

LIVING WITH MOTHER

CURTAINS AT THE WINDOW

By

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SCENE 1

EXTERIOR: OCCASIONAL MOO THROUGH OUT AND MAYBE

BIRD SONG ETC

PATRICK:

(Shouting)

Alan....Alan! She's in the bushes.....No the bushes... in the
spinney yonder!....In the spinney! Go around and drive her
back through!

(Normal)

He's a bit slow witted is that lad. A cow makes to break
through the fence and he just stands and watches her go.....

(Shouting)

Drive her back through lad!

(Normal)

So, yes what to say.....Well I can tell you about Mother. First off she's hundred and three years old now. Yes, one hundred and three so I can forgive her a few things but basically she is a bloody spendthrift. Can I say bloody? Too late now. It's done in it? Yes, she spends money like there's no tomorrow.....Or she would if I didn't keep a tight reign on the finances. And before you start thinking I'm tight. Well I'm not, I'm careful. Who knows what the future holds. And Mother would be up to all sorts if I didn't look after things.

(Shouting)

Don't be scared of her lad. That's it! Now shove her back though! Nooo!

(Normal)

If you want a job doing.....

(Shouting and hurrying off)

Alan, Alan!. You've left the bloody gate open!

SCENE 2

SEWING MACHINE

MAISY: Life's for living, that's what Susan says. And she's right; things have to change. We've been going on like this for a lifetime. Thrifty is one thing but my boy is and always has been tighter than a ducks you know what. Now, take his birthday. Patrick says birthdays don't mean nothing to him but it's a big one this year. Who'd have thought it? My son being eighty years old. It's on Saturday but he probably won't even remember. I'll make him a card though whether he likes it or not. And I could do him his favourite rhubarb crumble. That was his dad's favourite; rhubarb. There's a big patch of it round the back of the tin barn. Grows like billy-o it does. Thick as your arm and red as sunsets.... He was careful with money too was his dad..... Even when he died.....We buried him in a coffin made of old soap boxes. Put him out by the rhubarb. But money is for them that's alive and Patrick being eighty has had me thinking; we should be doing something not just existing. What good is all that cash once you're six foot under a rhubarb patch?

SEWING MACHINE

Oh there's not half enough material here.

SCENE 3

DOOR OPENS AND SLAMS SHUT

PATRICK: Curtains in the window? Curtains in the bloody window?

MAISY: Oh you made me jump son.....

PATRICK: Curtains in the window Mother. We can't be affording them.

MAISY: Now Patrick.....

PATRICK: How much they cost? We can't afford to be wasting money on curtains at the window. They look like ten shillings a piece at least Mother.

MAISY: Oh Patrick....Even I know we been Metrics for years an years..

PATRICK: I don't care if we're dollars, Euros or ying or bloody yangs mother. All I know is that we can't be throwing money away on frippery.

MAISY: Well I didn't spend anything Patrick. They made from the old tablecloth Aunty Winnie gave me twenty years ago. And there's only enough for half the window anyway.

PATRICK: Oh right. Well..You sure?

MAISY: Sure. Looks silly with only half the window covered though.

PATRICK: No one to look in on us anyways. Now what we got for tea?
I've done ten hours straight on that fencing and that lad Alan is near to bloody useless.

MAISY: How old is he now?

PATRICK: Sixty five.

MAISY: Don't know their born.

PATRICK: They don't mother, they don't.

HARLEY DAVIDSON APPROACHES. STOPS AND IDLES.

LETTERBOX GOES AND LETTERS FALL ON MAT. HARLEY

DAVIDSON ROARS OFF

PATRICK: That postman delivers later and later every day.

MAISY: I'll get it.

PATRICK: No I'll go mother you finish that tea. It'll take you an hour to get to the front door.

MAISY: I'm quicker than you.

PATRICK: Ho, I don't think. Remember that egg and spoon race at last years fete?

