

I'm Just a Very Maternal Person

SFX: Cold room effect. She's actually in prison, although we don't know this until the very end.

People underestimate the bond between a mother and a son. I'd kill to protect my son and I think a lot of mothers would agree with that statement. I'm no oddity. I'm just a very maternal person. I always have been.

SFX: Cold room atmos out

SFX: Baby gurgles under the following

SFX: Music with a slightly eerie vibe

When he was a baby – you know, new-born – he'd look at me as if he'd known me forever. And I think he had.

SFX: baby gurgles out

I know that sounds daft, but I think we've always known each other, me and him. We were always meant to be together. Somehow. I can't explain it.

SFX: Music out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

Anyway. To the people who don't understand why I did what I did, I say this. It's none of your business and I don't care what you think of me. You might sit in judgement and make assumptions but you just don't know. the bond I have with my son.

SFX: Eerie music in

SFX: Cold room atmos out

We've always been close. His father used to be jealous. Can you believe that? In fact, he said that's why he left when Mikey was just a year old. He said he felt like all my attention had gone on Mikey and he felt left out. Pathetic.

SFX: Door slam – as if it's in her memory

But I suppose we were in our own private bubble.

SFX: Eerie music out

SFX: faraway playground underneath the following

SFX: suburban atmos, birds, life etc

And then he went to school and he had teachers, and friends, then he had team-mates and had kickabouts with the lads down our road, and naturally I let him grow up.

SFX: playground and suburban atmos out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

Facilitated his development. As any loving mother would. And then he discovered girls.

SFX: Sinister (but subtle) drone in and under the following

Now, there was no way I was going to let some silly little cow break his heart so I told him I'd be very unhappy if he started seeing anyone I didn't like. And he accepted that. I think it made him feel safe. He knew I wanted the best for him, so there was no argument. What kind of mother doesn't want the best for her kids? Her son?

SFX: Drone out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

So he really didn't have a girlfriend until he went away to uni. And then I think he only did that because he was lonely.

SFX: Mobile phone ringing

I mean, we spoke every night on the phone and every morning when I woke up but he wasn't living with me during term-time and I think he was struggling.

SFX: Eerie music in

SFX: Cold room atmos out

Leaving home, leaving me, was really difficult for him. I'm sure it was. It was agony for me.

He didn't always tell me about these girls. I just, you know, sensed when he was seeing somebody. I could hear it in his voice.

SFX: Mobile phone ringing

SFX: Eerie music out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

SFX: Text alerts

When I'd phone him and he'd be dismissive, or said he was busy or didn't return my calls and texts, I'd know.

SFX: Phone EQ in

And I'd ask him outright. Even if he said there was nobody he knew I knew. And that was enough.

I mean, if he didn't feel comfortable telling me about these girls, they couldn't have been up to much, could they?

SFX: Phone EQ out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

That said everything.

Eventually he met somebody he saw for more than a couple of weeks, and that fizzled. And then another. And another.

SFX: Subtle drone under the following

SFX: V subtle eerie music under

He's a very good-looking boy. He's beautiful. Tall, dark, long-limbed, sensitive and he's got these eyes. Eyes that could drive a woman mad.

SFX: Drone out

SFX: Subtle music out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

And then, out of the blue, he told me he'd met Meredith. She, according to my reckoning was the seventh. Lucky bloody seven. He said he wanted me to meet her. That he'd been seeing her for a few months and he'd like us to be friends. Friends. Can you imagine my face?

SFX: Cold Room atmos out

SFX: Phone EQ in

Do you love her?

SFX: Phone EQ out

I said. He just sort of laughed, embarrassed. I could tell he didn't, but he might think he did. So we arranged that we'd meet in a pub. For lunch. A carvery, you know. He'd got a voucher.

SFX: Retail atmos under the following

I had my hair done, my nails, bought a new dress, new shoes, new bag – there was no way I was going to turn up looking a bag-lady.

SFX: Retail atmos out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

She, apparently, was from Cheshire. Went to a grammar school. Her father was a policeman. Her mother didn't have to work. And she was an only child. Well, you know what they say about only children. But I kept an open mind.

SFX: Cold room atmos out

SFX: Car on suburban road, parking under the following

SFX: As if she's in an enclosed space – inside a car

I parked up and watched the pub, waiting for them to arrive. I didn't want to be sat inside, like a plum at some empty table, killing time, waiting for Meredith. I spotted her straight away. Blonde.

Tall. Big teeth. Horsey. And he was smiling. I could tell he was nervous. There was a tension in his neck. The way he moved his head.

