

M O T H E R
TALK
D A U G H T E R

By Janet Guise and Jacqueline Moody

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PRODUCTION NOTES

This play was originally presented as a reader's theater selection with all performers reading expressively from their scripts, although the material can be memorized and blocked. Because this is a vocal collage, the emphasis is on animated line delivery rather than movement and staging. No set is necessary, although clever use of different levels, stairs, pylons, or risers, will add interest to the performance. Props can be effectively mimed. Because the performers are the many voices of one mother and daughter, it is most effective if they never have eye contact with each other.

The repeated lines which are done in unison throughout the selection are intended to serve two purposes. They state the theme of this selection and they serve to mark the end of one stage in the mother/daughter relationship and the beginning of another period.

The lines do not have to be split in the manner suggested in script. They should be assigned to the persons with the best delivery. Also, the first two long monologues for the Mother and the Baby can be done by one adult and one teenage performer. When a character is not talking, she should be frozen in place.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

3 MOTHERS
3 DAUGHTERS

INTRODUCTION

(The introduction is the only part of this presentation where the PERFORMERS have eye contact with each other and the audience. The other actors should be frozen in place.)

MOTHER 1: Since the beginning of time, mothers and their daughters have been struggling to understand each other. They have fought and loved their way from childhood to adulthood.

DAUGHTER 1: *(With forced enthusiasm.)* Tonight we are going to celebrate the unique relationship shared by mothers and daughters. Personally, I'd rather have a root canal than celebrate this so called unique relationship, but Mom said she'd ground me if I didn't help her. *(The MOTHER gives HER an angry nudge.)* Sorry ... am I grounded? *(The MOTHER only gives HER an angry stare.)* I said I was sorry.

MOTHER 1: *(Trying to keep HER composure.)* Most of the mothers in the audience can remember thinking you were going to be a different kind of mother than the one you had. You were going to have a better relationship. You were never going to say things like, "What part of the word NO do you not understand?"

DAUGHTER 1: *(Cutting HER MOTHER off.)* The problem is all mothers say dumb stuff like that over and over and over! I decided giving birth must cause some kind of brain damage ...

MOTHER 1: *(With controlled anger SHE interrupts her DAUGHTER.)* Obviously, the so called "perfect" relationship doesn't exist.

DAUGHTER 1: *(Interrupting again.)* Boy! You can say that one again! *(SHE laughs at herself until she sees her MOTHER'S angry stare.)* That is your patented "you're grounded" look. Come on, Mom, give me another chance. *(HER MOTHER ignores her, but she continues to worry about being grounded all through the Mother's next set of lines.)*

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MOTHER 1: *(With controlled anger.)* Tonight we are going to take a light-hearted look at the relationship of mothers and their daughters beginning at birth and ending when the daughter becomes a mother. We will be the many voices of one universal Mother and Daughter. We will ...

DAUGHTER 1: *(Interrupting again.)* Am I grounded? Because if I am, I would like to go on record as saying that it's cruel and unusual punishment, and I will never do that to my daughter!

MOTHER 1: Just wait until you have kids! *(Suddenly realizing HER mistake.)* My mother used to say that!

DAUGHTER 1: *(To the audience.)* Brain damage ... they all have it. *(To MOTHER.)* Oh, let's just get this over with.

MOTHER 1: Ladies and gentlemen, we invite you to listen to MOTHER/DAUGHTER TALK.

(THEY takes their places and the chant begins.)

ALL MOTHERS: Mothers say ...

ALL DAUGHTERS: Daughters say ...

ALL: **YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!**

MOTHER 1: Hi baby. It's Mommy! You remember me. I'm the lady who ate all the spicy Mexican food. You are so beautiful!! I know I talked to you lots over the last 9 months, but it's so different now we can chat face to face. *(Pause.)* Feel free to interrupt me with any comments you may wish to make. Aw, look ... you yawned. I guess I must be pretty boring already. *(Baby talk.)* That was the best yawn I ever saw. Mommy loves you! Yes she does!