MAISY: You glued yer egg to the spoon though.

SORTING THOUGH POST.

PATRICK: Nothing but bloody bills and a pizza menu. Oh and a letter for you mother.

MAISY: Oh let me see.

LETTER TORN OPEN

MAISY: It's another letter from Susan Tully. Oh lovely Susan. You remember her?

PATRICK: No.

MAISY: You must do.

PATRICK: Well I don't. Another letter?

MAISY: She was a couple years a head of you at school. Used to come over all the time. I nursed her mother afore she passed on. And then she went off to Australia I think it was. Oh and she says she's coming back home to retire.....Oh dear her husband died....Oh dear...But on a lighter note she's says the post is so rubbish that she'll probably be home by the time I reads this letter.

PATRICK: That's true. Another letter?

MAISY: Oh yes we've written a few of late we have. Did I not mention it? There's a P.S. "When are you getting e mail?".... What's e mail?

PATRICK: I dunno.... sounds French. Bloody common market.

MAISY: Oh but that's lovely isn't it. And she's probably home now. I'd give her a call if we had a phone.

PATRICK: There's call box at the end of the lane.

MAISY: We really should get a phone though Patrick. They've been around since before I was born.

PATRICK: The one at the end of the lane works perfectly and it hardly ever smells. Can't see any need to waste money by having one of our own in the house.

MAISY: Your father was the same about the lavvy.

PATRICK: He was right. Unhygienic having them indoors.

MAISY: Not on a winter's night it isn't. I can't tell you how many times I've had to scrape the frost off that seat.

PATRICK: Don't do you no harm mother. You're fitter than most folk round here.

MAISY: That's only because you won't give me the bus fair to get into town.

PATRICK: I thought you liked cycling.

MAISY: Not with a trolley on the back full of shopping.

PATRICK: Well that's the way of the world Mother. I'm out there tending them cows all day long. Mucking out and mending fences.....So what's for tea then mother?

MAISY: I'm off to go see Susan. She says she'll be at her mother's old house. Your tea's on the stove son. Beans and Mutton with some spuds from Monday.

SCENE 4

EATING DINNER

PATRICK: I lied when I said I don't remember that Susan girl. I bloody well do remember her. She was the kid at school who always had the best shoes. Always wearing new clothes on a Sunday. Her dad was the first person in town to have carpets. Flash is what my dad called them. Flash Harrys. They had an inside bathroom of course and a television. I remember I saw it once. She invited me and Jimmy Clayton over. There was a Donkey puppet thing and some posh woman telling a story. No idea what that was about. Bit childish I thought. Susan thought it was good though. She laughed like it was the best thing she had ever seen. Laughed and laughed she did..... I remember she always had pink ribbons in her hair. Pink

ribbons all crisp and new and she smelt of Lilac flowers. All fresh like. Bloody well laughed at me I remember. Just 'cos I had wellies on at school. Clean though. Oh yes Mother always made sure I was washed and scrubbed proper clean and me dad would polish them wellies until you could see the sun rise. And like he said: "No good wasting money on fancy shoes when you be traipsing through mud half the day."And now he's out buried by that rhubarb patch. Funny. Only seems like yesterday that he was in this room polishing my wellies.....

SCENE 5

CLOCK TICKING

MAISY: I don't think I've been out so late since V.E day. Oh but it was a tonic to see Susan it really was. She told me all about her travels and showed me photos of little African children she'd been teaching. Oh she's really lived. And just like her mother. A really lovely caring person. Heart of pure gold if ever there was one. And now she's back home. Funny how people return home one way or another. Back to the fields and the hills and all these lovely people. And I told her about what we've been

doing....which didn't take long. And Patrick's birthday coming up and she told me all about *her* eightieth. They hired a boat on Sydney harbour and had a proper old knees up. Imagine that; bobbing about on a boat in Sydney harbour. So anyways, we've got a plan. A surprise party. It's all very exciting. Susan is going to bake a cake and I'm going to raid the kitty and get us some balloons and we'll invite young Alan and the Frenchs and all the folk from the post office and the tavern. Oh Patrick will have the surprise of his life.....Hope he doesn't have a heart attack.

