

MOMMA

by Stephen Catron

NAME: Stephen Catron

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What's keeping you positive? Not sure that I am.

Yes, you can publish this

CHARACTERS

MOMMA: Stern, worn woman in her 50's.

TIMMY: Late teens. Not too bright.

SISSY: Mid 20's. Has had a hard early life, but more on track now.

ADAM: Friend of Sissy's. Mid 20's

TIME

June 1948.

SETTING

Rundown home in Oklahoma.

A hot afternoon. The front of Momma's house, where Momma is sitting in her rocking chair on the porch where she is listening to music coming from the radio. Timmy enters thru front screen door.

TIMOTHY: Uh, Momma.....Momma? You sleeping again? Anyway, I can't make the door stop squeaking. No more oil in the house. I tried bacon fat cause it's slippery. Didn't work.
Momma, you ain't dead are ya?

MOMMA: No, I ain't dead, shit for brains. I'm listening to my music.

TIMOTHY: OK. *(pause)* I told the Reverend you like jazz music. He said he didn't think it proper for white folks to listen to Negro music.*(pause)* I don't like your music. Too scambly. Guitar music is better.

MOMMA: I raised nothing but idiots. Jazz is the only music, Negro or not, you just too goddamn stupid to appreciate anything.

TIMOTHY: Reverend says I ain't stupid, just a little slower than most folks.

MOMMA: Don't interrupt me boy.

TIMOTHY: Yes Ma'am. But there's a car comin', see the dust?. Ow! Weren't no need to slap me.

MOMMA: Don't sass me boy. Can you see who it is?

TIMOTHY: No. Just that they's got a red car.

MOMMA: Go fetch my pistol and here take this *(hands Timothy an empty beer can)* and get me another one.

TIMOTHY: Yes ma'am.

MOMMA: I do not care for unexpected visitors and ain't nobody called me they coming out to see your sister. I do not recognize that car. Do you boy?

TIMOTHY: No ma'am. Maybe the Sheriff got a new police car.

MOMMA: Sheriff's don't drive red cars. God, your daddy was sure excited when he heard he was to finally have a boy. But, god damn if I don't understand when he said we shoulda tossed you into the lake when we found out how stupid you are. Thank god that you can fetch cigarettes. Anyway, we'll see soon enough won't we.

TIMOTHY: That looks like Sissy.

MOMMA: That is Sissy. Holy shit, what's she doing come here for.

TIMOTHY: Maybe she wants to show us her red car. And her boyfriend.

MOMMA: Get on in the house and wait for us.

TIMOTHY: NO! I WANTA SAY HI TO SISSY.

MOMMA: Fine, stop screaming, Go on down there,

TIMOTHY: SISSY. SISSY. Get out. Get Out OF THE CAR. I Love you Sissy.

SISSY: Timmy? Oh my god, look how big you got.

TIMOTHY: I'm not Timmy no more, I'm Timothy, which is my real name.

SISSY: Well alright, Timothy it is. What a fine looking man you are.

TIMOTHY: Is that your boyfriend?

SISSY: No, he is not my boyfriend. He's just a friend that came along with me today.

TIMOTHY: Momma says I'm too stupid to have a girlfriend. So I don't have a girlfriend.

SISSY: Well, that's alright, you're still young. You'll have lotsa girlfriends.

MOMMA: Timmy get on back on the porch and leave Sissy alone.

TIMOTHY: Momma still calls me Timmy.

SISSY: Hello Momma. Looking same as I remember.
Why ain't you in jail yet?

MOMMA: For what? Providing half the men in this county what they want. Including the Sheriff.

SISSY: There's a real low place in hell for you old lady.

MOMMA: You wanta beer?

SISSY: I'm good.

MOMMA: All right. Well, if you are not gonna accept my hospitality, why don't tell me what yur here for and then leave. Unless of course yur looking for a job, like your sister in there.

SISSY: No, I'll pass. Last time I didn't have much of a choice, but now I do. And I gotta a job. So, no thanks.

MOMMA: Yeah, you got a job. Last I heard you was waitressing at Albino's Truck Stop. Getting big tips for the fine service you provided. Services I taught you, you ungrateful whore. Timmy take this and get me a Jack and coke with lots of ice. Fuck it's hot today.

SISSY: It is gettin' hotter ain't it?

MOMMA: So, who's the feller ya got with ya? Some dumbass trash you picked up along the way.

