

Father's Girl

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. VILLAGE LANE - DAY

A small row of cottages nestle next to each other, gardens without privacy, fencing separating nothing.

In the middle of the cottages two old crones lean on their gates, deep in conversation.

MRS HULDA appears to be the older of the pair, hunched over at an unlikely angle.

MRS HULDA
Definitely a killer on the loose.

MRS RAVEN strokes the hair on her chin, contemplates before responding.

MRS RAVEN
Methinks not, it's just some sheep.

MRS HULDA
Is it though?

MRS RAVEN
Yes, of course it is.

MRS HULDA
What about the lad from Windhaven,
went missing in the woods?

MRS RAVEN
He ran away from home, t's all.

MRS HULDA
So they say, but now the sheep...

The pair pause their conversation as a young girl turns into the lane and starts to walk towards them.

MAE mid teens, is dressed in drab colours that match the sullen look on her downcast face.

MRS RAVEN
Hello Mae, how are you?

Mae lifts her gaze to the old women.

MAE
Very well, thank you.

MRS HULDA
And your dear Mother?

Mae visibly winces.

MAE
As to be expected.

MRS HULDA
Yes, poor Ruth. Still, you must be
a great comfort to her.

Mae looks pained by the comment.

MRS RAVEN
Sorry Mae, she means you can look
after her.

MAE
Sorry, yes, I can, I mean, do.

BEAT

MAE
If you'll forgive me, I need to
make sure she is comfortable.

Mae scurries further up the lane without pausing for a
reply.

MRS RAVEN
You shouldn't taunt her so.

MRS HULDA
She deserves it, poor Ruth - bed
ridden and widowed.

MRS RAVEN
He isn't dead, he just left her for
his cabin and his hunting.

MRS HULDA
Same difference...

Mae reaches her garden, hurries in and slams the gate behind
her.

The old women watch Mae as she runs up the garden path.

She opens the door to the cottage and slips inside.

INT. HALLWAY

Mae is silhouetted against the doorway.

She slams the door shut behind her and slumps against it close to tears.

RUTH, her decrepit mother, cries out.

RUTH (O.S.)
Is that you, dear?

Mae shudders.

MAE
Yes, Mother, just me.

Mae shucks off her coat and trudges forward.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The living room is functional, a sofa, a chair, fireplace, a number of mirrors on the wall.

Mae moves quickly around the room, unpacking bread and few other bits from her bag onto the table.

RUTH (O.S.)
(shrill and demanding)
Where have you been?

MAE
I had to go get some bread.

RUTH (O.S.)
Always an excuse with you my girl,
just like your good for nothing
father!

MAE
You know that's not true.

RUTH
Oh, but it is - anything not to be
in the house with me, just like him
and his damn hunting!

Mae gasps and begins to sob.

RUTH (O.S.)
(continuing)
I'm stuck here, shut off from the
world and you leave me for hours on
end - bet you went to see him too!

MAE

I was half an hour, and it was just for the bread you wanted.

RUTH (O.S.)

Never mind that, you know full well that I can't move...

MAE

Not this again Mum, please...

RUTH (O.S.)

Why? Don't you like the truth?

MAE

Mum, I didn't push you over on purpose, I was only six.

RUTH (O.S.)

Doesn't matter how old you were does it - results are the same...

MAE

But...

RUTH (O.S.)

(escalating venom)

But what? Am I less crippled?

MAE

Mother...

RUTH

(fully screaming)

Don't call me that - I wish I'd never met your damn father, and never given birth to you!

With that Mae turns and runs from the house, slamming the door behind her.

Ruth screams abuse as she retreats.

RUTH (O.S.)

Go on then run to your Father.

EXT. GARDEN - DUSK

It is now raining lightly.

Mae looks to the sky, dark clouds loom ominously.

Mae starts back towards the door. Stops as she spots the russet blanket on the washing line.

With a deft twirl the blanket is around her head and shoulders and she runs on.

EXT. LANE

Mae scurries down the now deserted lane.

Mae is worried, but determined.

She strides on towards the woods.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH

Inside the wood the dusk is a deeper shade.

Branches project shadows of witch-like hands, stalking ghost, lost souls.

Mae shivers, pulls her makeshift cape tighter around herself as if to banish the apparitions.

She plunges deeper into the woods.