SCENE 6

HOOVER

PATRICK: Humiliated mother! Bloody well Humiliated!

MAISY: What?

PATRICK: Worse idea you have ever had. Thank god I won't ever be eighty again!

MAISY: What's that son?

PATRICK: Will you turn that bloody thing off a minute!

MAISY: I'll just turn this off, I can't hear you.

PATRICK: I specifically said I did not want a party.

MAISY: I thought you just didn't want a present. I thought.....

PATRICK: I'll bet it was Susan's idea.

MAISY: We came up with the idea together son. I thought it was lovely. And everyone came and had a good time and bought you presents.

PATRICK: It was humiliating.

MAISY: The presents?

PATRICK: The bumps. Being given the bumps is humiliating at any age but eighty of the blasted things.....

MAISY: Well that was young Alan's idea that was.

PATRICK: Bloody fool. And Susan laughed and laughed herself silly.

SUSAN: She was just joining in son.

PATRICK: And how much did them balloons and sandwiches cost?

MAISY: Well not much and Susan says we should live a little these days and to be honest son I don't think we're poor are we.

PATRICK: We bloody will be at this rate. Forking out for people to mess about giving me the bumps.

MAISY: Susan says you should do things like that more often.....

PATRICK: Susan says...Susan bloody says. I'm fed up hearing about that woman already mother.

MAISY: You seemed to have a nice time after the bumps anyway.

PATRICK: Well I.....

MAISY: I could tell Susan was ever pleased to see you again after all these years. And you two had a bit of a dance when Alan started on the piano.

PATRICK: That is called being civil. Don't want people saying we're rude.

MAISY: Just tight fisted.

PATRICK: I beg your pardon mother?

MAISY: Tight fisted.

PATRICK: What's brought this on? One minute we're doing fine the next Susan comes home and all hell is let loose. Curtains in the window is one thing but sandwiches and bloody balloons?

MAISY: I've been thinking for a while son. We need to enjoy ourselves. Let our hair down. Life is for living after all.

PATRICK: Life is for working mother. I don't mind you running on about stuff as usual but actually spending money is another thing.

MAISY: Well Susan is coming over for tea tonight so there. And I've bought some fish from town. Take it out my pension if you must.

PATRICK: I will mother I bloody well will.

SCENE 7

EXTERIOR: COWS MOOING AND THE ODD BIRD SINGING

PATRICK *(Shouting)*

Alan! Pull her towards you! Alan! Towards you! Don't let go of the rope lad, she'll be back in that spinney! Don't let go of the rope.....Oh bloody.....

(Normal)

I should sack that lad I really should. If I don't have enough on my plate..... Susan came round for tea last night.

It wasn't unpleasant I must admit. Nice to have a young woman around the house and she's not unattractive. I reminded her of that time watching that television at her parents house..... And last night I couldn't help noticing she

had a little pink ribbon in her hair.....Still smells of lilac flowers too.....Just think what might have been in another life..... She does insist on laughing at me though. Says I should buy myself a belt. Nothing wrong with good honest string I said. And off she went laughing again.....Sure them two are up to no good though. Plotting something. As long as it isn't another bloody party that's all I can say.

SCENE 8

HALFWAY THROUGH, BOOGIE WONDERLAND

(Dancing)

Here we go! Oh I feel eighty five again. *(Laughing)* Who hoo. I'm away. I can still move with the best of 'em I reckon. Oh that get's the blood coursing I can tell you.

