

Erica O'Brien

Draft 1

*Mother Knows Best*

I warned my son not to go. I told him about that crazy killer "The Misfit". I told him! Why didn't he listen to me? I had just arrived at my childhood home in Tennessee when I got the call. When the officer on the phone said "Ma'am...I'm sorry to have to deliver this news over the phone but your son Bailey...he has been killed." My head felt like it was in the clouds, my legs felt like they had turned into jelly and could no longer hold me up I fell to the ground dropping the phone. My sister Ana and cousin Jenni tried to find out what happened but in that moment I could not put it into words. Ana picked the phone up from the ground, she talked to the officer and got the rest of the information. Ana got off the phone and took me inside with help from Jenni. She sat me down in the living room while telling Jenni to make us some tea. She sat across from me visually upset herself and told me the rest of what happened to Bailey. Bailey had pulled over to fix a flat tire and it was just starting to rain when a car pulled up behind them. A man got out offering to help him change the tire before it started raining too hard. At first I was confused. I asked "If Bailey is dead how do they know all of this?" Ana told me that the kids and their mother managed to get away. As anyone would expect they are extremely shaken up but they are okay. I felt some relief knowing they were safe but I still couldn't understand why God, our Lord, and Savior had chosen to take my Bailey boy. He was my only the son, the one who has taken care of me in my old age. We did not always see eye to eye but I would never expect God to punish me this way. Why was it Bailey who was killed..why not his wife. The mother of the children. Me and her never really got along. I cursed myself under my breathe for

even thinking such a thought. God help me. Jenni broke my chain of thought when she brought me out a cup of steaming hot tea. I sat in the living room holding the cup letting the sting from the heat get to my hands. This real pain seemed to help take my mind off of my emotional pain. For hours I sat praying this was all some kind of nightmare I would soon wake up from. Ana let me be for those couple of hours but later came in to let me know where Bailey's wife and kids are. They were being put up in a hotel for the night and tomorrow would be driven here to my childhood home. I was thankful they were not hurt but the thought of Bailey surviving instead of his wife would not leave me.

I could barely sleep that night. I tossed and turned all night every time I closed my eyes I saw that monsters, "The Misfits" face. When I finally was fed up with tossing and turning I got out of bed and did what I know best. I prayed. I prayed for hours asking God to show me why this had happened and to give me the strength to get through this trying time. I prayed that God would take Bailey in open arms even though he had started to stray from his religion in his adult life. I prayed that he would forgive me for wishing death on his wife and hoping for his return. After praying for a while I was finally able to fall asleep for a little while.

The next morning, I woke up to the sound of car doors shutting. I reluctantly got up and went to look out the window. It was Bailey's wife and kids. I saw her and felt sick. I got myself together knowing that whatever pain I was feeling they were feeling too...maybe even more. I have to be strong for them and I know God will help me with that. I quick got dressed fixed up my hair and went downstairs to greet them. When I saw Bailey's wife you could see it in her face she was lost and not quite understanding what had really happened. I was shocked seeing the kids. This is the first time since they were born that they had been quite. I walked up to them saying a silent prayer that I could keep myself together and tried to wrap them all up in a hug but

to my surprise I was rejected. Bailey's wife stepped back starting to sob. She looked at me with disgust saying "This is all your fault. You jinxed us. If you would have never brought up that misfit guy this would not have happened." Her voice was cracking barely able to get the words out. I could not believe what I was hearing. She was blaming me! I stood there staring not really knowing what to do or say. I could not keep it in any longer. I snapped. "Well maybe if you did not spoil your little brats so much you all would have been here safe with me! Bailey would have been here still! My boy would be here!!" I began to sob. Ana overheard what was going on and ran into the room to arbitrate the fight. She wrapped me up in her arms and pulled me to the kitchen. Ana looked at me surprised with my behavior. I had never been one to lash out like that. Her being my older sister knew she needed to be there for me but also knew she needed to tell me what I did was wrong. She looked at me with a stern face and said "You need to keep it together. I know you two have not always been on good terms but she is hurting just as much as you. Neither of you have a right to blame each other. She then instructed me to make tea, tea seemed to be her go to thing to calm people down. She left me alone in the kitchen and when to bring Bailey's wife and kids upstairs to show them their rooms. After about fifteen minutes Ana returned with only the two oldest children. She told me their mother and the baby were napping and would be down for supper. The kids still said nothing to me just started at me as if I were the one who killed Bailey. I silently sipped my tea once again hoping the sting from the heat would ease my pain. I was dying on the inside but I knew God would want me to rise above and know this is just the stages of mourning.

Ana had made a beautiful supper. She made her famous chicken pot pie, green beans, mashed potatoes, and for desert a chocolate cake. I picked at my plate not really feeling like eating but not wanting to be rude. The kids however went to town eating anything and

everything on the table. I loved my grandchildren I really did but in this moment I could not even look at them. It made me sick, sad, and everything in between. Bailey's wife came downstairs huffing and puffing. I paid her no mind. After twenty minutes of sitting there she excused herself and said goodnight. I worked up enough grit and tried to talk to the kids and let them know that their father was with God now but once again I was ignored. I could not take being treated like this anymore. I slammed down my fork and went upstairs to talk to the children's mother. She was sitting on the end of the bed holding a shirt. Once I got closer I realized it was one of Baileys. She looked over her shoulder and told me to get the hell out that she did not want to talk to me. I stopped putting my hands on my hips. Once again the feeling of rage I had before came over me. I started talking...then yelling. I could not stop. I told her "I understand you are upset but so am I. Bailey was my son I loved him just as much as you did! You can feel whatever way you want about me but to poison those kids minds too is not okay. They are my grandchildren. My son's children, and I'll be damned if you think I am not going to be in their life still. You do not have to like or agree with me but you will respect me." She was silent for a little while. Then it was her turn to yell, and boy she did not hold back. "You selfish bitch. You think you can come in here and tell me what I am going to do. Bailey is the only reason I put up with you and guess what? He's gone now so I do not have to have you in my life. So if I were you I would watch what I say." I said nothing back, I turned and walked out.

In the days following things were very uncomfortable. The children's mother and I spoke to each other through Ana and figured out and prepared Bailey's viewing and funeral.

The funeral came and went. I moved in with Ana and Bailey's family went back to their home. The next couple of months seemed to be all a blur with all of the changes in our lives. It was hard without Bailey being here. I missed the kids.

I was sitting in the living room with Ana one night when the phone rang. I picked up surprised to hear the voice on the other end. It was Bailey's wife. She sounded scared, she was stuttering. "He's back. He broke out again."