

MOTHER AND CHILD

by Jan Gerdel



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Mother and Child

A short play for mothers and daughters

by Jan Gerdel

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MOTHER Woman, about 45 years old

CHILD Woman, about 20 years old

PRODUCTION NOTES

This short play presents a brief walk through the lives and roles of a mother and her daughter. Most of the lines are addressed to the audience, and the entire play may be performed as a reading with the women sitting on two stools.

If memorized, minimal acting is necessary, and a few stage directions have been included. When performing, the characters should keep a few feet between them while talking to the audience, and come together Center Stage when interacting with each other. They only props needed are two stools and a sweater.

1 *(Two stools are set about five feet apart. MOTHER sits Stage*
 2 *Left, holding an open-up-the-front sweater rolled up to*
 3 *appear like an infant in a blanket. CHILD stands Stage*
 4 *Right, in front of stool, back to audience.)*

5 **MOTHER:** The day she was born, I knew she was a gift
 6 straight from God. Suddenly this precious bundle was
 7 dropped into my arms, and all I could do was stare in
 8 awe and wonder. These nurturing genes just magically
 9 appeared, and I thought I would never put her down. I
 10 could have held her forever. She was my life, my joy.
 11 Oh, how I prayed — for both of us!

12 Lord, help me to protect her without smothering her.
 13 Help me to guide her without pushing her. Help me to
 14 discipline her without being harsh. Help me to lavish
 15 her with love without spoiling her. Amen. *(Stands, lays*
 16 *“baby” on stool.)*

17 **CHILD:** *(Turning toward audience)* And God answered her
 18 prayers.

19 **MOTHER:** She began to grow. She was such a cute little
 20 thing. And so full of questions.

21 **CHILD:** *(Climbs onto stool, swings legs, looks around, childlike.)*
 22 Mommy, where does the sun go? Why does Heather’s
 23 mommy go to work every day? I bet you’re glad you get
 24 to stay home and play with me, aren’t you? Mommy,
 25 can you help me build a sandcastle? Bobby says his
 26 daddy can beat up my daddy. Why would he want to
 27 do that? Mommy, where do babies come from?

28 **MOTHER:** Her world was full of wonder. She had to explore
 29 everything.

30 **CHILD:** *(Standing)* Everything.

31 **MOTHER:** Honey, don’t pull the cat’s tail; it’s not nice to
 32 pull the cat’s tail. Don’t touch the electrical socket,
 33 darling, you might get burned. Sweetheart, be careful
 34 going down those steps. You might fall and break your
 35 leg. Come back inside and put on your sweater, young

- 1 lady. You don't want to catch pneumonia, do you?
- 2 CHILD: I never once caught pneumonia.
- 3 MOTHER: We turned around twice, and, just like that, she
- 4 was getting ready for her first day of school.
- 5 CHILD: *(Turns, brings her stool to Center Stage, slightly forward.*
- 6 *MOTHER sits on stool, CHILD kneels in front of her.*
- 7 *MOTHER fixes CHILD's hair. Both look forward as into a*
- 8 *mirror.)* I'm a big girl now, aren't I, Mommy?
- 9 MOTHER: Yes, you are, dear.
- 10 CHILD: Today I'm going to learn how to read and write.
- 11 Then I can read you a bedtime story.
- 12 MOTHER: That will be nice.
- 13 CHILD: Mommy?
- 14 MOTHER: Yes, dear?
- 15 CHILD: Can you come to school with me?
- 16 MOTHER: No, sweetheart.
- 17 CHILD: But who will play with me?
- 18 MOTHER: You're going to meet lots of other children and
- 19 make many new friends. You'll see. You'll be fine.
- 20 CHILD: Promise?
- 21 MOTHER: I promise.
- 22 CHILD: Will they play games with me?
- 23 MOTHER: I'm sure they will.
- 24 CHILD: Mommy?
- 25 MOTHER: Yes, dear?
- 26 CHILD: Will you be here when I get home?
- 27 MOTHER: I'll always be here for you, honey.
- 28 CHILD: 'Bye, Mommy. I love you! *(Stands, takes two steps*
- 29 *Stage Right, freezes.)*
- 30 MOTHER: Help, Lord! I don't want to let her go!
- 31 CHILD: *(To audience)* Time marched on. I grew.
- 32 MOTHER: *(Stands, moves two steps Stage Left.)* So did I.
- 33 CHILD: Susie and Joanie said they weren't my best friends
- 34 anymore.
- 35 MOTHER: And we learned forgiveness.