EXT. WOODLAND CLEARING

There is a small house in the clearing, smoke rising from the chimney.

She bangs loudly on the wood.

RUTH

Dad, it's me - let me in, please -
let me in.

A sound of movement comes from behind the door.

After a few moments the door is flung open and light floods over Mae.

She throws her arms round his midriff and begins to sob.

INT. CABIN HALLWAY

Mae's FATHER is a tall and imposing figure in his forties, he beams down lovingly at his daughter.

FATHER

Hey little one, what on earth is
the matter?

MAE

Oh Dad, it's Mother, she's getting
worse.

FATHER

Now, now - calm down, come in and tell me what's happened.

Mae is led into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

They sit on the small lumpy sofa.

Hunting trophies and paraphernalia line the walls, rugs and skins scattered on the floor.

FATHER

So what's so terrible that's got you running through the woods at night?

MAE

She's just so awful all the time now - constantly picking on me.

FATHER

Yeah, she always did have a spiteful streak.

MAE

Is that why? Did that make you leave me?

FATHER

Mae, I didn't really leave you, I need my space, the outdoors, and she just didn't understand.

MAE

But now she blames me... no wonder she hates me.

Mae pauses and looks thoughtful for a moment.

MAE

(continues)

Can you come back with me, talk to her, explain things?

FATHER

Oh, I don't know about that.

MAE

But you can tell her how it's not all my fault.

FATHER

Er, I'm not sure that's a good idea
Mae.

MAE

(starting to cry)
So you did leave because of me
then?

FATHER

Okay, okay, look I'll come and try
and get her to understand -
again...

Mae stops crying and looks up at her father.

MAE

Then everything will be okay, it
will all be good again.

FATHER

Well, let's not get ahead of
ourselves, let's see when we get
there.

He gets up and takes a rifle down from the wall.

Mae looks at him, a question in her raised eyebrow.

FATHER

Not safe in the woods at night...

They leave the living room, continue through the hall.

Mae grabs her improvised cloak and Father grabs a sturdy
coat as they leave.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH - NIGHT

Mae and her Father walk quickly through the woods back
towards the village, the full moon the only light to guide
them.

Soon they are at the village, up the familiar lane and the
through the familiar gate.

MAE

Let's be quiet, in case she's
asleep.

Mae slips quietly through the door before her Father can
answer.

INT. HALLWAY

Mae runs through the hallway and into the living room.

MAE

(whispering over her shoulder)
Won't be a minute Dad, just wait in
the living room for me.

Father shuts the door quietly behind him, rests his rifle against the wall and tip toes through into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Father looks around.

FATHER

(whispering)
Mae, where are you?

There is no answer.

Father paces the room, looking at the furnishings, mirrors on the walls etc.

FATHER

Where are you?

Still no answer.

Father walks to the bedroom door, pauses in front of it.

He cocks his head on one side and listens intently.

No sound comes from behind the door or anywhere else in the house.

Father pushes the door open to reveal the contents of the room.

In the bed against the wall is Ruth, probably.

Her face is a rictus grin, a dessicated husk.

She has been dead for weeks if not months.

A knife handle protrudes from her chest.

FATHER

God, no!

Father steps back from the doorway into the living room and spins round.

Sitting at the table in the living room is Mae, a knife in her hand.

Father glances round and catches sight of the Mae in one of the mirrors.

The reflection is no longer Mae, her reflection is a wild beast.

FATHER

Mae, why?

BEAST (IN MIRROR)

You and mother created me.

FATHER

But, we didn't do this.

BEAST (IN MIRROR)

I think you did, deserting me with her and her poison. She never stopped.... 8 years of blame, every day, poor cripple, helpless old lady, evil daughter...

FATHER

Oh Mae, no!

BEAST (IN MIRROR)

Yes, Father, and still you didn't come and save me.

FATHER (IN MIRROR)

But I wanted to but your mother hated me and...

BEAST (IN MIRROR)

And nothing, you're just weak!

Mae reaches forward and stabs down with the knife, temporarily skewering Father's hand to the table.

He screams in agony.

FATHER

(weeping)

Mae, I'm sorry...

Father briefly looks at himself in the mirror.

For a split second a beast stares back at him.

FATHER
(looking at his daughter)
So sorry...

The knife comes down again.

FADE OUT:

THE END