SFX: Car door opening and closing

SFX: High heels on pavement/gravel

SFX: Pub door opening

SFX: Pub atmos

Anyway, I walked in and he came straight over and gave me a massive hug. I saw her face, over his shoulder and she just looked down at her hands like she didn't know where to put herself. Yes, I thought. He's mine, lady. You tread careful.

SFX: Pub atmos fades to almost nothing.

SFX: Drone

And then she stood up and stretched out her hand and I shook it. It was limp and dry as if I was shaking hands with an empty glove. There was nothing to her. Oh she was educated and polite and well-travelled and she didn't drink. Didn't quite approve when I ordered a spritzer. Mikey's eyes were darting from her to me, to me, to her like a tennis umpire. When it was over and I stood up to leave, he looked at me expectantly, as if he wanted me to show that I liked her. I just patted his cheek and left.

SFX: High heels on tiles

SFX: Pub door opening and closing

SFX: Cold room atmos in

I didn't phone him or text him for a week after that, and he knew.

SFX: Mobile phone ringing

SFX: Text alerts

It got to the point where he was phoning me five times a day, leaving messages and he even sent me a card through the post.

SFX: Letterbox flapping

That's how much he loves me. Couldn't bear not to be in contact with me. He said he'd been to see his doctor he was that bad.

SFX: Subtle drone in, under the following

SFX: Eerie, subtle music in

We never discussed her. He was always coming up with suggestions for me to see them again, together – walks, lunches, theatre trips – but I told him in my own way that really I wanted to see him without her. Why would I want to see her? My time with him was precious, now he was growing up, making his own life. I wanted to cherish it – every moment. And I wasn't really in the mood for sharing, know what I mean?

SFX: Drone out

SFX: Music out

So I didn't see her until the following Mother's Day.

SFX: Doorbell

They just turned up. Unannounced. The plan had been for him to take me to afternoon tea at a posh hotel. I'd got a Groupon deal to make it a bit cheaper for him.

SFX: Suburban front door opening

SFX: Suburban atmos in

But no. She was there. On my doorstep in her daft dress with her daft hair and her daft teeth.

We've got something to tell you, he said.

SFX: Drone in

SFX: Suburban atmos out

Well, you don't have to be a genius to know what he was going to say. He'd proposed. And she had accepted. Couldn't I find it in my heart to be happy for him? For them? I slammed the door and said I had a migraine.

SFX: Drone out

SFX: Suburban front door slam

SFX: Cold room atmos in

It completely ruined my day.

SFX: Dark music in

Meredith was a primary school teacher. Ah, bless. And from what I could gather from the school website they took safeguarding very seriously. So what on earth would the head say if they were to receive a letter suggesting that Meredith had said inappropriate things to a child? That Meredith had slapped a child? Now I'm not saying I wrote such a letter, nor am I saying that I posted it, but what I do know is that Meredith was suddenly not working there any more. And that Meredith – according to Mikey - was seeing a counsellor. Bless her.

SFX: Letterbox flapping

SFX: Dark drone in

It was around that time that Meredith started getting credit card bills for items and services she claimed she hadn't bought. She alleged that somebody had stolen her identity. That somebody had a vendetta against her. That's when she started drinking. She was already on anti-depressants it turned out and according to Mikey, she was "spiralling."

SFX: Dark music out

SFX: Dark drone out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

Of course I was the first person he turned to. He said she'd changed. He said she didn't communicate. That she was totally self-involved and oblivious to him and his needs. I said to him, what did you expect? But he said that despite everything, he still wanted to marry her.

SFX: Harsh EQ on this next line

He looked straight at me when he said that, and it was an arrow through my heart.

SFX: Dark drone in, getting darker throughout

So imagine my devastation when I learned that somehow, somebody had done something terrible to the wheels of her car. That one day when she'd summoned the energy to get off her arse and go out, the front offside wheel came clean off and she ploughed straight into a lamp-post at 30 miles an hour. It was a tragedy they said in the local paper. Spinal injuries.

SFX: Dark drone out

SFX: Cold room atmos in

Well, Mikey wasn't gonna cope with that, was he? He didn't want to be married to that. So he broke it off, even though she said she'd been the one to finish it.

SFX: Dark music in

Now, unfortunately – and at the time, I didn't realise – but there was CCTV footage of the perpetrator working on her car. I'm not saying I did it. I've never said that. But the jury seemed to think I did.

SFX: Prison doors slamming

SFX: Keys on chains

SFX: Harsh, metal locks being turned

SFX: Prison atmos – large, echoey room

I'll be out eventually.

SFX: Dark drone in

Would I do it again? Of course I would. And who comes to see me every week and bring me flowers and chocolates and sends me cards telling me he loves me? I won that one, didn't I? Eh? He's mine, and he always will be.

SFX: Dark drone and dark music swell