SISSY: Just a friend

MOMMA: Friend? OK, call him what you want, but I know a whore and a john when I see them.

SISSY: His name is Adam.

TIMOTHY: Here ya go Momma.

MOMMA: Why thank you Timmy. And what's this Adam do?

SISSY: Plays trumpet in a band, he ain't too good. He ain't too bad. And I sing in the band.

MOMMA: You sing in a band. Well don't that beat all.

SISSY: I sing pretty good too, so they tell me.

MOMMA: You always was looking for compliments.

SISSY: Mr. piece of shit, Jenkins was always giving me compliments, wasn't he Momma? He told me how pretty I was. And how much he liked having special times with me. I was eleven years old Momma. Eleven. You remember that don't cha? How old was Betty when you auctioned her off the first time? I told Mr. Jenkins I was gonna tell his wife about his special visits and damn soon I was getting unexpected money. Did you know about that? When I had \$50 saved, that's when I took off. I did what I had to do to get by.

MOMMA: I bet you did.

SISSY: Time to shut your mouth momma. You know, some say I sound like Ella. Sometimes they say I sound like Billie. The one thing I took from this place, other than hatred, is jazz music. And I sound damn good.

MOMMA: Goddamn full of yourself, is what it is. Don't no white girl sound like Ella, or Billie that's for damn sure.

SISSY: I guess I am. You know why? Course ya don't, but I'm gonna tell you a secret. But first, I gotta question for Timmy.

TIMOTHY: Timothy.

SISSY: Right, Timothy, you like jazz music?

TIMOTHY: No. I just told Momma that before you got here. Too much, too much noise. I like guitar music. Not the loud kind, just the quiet kind. Then it's nice. Peaceful.

SISSY: Maybe I can sing you a nice peaceful song. Would that be all right?

TIMOTHY: I, I, would like that. Thank You.

SISSY: But first, Timothy, I would like you to do me a favor.

TIMOTHY: Sure.

SISSY: Go find a suitcase or sack or something and put some clothes in it. Tell your sister to do the same thing.

MOMMA: All right that's enough right there. Sit your dumbass down and you two get the fuck outta here.

SISSY: Go on Timothy. Gather up your stuff, and get Betty to do the same. Go on, I need to tell momma a secret. It's ok.

Hey Adam, get on up here and introduce yourself to my momma.

ADAM: Pleased to meet you ma'am.

MOMMA: What do you two want?

SISSY: Adam. here, wants to be one of the best jazz trumpet players, that's what he wants, ain't that right?

ADAM: I'm ok ma'am, but I'm looking for ways to get better. You know, we'd be up there playing and Sissy is singing. She's real good. Everybody loves her. Anyway, then comes the break, and people be dancin' and shit, you know, and a key change or two and I always seem to hit a clinker. It's embarrassing, you know.

MOMMA: I see. You brought a two bit horn player all the way out here just so he could tell me that.

SISSY: Listen carefully Momma. I want Timothy and Betty the fuck outta here. Today.

MOMMA: And I want you two, the fuck offa my property. Right now. *(pulls pistol out from under her lap blanket)*

ADAM: Whoa, whoa. I don't like guns.

SISSY: Calm down Momma, I ain't told you my secret yet. Adam, I told you about her pistol right, so calm down. And I told you to remember that snazzy song we was playing two nights ago? You remember, right?

ADAM: I do.

SISSY: And remember that part I told you my momma would like. Tell her about that (*long pause*). Go on Adam, tell Momma all about it, then we can get the hell outta here and go back to practicing.

ADAM: OK. The one where, when I was just about to hit the high note and the horn be up like this and I'd wave my other hand around like this, and, and (*quickly*) take this knife and shove it into yur momma's chest like this. Then I twist it around. (*stunned at what he just did*)

SISSY: That's exactly right Adam. You signed the paper. Now Momma, as you sit there bleeding to death, I want you to think about all the terrible things you done. ALL OF THEM. To me, to Timmy, to Betty. But the secret is, get off the porch Adam, this is personal. (*whispers*) The secret is, I told Adam the way I got to be such a good singer. You know what I said? I said, I sold my soul to the devil. But the devil said to sell your soul you have to do some bad things. So I told Adam if he did this for me, he would be the best trumpet player ever. Better than Louie Armstrong himself. You ever hear anything so stupid. That boy Adam is dumber than a rock. So Momma, take your pistol, here let me hold your arm and (*BOOM, shoots Adam in the back*). Come on you two, we got places to go.

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