

GOOSHY

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mama
Mandy
Gooshy

(The setting is southeast Kentucky, deep in the pinewood forests. Mandy, a Junior Executive with a Nashville accounting firm, has returned to the home of her mother and her mentally disabled brother, Michael, who the family has always called Gooshy. Mandy's unkempt mother is barely literate and has "gotten by" in their ramshackle backwoods house mainly by the help of Michael's government checks.)

Mama: So. Christmas bring you home, does it?

Mandy: Hello, Mother.

Mama: "Hello, Mother!" My, but don't you talk dif'erent nowdays. That the way they talk in Nashville? Spiffy dress. What'd it cost ya?

Mandy: It wasn't much ... Mama. Merry Christmas.

Mama: Why'd ja come?

Mandy: That's it? That's all you've got to say to your daughter at Christmas?

Mama: Sorry, child. I don't live in no Nashville apartment with diamonds and Cadillacs and ...

Mandy: Please, Mama. Please just talk to me. I don't have any of those things.

Mama: *(laughing)* Shoot! You don't even sound like the girl that left her Mama and retard brother ta go on some snooty college scholarship to Dallas, Texas! You've

grown up, child! God knows I wouldn't know how you got that way ... no more than I seen of you.

Mandy: Mama, you don't have a phone. You can't ... well, you

...

Mama: I can't read the letters you send? Might as well say it, chil'. Your brother's a retard and your Mama's a full-blown idiot!

Mandy: I didn't say that, Mama. And don't call Michael that name.

Mama: Gooshy's a retard. That much ain't changed since you been gone. He's born normal as you then just went stupid one day.

Mandy: Mama, I'm only here for a few hours. It's Christmas and I drove all the way from Nashville just to see you.

Mama: Oh, well forgive me, your High and Mighty. Just to think you drove your big limousine all this way just to see the retard and the idiot! And here I forgot to bow when you came in the room!

Mandy: Where's Michael, Mama?

Mama: Gooshy's out back. Where he always is. Boy'd live out there if I let 'im.

Mandy: I want to see him.

Mama: What for?

Mandy: He's my brother.

Mama: Don't believe everthing your daddy told you.

Mandy: Stop that, mama! That's awful! I want to see, Michael.

Mama: He won't answer to that. Gooshy's all he knows. Old gooshy-brain.

Mandy: Stop calling him those horrible names, Mama! How do you expect him to ... (*Michael enters*) ... Michael! Michael, is that you?!

Gooshy: (*his thought processes are slowed not only by his affliction, but from years of being treated as incapable by his mother.*) Who you?

Mandy: I'm your sister, Michael. I'm Mandy. Remember?

Gooshy: Me Gooshy. Who you?

Mandy: He's worse, Mama. He doesn't even remember his name. Michael ... Gooshy ... I'm your sister. We grew up in this house together.

Gooshy: Gooshy don't know nothin'. Gooshy stupid retard. You got any candy?

Mandy: Michael ... Gooshy, please ...

Gooshy: (*in a string of non-coherent babbling*) 'Cause Gooshy like candy 'cause make him feel good and get sticky all over fingers but Mama say "No Gooshy, you get no candy. You a retard 'cause you born a retard," but Gooshy like candy and Gooshy like gravy ... lots o' gravy ... sometime Gooshy just eat gravy and nothin' else and then Gooshy he get real real sick and Mama say "Just like a stupid retard, eatin' all that gravy ..."

Mandy: (*grabbing him*) Stop it, Gooshy. Don't talk like that. You're not stupid. You're sick, that's all.

Gooshy: Yep ... all that gravy ... Gooshy get you betcha sick.

Mandy: Mama. (*drawing up her courage*) I'm taking Michael with me. That's the real reason I came.

Mama: (*stares at her a long minute then simply laughs*)

Mandy: I'm not kidding, Mama. I can do it. I have papers! I have the right! He's my brother and I'm going to do it.

Mama: (*laughs again*) Oh, no you're not!

Mandy: I have the legal right, Mama.

Mama: He's my boy!

Mandy: And I can find you unfit in any court in the country. Now, you can save a lot of time and thousands of dollars in lawyer's fees if you just sign the papers now, but I'm warning you ... if you want to fight it, I'll fight it. It'll cost me a fortune and it'll cost you more than you'll make for the rest of your life, and I'll win. Do you hear me, Mama? I'll win. I can get Michael help and any judge will agree with me.

Mama: Why you snot-nosed little ingrate! Whatta you mean floppin' your high-society self in here ... dressed like a flop-house tramp ... and steal my boy away from me!

Mandy: Mama!

Mama: Who you think take care of this chil' all these years?



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