

I'll be Mother

By

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INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - DAY

A dusty mantle piece is covered with framed of family snaps (Birthdays, Christmases etc).

ROSE, 70s, a sourpuss old dragon runs her index finger along it and examines the dust.

ROSE

I guess you were not expecting me.

Several Cardboard boxes marked "Keep", "Charity" and "Rubbish" cover the floor.

CLAIRE (late 30's) weaves around the messy Kitchen with her mobile glued to her ear and a box under her arm.

CLAIRE

(On phone)

Darling, put your dad on the phone.

Claire puts the box on the table next to roll of black bin bags. She turns on the kettle.

CLAIRE

(On phone)

What's going on?

Rose watches her daughter argue on the phone. She touches a framed holiday picture of Claire, happy and laughing with her daughters KATE and MOLLY.

She glances at her daughter again, tired and drained and nothing like the girl in the photograph.

The kettle hisses violently. Claire crooks her mobile under her chin.

CLAIRE

(On phone)

Of course they're going to act up.

She grabs the kettle and pours water into an old chipped "Best mum in the world" mug.

CLAIRE

(On phone)

Well, they're your kids too.

She looks at the mug and regrets the words the moment they came out. She turns and catches her mother's eye.

CLAIRE
(On phone)
Look, I can't do this right now.

Claire hangs up and plonks the mug on the counter.

Rose sees a tea bag floating in it.

ROSE
Leaves darling, never bags.

Claire grabs the mug, marches to the sink and pours the tea away. She shoves the tea bags back into the cupboard, slamming the door.

Rose wanders around the room and catches herself in a mirror hanging on the wall. She fiddles with her dress.

ROSE
I don't know why you put me in
this.

Rose notices her daughter in a drab looking outfit.

ROSE
Never one for fashion, were you
dear?

Rose stares at her reflection in the mirror, pulling back the loose skin around her neck.

ROSE
I guess it doesn't really matter,
in the end.

Rose approaches a a pile of unwanted clothes hidden in the corner. She picks up a 60's style day dress.

Rose clenches the dress for a second then places it on a back of a chair.

As Claire pours the hot water into the teapot, She loses her grip and the kettle falls. The water burns her hand.

CLAIRE
Shi---sugar.

ROSE
Just one lump, dear.

Claire grabs her fobbing hand and rushes to the sink.

ROSE
Let me see.

Rose stands behind Claire and examines the burn. Claire, unconformable by the closeness she steps aside.

ROSE
 You used to have such lovely
 hands. Mind you, you never looked
 after them...

As Rose waffles on, Claire massages her hand under the running water. She focuses on a faint tan line of a missing wedding band.

ROSE
 Where are the girls?
 (nods to Claire's hand)
 With him I suppose.

Rose admires a wall full of photos of Claire's daughters.

ROSE
 I haven't seen them for a while.

Claire pours the tea into the mug.

ROSE
 You know, the last time I saw
 Molly, I thought she was a bit
 plumpy. She's a growing girl
 dear, but she shouldn't be
 growing in both directions.

Claire mouths along with "growing in both direction" like she's heard it for the umpteenth time.

ROSE
 And Kate... A dreamer that one...
 Just like your father.

Claire eyes' focus on a picture of her dad.

CLAIRE
 Enough.

Claire clenches her fists.

ROSE
 Never did thing wrong in your
 eyes. Always the daddy's girl.

She hits the box off the table taking the mug with it. It smashes on the floor.

CLAIRE
 I said ENOUGH.

Claire glares at the clutter around the Kitchen. She picks up items and throws them down.

CLAIRE
The... picking... the...
controlling.

Claire face crinkles up with despair and she kicks a box.

CLAIRE
It stops now. You hear me.

Claire is alone in an empty Kitchen. She gazes at the broken mug.

Claire, upset, falls to the floor and picks up the broken mug pieces scattered around the floor. She sobs.

Surrounded by mess, Claire finds A SMALL PHOTOGRAPH of a mother and baby. As she picks it up she turns it over and reads "My Beautiful Girl".

She turns the photo back she stares back at the image of a loving mother she never knew.

The phone rings.

Claire wipes her eyes and gets up from the floor. She answers.

CLAIRE
(On phone)
Hey munchkins, having fun?

She wanders out of kitchen and passes the dress on the chair.

CLAIRE (O.S)
I miss you too. You did? Oh I'm
so proud.

She picks up the dress and leaves the Kitchen.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - LATER

Claire, now in her mothers dress, carries out a few large filled rubbish bags and puts out by the bins.

A car parks in to the drive. Claire's girls pop out and run towards her. She greets them with a hug bear hug and holds them close.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - DAY

The room is spotless. The children and Claire can be heard from outside. Rose's photo is proudly on display with the other photos on the polished mantelpiece.

END