ronnie wondered. Ronnie tried to scream for his dad, but his voice was so weak he could only manage silent screams. He tried sitting up but kept falling down once he would get into a full sit-up. Ronnie saw a glass jar sitting on the steps, the third step from the bottom, just up high enough to break if knocked over. Ronnie could hear Mother arguing with his dad but stopped listening, his focus was to knock the jar over. His head began pounding with the worst headache he ever experienced, and his muscles were stiff. His arm was no longer limp, and the graying was going away but it still hurt. He fell over on his chest and began to slowly crawl toward the steps, inching closer with every crawl. Finally, he reached the jar, raised his arm up, and swung as quickly as he could knocking the jar over shattering it on the cold basement floor. The crash was loud, and he heard his dad ask, "What was that?" Ronnie tried to yell and nothing but small squeals would come out of his mouth, barely audible for a human to hear. Damn Mother and her drugs, whatever she injected him with were causing him to stumble and probably was causing his pain too. Mother could be heard saying, "It's nothing, damn goat probably got in the basement. Let me go check. Please stay Rand, finish your coffee." Mother unlocked the basement door and came walking downstairs, her eyes were filled with an evil Ronnie had not seen before as she locked her gaze on him. "YOU! You have been a very bad boy." Mother came towards Ronnie raising her hand to beat him. In that second Ronnie felt his strength return and like an Olympic athlete, he rolled and dodged her swing. She stumbled forward and Ronnie saw his chance, he kicked with all his might connecting on her back. The force pushed her to the ground and she hit her head as she fell, knocking her out cold. Ronnie feeling relieved and excited raced upstairs to tell his dad what was going on and that he was ok.

Ronnie made it up the stairs and into the kitchen, he yelled, "Dad!?" But he wasn't in the kitchen. Ronnie turned toward the living room and on the couch lay his dad with an empty coffee mug in his slumped-over hand. "No! No! No! Dad, please wake up!" Ronnie said as he shook his father. Randy barely opening his eyes said with a slur in his speech, "Ronnie? Son, you're here?" Ronnie wrapped his arms around his dad and lifted him up carrying him out to his dad's car. "Dad, she drugged you, you have to fight it, please wake up!" Ronnie was able to get his dad into the passenger seat of the car. He looked in his dad's pocket and found the keys, damn it, he will drive if he has to, just to get them to safety. Before he could take off though, Ronnie thought if he had that dark liquid Mother was drugging them with, they would have evidence against her and an antidote. Ronnie took a deep breath and ran back into the house. Once in the kitchen, he opened the cabinet and there it was, a small vial of dark liquid, the drugs she kept injecting him with. Just as he was pocketing the vial he heard Mother in the basement start to growl and scream, "Agghh!! I've had enough you ungrateful little shit!" He could hear her rising up and

walking up the stairs, he turned and ran out the door to the car and his father. Once out of the door, he felt the keys drop, he tried to quickly turn around to retrieve them but Mother burst through the basement door. Ronnie jumped off of the porch hiding behind the corner of the house hoping that the night would conceal him long enough to get Mother out of the house so he could retrieve the keys. Mother stepped out onto the porch and yelled out into the night, "You can't go anywhere without these!" waving the car keys of his dad's SUV. "Come back, Daddy is just taking a nap, he will be fine and we will be a happy family again." Ronnie filled with rage, his chest heaving rapidly, teeth gritting and lip curled, he came into view holding the vial of drugs. "This ends now Mother! Give me the keys or I run, one way or another I'll be back with the cops. I'm sure they will want to talk to you after I give them this." Mother looked at Ronnie waving the vial, her expression now calm. "Sweetie, give me that, it's your medicine." Ronnie yelled as loud as he could, "Enough LIES!! You're not my mother!! What have you been injecting me and my dad with?" Mother started to walk slowly off the porch, "We should talk, but first you have to give me your medicine. You don't understand what I had to do to get that." Ronnie finally tired of this screamed, "FUCK YOUR MEDICINE!" Ronnie raised his arm to throw the vial but before he could he felt something hit him hard from the side knocking him down, Mother ran with inhuman speed and caught the vial before it hit the ground. She looked it over making sure it wasn't broken, once she was satisfied she looked to her side and said, "Finish it. Knock him out so we can fix this." Ronnie looked at who, or rather what she was talking to, and saw the thing that had knocked him down, it was the goat Odie, and he was charging Ronnie and hit him in the head. Ronnie fell backward as he passed out again.

His head pounding, Ronnie awoke to realize he was tied to a chair, sitting directly across from him also tied to a chair was his dad Randy, still unconscious. They were in the living room and Mother stood next to them. Mother looked at Ronnie with a disappointed glance saying, "You have been a very naughty boy. Me and your father are worried sick about you. Isn't that right honey?" Mother lightly caressed Randy's shoulder as he started to awaken. He raised his head and locked eyes with Ronnie, the look on his face was of sheer terror, his mouth curled as if he were going to cry, his eyes watering, and sweat pouring down his head. He asked, "Ronnie? My god, son, what did she do to you?" Mother raised her eyebrows in a shocked grimace, "Randy, I would never hurt our boy." Randy snapped back, "He is NOT your son! What did you do to him?" Mother tilted her head and raised one eyebrow, "I did nothing to him, I rescued him, I healed him. Now we can be a family, especially since that boyfriend thief Vera is out of the picture." Vera, that name, Ronnie recognized it, that was his real mother's name. Randy yelled back, "We were over. Because you acted then as you are acting now, like a psycho." Mother slapped Randy across the face, "Don't EVER call me that. I was and still am your soul mate, you just couldn't see it. You left me for that bitch, then you went and had him. That is supposed to be OUR son Randy! I thought about letting him stay dead there that day, but I knew you wouldn't be happy without him." Ronnie was stunned at what he heard, what was she talking about. As he tried to process the words she just said, his memories came rushing back.

