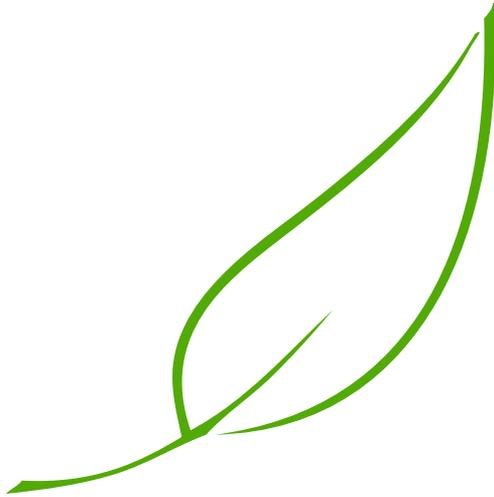


TRUST ME

by Ken Bradbury



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(Linda sits at the breakfast table, toying with a piece of toast. She has no interest in eating. After a moment, her daughter Randy enters. She stares at Linda for a moment, then sits and begins to eat breakfast. The mood is as cold as the toast.)

LINDA: *(finally)* Good morning.

RANDY: *(a pause ... not wanting to talk)*

LINDA: I said Good Morning.

RANDY: Morning.

LINDA: *(another long beat, then)* Are you feeling all right, Randy?

RANDY: Yeh. Fine. Just tired.

LINDA: Late night, wasn't it?

RANDY: I don't know ... didn't notice when I got in.

LINDA: Do you want me to fix you something hot?

RANDY: This is okay.

LINDA: *(a sigh, then)* Randy, I was still up waiting for you at two o'clock this morning.

RANDY: Sorry.

LINDA: That's it? No explanation of where you were?

RANDY: *(a sigh, then)* Mom ...

LINDA: Go ahead and eat your breakfast. We'll talk about it later.

RANDY: Let's don't. Let's just don't talk about it again. I'm really tired, Mom.

LINDA: We have to talk about, Randy. You're still a minor. I'm still your mother. I need to know where you are.

RANDY: Sorry. I'll call next time. Promise.

LINDA: Why can't we talk, Randy? Why can't we talk like other mothers and daughters?

RANDY: They don't. They don't talk ... just on television.

Look, I'm not doin' anything wrong, Mom. Trust me.

LINDA: (*to herself*) "Trust me."

RANDY: (*begins to speak, then decides against it and continues nibbling on something*)

LINDA: What? What were you going to say?

RANDY: Nothin'. Mom, I'm really tired, okay?

LINDA: You're always tired, Randy. Let's just talk for once, all right? Let's just talk about things ... like you ... like where you go and what you do ... and who you're with.

RANDY: Oh, great.

LINDA: And please don't give me that. Is it that much trouble to just talk, Randy? Am I putting you out that much.

RANDY: (*crossing her arms and leaning on the table*) Let's talk, Mom. You wanna talk, let's just talk.

LINDA: (*a bit taken aback, then*) Uh ... all right. Let's begin with where you were last night.

RANDY: With friends ...

LINDA: (*begins to speak*) ...

RANDY: I know. What friends? Then, "Where did you go?" Then, "What did you do?" Then in a minute or two of yelling at each other we'll work our way all the way up to "Why do you do these things, Randy?" And I'll scream "I don't know! I just do!" Then you'll scream something back in that precious, motherly way of yours, and I'll slam my cold toast on the table and I'll run to my room and slam the door, and you'll sit here crying at the kitchen table until lunch. Then you'll tip-toe ... a concerned, motherly tip-toe ... to my room and you'll tap-tap-tap on the door and you'll say Randy? Are you hungry, dear? And I won't answer, so you'll do it again and again ... and pretty soon I'll know you'll leave me alone if I just come out and we'll eat lunch, then you'll say, "Randy, I'm really sorry about yelling at you. Can't we just talk?" Is there something you want to add to the routine this time, mother, or can we just skip it all and somehow save this poor piece of toast?

(*a long silence as Linda stares at the table*)

RANDY: (*finally*) I'm goin' out. I won't be late.

LINDA: (*as Randy's about to leave*) Randy! Don't! (*Randy stops at this tone...it's new*) Don't leave. Don't walk out. For once, just don't walk out. Sit down.

RANDY: Mom, I ...

LINDA: I don't care what you want, Randy! For once, just listen to what I want! Is that too much for you? Can you handle just listening for once?

RANDY: (*hesitates a moment, then sits...quietly defiant*) I'm sitting.

LINDA: (*a pause, then*) Why do you do this to me, Randy?
Why do you put me through this?

RANDY: Mom, it's not ...

LINDA: Answer my question! For once, don't make an excuse, don't tell me how bad you feel, just answer my question.
Why do you put me through this?

RANDY: Through ... what?

LINDA: This. This ... conversation! This stupid act every time I want to know about your life? Why can't you talk to me? Where'd you learn to be so ... so ...

RANDY: Stupid? Irresponsible? Wanna go for hateful? Which one, Mom?

LINDA: What's happened to you, Randy?

RANDY: I got this feeling, Mom ... I really got this feeling that this time you're really not gonna let me leave without a fight.

LINDA: I'm not fighting you!

RANDY: When was I supposed to learn all this, Mother? For God's sake, Mom, I ran outa the house for the first time when I was in second grade! That was the first time you and Dad actually started throwing hard objects at each other! I mean, in kindergarten you'd only worked up to an occasional pillow slammed at each other or maybe a bread pudding at Christmas, but when it came to books and magazine racks, Mom, I was too young to duck! Is that when I was supposed to learn how families talk?

LINDA: Randy, that's all past! I want to talk about ...



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