RADIO CLICKS OFF

Phew. Bit out of breath. Oo where do the years go hey. One minute you're dancing to Bing Crosby, the next you're a silly old lady wearing your son's trainers. He hee! Anyway it's all planned. Me and Susan have booked it up on her computer thing. We've decided we have to take to bull by the horns and

lead him to water. One of Susan's funny sayings that is. If the mountain won't come to Mohamed then we have to take Mohamed to the mountain...and make him drink.....Something like that anyway.

SCENE 9

DOOR CLOSES

PATRICK: That bloody lad. He spends more time hunting down cows than he does fixing the bloody fence.....Mother?...Where are you Mother?

MAISY: (*Coming downstairs*) What's that son?

PATRICK: I say that bloody lad takes.....What the hell are you wearing?

MAISY: I bought it back in the seventies for the jubilee. Remember we had that party in the village hall? Vol en vents, jelly boats....

PATRICK: Hey? Yes but why are you wearing a party frock? Not another surprise party is it? Oh, I hope you haven't lost your marbles mother. I remember Marty Jenkins' mother went the same way. He came home one day and she was dressed as Nefertiti.

MAISY: No, no there's nothing wrong with my marbles because....ta da! Take a look at these.

PATRICK: What's this? (*reading*) The Pacific Star. Round the world cruise.....

MAISY: Well?.....Say something Patrick. It's a round the world cruise. All those places we've only read about. I've paid for it all from my savings book. I never realised I had so much money until I looked. The seven seas, New Zealand, America, Hong Kong.

PATRICK: A....round the.....You've booked us

MAISY: Around the world cruise. We need to spread our wings and enjoy ourselves son. And Alan can look after the farm.....

PATRICK: Bloody Alan. He couldn't look after himself. I'm not even going to ask how much this has cost. I'll tell you now. You can march down that lane and call the bloody, Pacific Star and tell them we are not bloody well coming.

MAISY: But, you'll love it I know you will.

PATRICK: Mother, there is no way I am going on that boat.

MAISY: Susan's coming.

SCENE 10

SHIP'S HORN. SEAGULLS.

PATRICK: Always loved boats of course.....I remember dad saying he fancied joining the navy once. Bit of adventure.

MOTHER: That's right. He would have joined right up if it hadn't been for his flat feet.

PATRICK: And his eyesight.

MOTHER: And his seasickness. We're doing it for him son.

PATRICK: Yes and for ourselves like Susan says.

MOTHER: That's right. See the world and live a little hey?

PATRICK: Who'd have thought it? You me and Susan on the high seas.

MOTHER: I always thought you was sweet on that girl.

PATRICK: Me?

MOTHER: Can't fool your mother.

PATRICK: She's a rare woman that's for sure. Italy was nice though wasn't it?

MAISY: Oh Beautiful. Big queue of people behind us in that leaning tower though wasn't there?

PATRICK: Well, people don't mind waiting. Anyway, they need to stop running on and relax.

MAISY: Get up out of bed and smell the coffee.... beans.

PATRICK: What's that?

MAISY: One of Susan's little sayings. I'm so glad she's here.

PATRICK: Me too. You know, when we get home mother I want you to go to that Mr John Lewis' shop that Susan likes and I want you to buy all the curtains you want. Hang 'em in every window in the blessed house.

MAISY: Oh Patrick. That's lovely. You sure?

PATRICK: Course. We can afford it. I know this fancy cruise was probably expensive. Couple of hundred pounds at least I imagine but we can afford a few bob for you to get the things you like.

MAISY: Oh right...yes

PATRICK: Mind you we're still not having an indoor lavvy though.

MAISY: Think Susan would like it son. She's used to a bit of luxury.

PATRICK: I see what you mean. She's a woman of taste that's for sure. What the hell lets' get one. Life's for living hey Mother? An indoor toilet, curtains in the window and maybe, maybe even carpets on the floor!

MAISY: That's right son. Life's for living.

PATRICK: Life's for Living! Come on Mother, let's join Susan in that
lounge bar. We can all have half a lager!

CREDITS