He remembered that day, his mother, his real mother woke him up, she was going to the store and asked if he wanted to come with her. Ronnie was so excited to go to the store with his mom because she always would take him for ice cream afterward. His dad was working that Saturday

and would be home later to take the family to the movies. There was a new superhero movie out that Ronnie was really excited for. He and his mom stopped for gas, once finished they headed out onto that old rural road filled with hills that led into town. He didn't know what happened he just remembered his mom being scared and slamming her foot down, she lost control of the car coming down a hill and they collided with a car coming from the opposite direction. All he recalled after that was a spinning feeling and then black, just black nothingness before being awoken by Mother, the fake Mother. Her words, what she said, Ronnie had died in that car wreck and she brought him back.

Ronnie looked up at Mother and asked her, "Am I dead?" she hung her head in sorrow and responded, "Sweetie, I brought you back, I just have to give you your medicine and you can stay here with us." Ronnie felt a heaviness in his chest as he looked at his dad now crying. He looked Mother directly in her eyes and asked, "How did you do it?" Mother snapped back, "Not important, you're here now." Ronnie felt the ropes tied to his hands loosening, he knew he was free. While he still had strength he quickly swung his arms free and tackled Mother to the ground, he grabbed a coffee mug sitting on the table and hit her as hard as he could in the head knocking her out cold. Ronnie stood up slowly and looked at himself in the reflection of one of the picture frames on the wall. It wasn't clear but he could see his scarred face from where he skidded on the pavement. He was ejected from the car and it scraped half of his face. He never noticed it until now but there were no mirrors in the house. He untied his dad and said, "Get out of here, go get help." With tears in his eyes Randy said, "Son, no come with me, we can figure this out." Ronnie hugged his dad, "No. I'm not meant to be here, let me fix this, I'll keep her occupied, go get help." Randy pleaded, "No, I can't lose you too." Ronnie responded, "Dad, go. Please, if she wakes up I may not have the strength to help you again. Go get help." Randy knew his son was right, he hugged him once more saying, "I love you, son." Tears rolling down his face Ronnie said, "I love you, Dad, now go." Randy ran out of the house and drove off in his SUV. Ronnie sat down in a chair and waited for the "medicine" to wear off so he could die for good this time. A voice came from behind, "I can make her suffer, you just have to pay the price."

Ronnie turned around to see a tall monstrous creature leaning against the wall. It was grayish black with a wide mouth full of razor-sharp fangs, it had wings on its back and its feet were hooves. Its eyes were black as the night, Ronnie was shocked, the eyes gave it away, so he asked, "Are you Odie?" The creature waved his arm in a circular motion and bowed, "Guilty, but I have gone by many names." It was all starting to make sense to Ronnie now, "So she used you to bring me back?" The creature laughed, "Well, that wasn't the original plan but she paid the price. It was supposed to be your mother for your father, but when she wanted you, she had to pay again. The other driver that day was alive, she sacrificed him for you. I gave her my blood, and once injected it raised you into what you are now, not living, not dead, somewhere in between." Ronnie shook his head, "So what can I pay to bring myself back?" The creature looked around, "Well, you can't come back. You were bought, but you can have a refund if you like. Be returned to rest as you should be." Ronnie hung his head, "How do I do it, and how do I make her suffer?" The creature smiled and handed Ronnie the hammer he used to hit the creature when he was in goat form. "Kill her, with this. It has my blood; you will get your refund and I will

have her soul instead.” Ronnie looked at the hammer and then looked at Mother who was waking up, “She will suffer?” The creature smiled a sly grin, “I guarantee it. But you better make your decision fast, she’s waking up.” Ronnie got up and walked over to Mother as she woke up looking at him standing over her, she looked at the creature and her eyes widened as she screamed, “NO! You can’t!” Ronnie raised his arm and said, “You deserve this bitch.” Then he began to repeatedly beat Mother in the head with the hammer until there was nothing left but a slushy pile of bone, blood, and brain matter. The creature nodded to Ronnie and said, “Debt has been paid, you can rest now.” He snapped his fingers as blackness engulfed Ronnie.

Almost as soon as the creature's fingers snapped Ronnie awoke, but nothing was familiar. There was fire all around him and he heard screaming coming from all directions. Two creatures that looked similar to Odie came flying down where he was, one grabbed him as the other began to read from a black book. The first creature said to the other, "Mild torture, one thousand years because he made a deal with the boss. Hot spears should do the trick." Ronnie screamed, "What? No, he said I would be at rest, that the debt was paid, the refund was given." Both creatures laughed loudly, and then the first one explained, "You should really read your contracts, your deal with the boss stands, but the other guy frowns on murder. That's why you're with us. You still need to be punished, but the boss is taking it easy on you on account of the rivalry between him and the other one. Take him away." Ronnie screamed as the second creature brought him to a building and into a room with a table. The creature strapped Ronnie to the table, it was hot as fire and Ronnie could hear and feel his skin burning. The creature leaned down and said, "This really isn't that bad, you could be the woman you sent here. She is in the other room. After your sentence is up you can talk to the boss, maybe you can be one of us." The creature left and another walked in with a large spear. It started to stab Ronnie and he could feel the excruciating pain all over. Time had passed and he began to get used to the pain, he didn't know how long though. One thing was helping him throughout this whole ordeal, as he heard the sound of Mother from the other room begging for mercy, Ronnie smiled the largest grin he had ever smiled.