- 1 CHILD: I made a bad grade in spelling.
2 MOTHER: We did homework together for two months.
3 CHILD: I fell off the monkey bars and broke my arm.
4 MOTHER: I took her to the doctor and put on a brave front
5 as I watched him set it.
6 CHILD: Dad bought me a brand-new bike with training
7 wheels.
8 MOTHER: I fretted when she asked her dad to take the
9 training wheels off.
10 CHILD: I got a crush on Jimmy.
11 MOTHER: We had our first talk about boys.
12 CHILD: She bought me a bra.
13 MOTHER: We had our first talk about growing up.
14 CHILD: So why was she so surprised when I grew up?
15 MOTHER: Suddenly she bloomed into a teenager. Her life
16 became a whirlwind of activity.
17 CHILD: Let's just say I had a life.
18 MOTHER: She didn't seem to need me anymore.
19 CHILD: A kid needs to eat and have her clothes washed! I
20 needed her.
21 MOTHER: She lost her communication skills.
22 CHILD: I talked for hours on the phone with my friends.
23 MOTHER: She just didn't talk to me.
24 CHILD: I thought she didn't understand. (*Plops on center*
25 *stool, disinterested, "TV remote" in hand.*)
26 MOTHER: What's the matter, honey?
27 CHILD: Nothing.
28 MOTHER: How is school?
29 CHILD: Fine.
30 MOTHER: Do you need help on your math?
31 CHILD: No.
32 MOTHER: I'm going shopping. Would you like to go with
33 me?
34 CHILD: Can't.
35 MOTHER: Why?

- 1 CHILD: Got plans.
2 MOTHER: To do what?
3 CHILD: Go out.
4 MOTHER: Where?
5 CHILD: Just out. Love you, Mom! Bye-bye! (*Stands, steps*
6 *Stage Right, freezes.*)
7 MOTHER: Lord! Take care of my baby.
8 CHILD: (*To audience*) He did.
9 MOTHER: One day she brought him home.
10 CHILD: He was handsome and kind and incredibly smart. I
11 was hopelessly in love.
12 MOTHER: They had an announcement to make.
13 CHILD: (*Turns, shows MOTHER ring finger.*) Guess what?
14 We're getting married!
15 MOTHER: That's wonderful, dear!
16 CHILD: (*Turning head to audience*) She was skeptical.
17 MOTHER: You are going to wait until he graduates, right?
18 You two are awfully young.
19 CHILD: We're older than you and daddy were when you got
20 married.
21 MOTHER: That's different.
22 CHILD: We'll be fine, Mom. I promise. We love each other.
23 And he loves God.
24 MOTHER: (*To audience*) He loves God. That was music to my
25 ears.
26 CHILD: My wedding day is all a big blur in my memory.
27 MOTHER: We had planned and prepared for six months.
28 CHILD: There are some things you just can't prepare for.
29 MOTHER: (*MOTHER and CHILD move together to stand Center*
30 *Stage, looking forward into mirror, fluffing dress, doing*
31 *makeup, hair, etc.*) Has anyone seen the groom?
32 CHILD: Daddy says he'll be fine as soon as he's finished
33 throwing up.
34 MOTHER: Someone take the pillow away from the
35 ringbearer. He's drooling all over it!

- 1 CHILD: The flowergirl is crying because she's afraid to go
2 down the aisle by herself.
- 3 MOTHER: The caterer is late.
- 4 CHILD: Mom! I have a huge zit on my face. I look terrible!
- 5 MOTHER: (*Turns CHILD's face toward her.*) You look fine,
6 honey. (*Back to mirror*) Has anyone seen the hair spray?
- 7 CHILD: (*To audience*) Why didn't I elope?
- 8 MOTHER: The wedding was beautiful.
- 9 CHILD: I was exhausted.
- 10 MOTHER: Her father looked so handsome, so proud
11 walking her down the aisle.
- 12 CHILD: Mom cried.
- 13 MOTHER: I cried.
- 14 CHILD: I think it was hard for her to release me to someone
15 else.
- 16 MOTHER: Help, Lord. I don't want to let go!
- 17 CHILD: We were happy. We lived on very little money and
18 a whole lot of love.
- 19 MOTHER: God took care of them.
- 20 CHILD: I'm sure her prayers helped.
- 21 MOTHER: Then one Christmas they came home and made
22 an announcement.
- 23 CHILD: (*Excited, steps toward MOTHER.*) We're pregnant!
- 24 MOTHER: A grandbaby!
- 25 CHILD: I think I'm going to throw up.
- 26 MOTHER: Morning sickness is normal, dear. It will get
27 better.
- 28 CHILD: I grew as big as a barn!
- 29 MOTHER: She looked so healthy.
- 30 CHILD: (*MOTHER picks up "baby" from stool and places in
31 CHILD's arms.*) The baby was born. She was perfect.
- 32 MOTHER: Ten fingers, ten toes, no hair. Just like her
33 mother.
- 34 CHILD: She was a gift from God.
- 35 MOTHER: A blessing from heaven.



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