MOTHER 2: Let's check you out. Aw, look at those tiny fingers. Maybe you will be a piano player. *(Baby talk.)* Mommy's girl can be anything she wants to be, *(Pause.)* within reason of course! Daddy was sooo glad to meet you last night. I never saw him be so tender or so proud. He kept saying, "You're Daddy's baby girl! You're Daddy's little girl!" You're in, kid. If you play your cards right young lady, he will move mountains to make you happy.

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MOTHER 3: This baby thing is all new to me so we'll have to learn about it together. You are sooo beautiful! I know it just doesn't get any better than this! Your Nana said I would feel this way, but I just couldn't imagine it when she described it. (*Talking baby talk.*) She was right! Yes she was!

MOTHER 1: You're gonna love your Nana. I just can't wait for you to get to know each other. I didn't always listen to her when I was growing up, but you and I are going to be sooo different! Yes we are! Your Nana said our differences were just a natural part of growing up, but that just can't be.

MOTHER 3: Surely you'll never find me as embarrassing as I used to find her. Don't get me wrong; I love your Nana, but we were so different!

MOTHER 2: It was like ... one day I realized this and the battle was on. I was so hard on her during those years.

MOTHER 1: I am still sorry for some of the things I thought and most of the things I actually said. I guess it actually surprises me that she loved me in spite of all that happened. Remind me to tell her that.

MOTHER 3: Though now that I look at you ...

MOTHER 2: And now that I actually feel the way I feel ... I think I know what got your Nana through those tough days.

ALL MOTHERS: I LOVE YOU SOO MUCH!!!

MOTHER 1: We need to set down a few rules if we're going to get off to a good start. Let me begin by promising to take very good care of you. I will feed you, change you, and teach you everything I know.

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MOTHER 2: I'll always be there for you, and I'll always listen to what you have to say. I also promise to take you to God's house and to teach you all I've learned about Him.

MOTHER 3: Your Nana taught me, and she and God expect me to pass it on. You're gonna love Him! Oh ... and God ... I'm sorry for some of the things I said during labor. You got me through it ... and she's just the most wonderful baby in the world! Thanks!

MOTHER 1: To continue the promise ... I further promise NEVER to say the following phrases:

MOTHER 2: You're going to wear that?!!

MOTHER 3: This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.

MOTHER 1: Do I look like a money tree?

MOTHER 2: Do you want me to give you something to cry about?

MOTHER 3: I'm your Mother not your maid.

ALL MOTHERS: AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST ...

MOTHER 1: It's not what you SAID ...

MOTHER 2: It's the WAY ...

MOTHER 3: You said it!

MOTHER 1: Home tomorrow ... I hope I'm up to it. I want to be the best mommy, but I'm scared.

MOTHER 2: What if I fail? What if I let something happen to you? What if I disappoint you?

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MOTHER 3: God ... I know you're omnipotent and all ... but hasn't it occurred to you that sending along an owner's guide to one of these would be a great idea!

MOTHER 2: *(Waits a moment.)* Well I guess it's just you and me kid ...

MOTHER 1: And we'll just have to keep in touch with the "Manufacturer" through daily prayer.

MOTHERS: Mothers say ...

DAUGHTERS: Daughters say ...

ALL: **YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!**

(It is not necessary to use a baby voice to play the part of this sophisticated baby.)

DAUGHTER 1: So this is the world you have been talking about so much. *(Pause.)* It's not exactly what I've been expecting ... but it will do, I guess. This diaper thing is for the birds ... and who picked this outfit? I hate pink! Blue would look sooo much nicer. The kid next to me has blue. Why not blue for me?

DAUGHTER 2: By the way, the kid next to me in the nursery says I'm bald. He's got the good colors and a head full of hair, and what about me? I'll never make the cover of Vogue at this rate.

DAUGHTER 3: And that doctor last night ... did you see the way he slapped me? You sounded pretty busy, but apparently while you were not looking, he hit me! And let me tell you ... I told him a thing or two!

DAUGHTER 2: Frankly, this whole birth thing was a drag. I liked the arrangement we had, but the kid next to me says this is the way it is, so I apparently have to go along with it.

End of Freeview

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