

# Living With Ogres



Mitt Ray

**Living With Ogres**  
**Escape From Marshside**

**Written by Mitt Ray**

**Illustrations by Sergio Drumond**



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## Donna's Worries

It was really dark. I couldn't see a thing. All I could smell was the stench of rotting food and I could hear some sobs. I couldn't stand the disgusting odour. I wanted to get out of there as quickly as I could, but the sobbing stopped me. I had to find out who it was. So I dropped the firewood I had just collected. I extended my hand and touched the wall, and then I felt my way to one of the corners of the room. I lit the torch that was there with the matches on the shelf beside it. I turned around and lifted it up high. I could see everything clearly now. The blood-soaked floor was strewn with rotting meat, bones and skulls which were all covered with maggots.

I took a couple of steps forward. And there, in one corner, was Donna. She was sitting on a log. She was dressed in clean white clothes. Her head was bent over her lap. She had one arm over her face and the other against her ear. Compared to her disgusting surroundings, she looked so clean, pure and innocent.



She looked like she was crying because she was in pain. I went over and asked her what had happened. She didn't answer, so I sat down beside her on the log. She clung on to me tightly and continued crying. Then I saw it. It was her ear that was hurt. It was bleeding and it looked like something had bitten her there. Part of it seemed to be missing. Her left sleeve was drenched in blood

and some of it was dripping onto my clothes too. I wasn't sure what to do, so I just hugged her and patted her back and tried my best to make her feel better.

I tried to examine her wound. I moved my hand close to it and I almost touched it, but she slapped my hand away.

So I asked her to tell me what had happened.

"Karen bit my ear," she answered.

"Why did she do that?" I asked.

Donna sighed. "She asked me to cook her some food, so I did. It took me a long time because there was a lot of it to cook. You know how much she eats! Having to wait made her very impatient. She began shouting at me and that got me nervous. I started shaking."

Donna was new and was finding things difficult. I had already been here for a few years and I was used to Karen the Ogre shouting at me. It could be very intimidating when you stared up into her big, brown evil face with its pointed ears which had green fungus growing out of them, and the large, scary, dirty teeth that hadn't been brushed for years. And, as if that wasn't bad enough, she used to scream so loudly that it almost ripped your head apart and deafened you for a while. She also used to slap her fist into her hand and this was terrifying as you could see how strong she was. Even a look at her claws, which could easily cut down a tree, really freaked you out.

After you looked away, you could sense her glaring at you. It would feel like her eyes were burning a hole into the back of your head. It made working difficult and you just couldn't concentrate.

In my early days, I was scared too, maybe even more scared than Donna. But after being shouted at and tortured for years, I got used to Karen and it didn't bother me as much as it used to. I knew it was going to take Donna a long time to become accustomed to Karen's scary threats.

Donna went on. "I was getting more and more nervous and confused. I wasn't even sure what I was doing. I just wanted to leave everything as it was and run away, but I couldn't. She was there, staring and shouting at me. At last the meal was ready. I was about to put it on a plate for her, but she grabbed the pan and started eating from it with her hands. As soon as the food reached her mouth, I could see she didn't like it. She spat it all out into my face. She said it was horrible and too salty.

Donna shivered. "I was really scared. Karen was shouting and threatened me with her teeth and claws. 'What am I going to do about my hunger?'" she screamed. It was the scariest thing I ever saw. I was ready to do anything to make her stop. So I told her that I would cook her some food, properly this time. But she said she couldn't wait any longer and she needed something to eat right away. So she grabbed me and bit my ear and told me that if I ever served her bad food again, she was going to eat me. I ran away as fast as I could from there. I didn't want to find out what she planned to do next."

"Don't worry. I will tend to your ear. Everything will be okay," I said.

But Donna answered that if she stayed here she was going to die, either at Karen's hands or from fright. She was going to run away.

I got up and I turned my back to her. I pulled up my shirt and showed her the teeth marks on my back. She started crying even more. I told her, "That's what happens if you try to escape."

Donna was very shaken. She asked me what the other scars were.

“I have been here for seven years. I have been bitten, mauled and beaten up by that wild ogre Karen,” I answered. “Please don’t escape. It’s impossible. She can easily sniff you out. Besides, you’re the only one I can trust here.”

“What about Arlene?” Donna asked.

“I can’t trust her,” I confided “She has been working here for longer than me. She listens to everything Karen tells her. That’s why she’s so happy here. I have never seen Karen hurt her.”

Donna snorted. “I don’t care. I’m going to escape. I’ll try it. I don’t care if I do die. I can’t live like this, terrified all the time.”

I felt that it was just her fear speaking and that all of this brave talk was going to vanish soon. So I took her to her room and tended to her ear. I wiped it clean, removed all the blood, and dressed it carefully. I also tried to look for the part that was missing, but I couldn’t find it. Karen must have eaten it.

Donna thanked me and gave me a hug. She asked me to stay beside her, as she was too scared to sleep alone. At first, I hesitated, as I had to get back to work and Karen wouldn’t stand for me loafing around and not doing anything. But I liked Donna, so I waited there for a while and as soon as she fell asleep, I went back to my jobs. I had a lot of my own and now I had Donna’s to do too, so I hurried.

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