

Motherhood Out Loud

Leslie Ayzasian, Brooke Berman, David Cale, Jessica Goldberg, Beth Henley, Lameece Issaq, Claire LaZebnik, Lisa Loomer, Michele Lowe, Marco Pennette, Theresa Rebeck, Luanne Rice, Annie Weisman and Cheryl L. West

Comedy

One Acts

1-2 men, 3 -6 women (doubling, flexible casting) **ALL ROLES OPEN.**

"**MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD**...never fails to strike both the funny bone and the heart. Anyone who is or has a mother, a stepmother, a foster mother, or anything in between will be able to relate to and enjoy this insightful piece...the collection is impeccably cohesive...What makes the piece work so well is that its portrait of motherhood shows all facets of a family. From adoption to surrogacy to gay parenting to stepmothers, no stone is left unturned...Put aside any preconceived notions about the topic...the play will grab you, as a mother in any form has a long-lasting effect whether you like it or not." —BackStage. "Packed with wisdom, laughter, and plenty of wry surprises." —TheaterMania.com. "Funny, unexpectedly poignant and sweetly entertaining. Brings tears of joy...An evening filled with wit, humor, pathos and enlightenment. Heartfelt and true to life." —Examiner.com. "[**MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD**] succeeds because it is so authentic." —Entertainment Weekly. "Chicken Soup for the Mom." —Variety. "Funny, poignant and spirited." —Santa Monica Daily Press. "Pretty darn great...bring a friend— and your own tissues. You'll need them." —MamaSaid.net. "A humorous and inspiring journey through motherhood. Raw, unadulterated and incredibly moving." —RockinMama.net.

THE STORY: When entrusting the subject of motherhood to such a dazzling collection of celebrated American writers, what results is a joyous, moving, hilarious, and altogether thrilling theatrical event. Utterly unpredictable, **MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD** shatters traditional notions about parenthood, unveils its inherent comedy and celebrates the deeply personal truths that span and unite generations.

Prepare a monologue of your choice to perform if interested in this **FIRST FRIDAY READING**.

Or prepare one of the following monologues from the script:

FEMALE SCENES:

NEXT TO THE CRIB (pg. 7-9) Top of scene to END LINE pg. 7 "When do they sleep? When do I?"

NEW IN THE MOTHERHOOD (pg. 9 – 10)

ODD MOM: Start line pg. 9 – "Oh hi. This bench taken?"

End line pg. 10 ""Hey, remind me to cancel showtime --!"

QUEEN ESTHER (pg. 16) Top of scene to END LINE "So the costume thing goes away."

MICHAEL'S DATE (pg. 38) Top of scene to END LINE "And now he's on his first date."

STARS AND STRIPES (pg. 50) Top of scene to END LINE "Then one day there's a knock on the door."

MALE SCENE:

IF WE'RE USING A SURROGATE, HOW COME I'M THE ONE WITH MORNING SICKNESS?
(Pg. 26) Top of scene to END LINE: "Her profile said she wanted to help gay people become a family so she can show her kids the brave new world they live in."

MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD

Written by

Leslie Ayvazian, Brooke Berman, David Cale, Jessica Goldberg,
Beth Henley, Lameece Issaq, Claire LaZebnik, Lisa Loomer,
Michele Lowe, Marco Pennette, Theresa Rebeck, Luanne Rice,
Annie Weisman and Cheryl L. West

Conceived by

Susan Rose and Joan Stein

Primary Stages Opening Night Draft
October 4th, 2011

This Book belongs to: HOWARD SHANGRAW

NEXT TO THE CRIB

By Brooke Berman

A woman spreads a sheet down on the floor, lies down on it, and attempts to get comfortable. It's hard. The floor is not comfortable. She tries again. She sits up.

WOMAN

This is me. On the floor. Next to my baby's crib. My baby is a sleep terrorist, waking every two hours to feed. All day – and all night long. Tonight, I'm horizontal on shitty carpeting, nestled between the crib and changing table, because my husband has a cold. A cold!

“Don't do any night-feedings.” I said. “Rest.” This made me look like a very loving wife.

But I am saving my own neck. I am not getting sick. My baby is not getting sick. And I am not getting sick. Stay the fuck away from us.

She spreads her blankets out on the floor, creating a nest.

She tries to lie down and sleep. She cannot. She gets back up and talks to us again.

I used to be an insomniac. I spent a great portion of the last decade not sleeping. So I thought the “sleep deprivation” part of motherhood would be easy. After all, I love 2AM! I'd stumble into some all night diner from some dance club and eat French fries. Or sit awake at home enjoying the quiet. “I am a 2AM kind of girl” I thought. “I won't mind 4-hour nights! I can function on four hours of sleep!”

Fuck that. Sleep deprivation is killing me.

Sometimes, when I'm leaving the house, I turn to my husband and ask, “Do I look okay? Or like a crazy person?” And sometimes he doesn't answer.

In “Mommy and Me” class, I learned about something called “The Four Month Sleep Regression.” (Technically, they'd have to be “sleeping” in order to “regress” – but... whatever). Apparently, at four months, any progress you've made teaching them to sleep goes out the window. And then TEETHING!

Followed by crawling and then separation anxiety. All of which keep them awake. When do they sleep!? When do I!?!?

*She tries to lie down and sleep. It doesn't work
And she's up, addressing the audience again.*

I saw this play about Romania just before the Revolution. I bet those characters could sleep on the floor. Those characters, hungry and clad in gray, would know how to fall asleep on this carpeting without creature comforts. Creature comforts do not exist when you're overthrowing a Communist regime! Or, maybe we're escaping Nazi Germany, hiding on all sorts of floors as we make our way to the border, like the pianist in *The Pianist*. Or, camping! I've gone camping. In a dense forest. And the tents are inadequate and the ground is cold, and there is nothing resembling a coffee shop anywhere. Oh my God, what if we get eaten by bears!?! (*giving up as the fantasy collapses*)

*From the other room, we hear her husband's very
loud sneeze or nose-blowing, sounds of a bad cold.*

If I get sick I will kill him with these very hands. And if my baby gets sick, I will kill him and then myself.

Maybe I'm not cut out for this. I have spent the last 20 years as an adult doing whatever I wanted to do whenever I wanted to do it -- and that's over. FOREVER. Never again will I move through the world without care. FOREVER, and I mean forever, there will be this tie, the thought, "Where's my kid? Is my kid okay?"

I belong to him now. With my husband I can at least pretend some kind of emotional autonomy, like that Rilkean sort of "two solitudes that border each other" bullshit. But with my baby? Uh-uh, No way, it's full-on. He depends on me. And I better be up to the task... Or else.

(Lights out)

NEW IN THE MOTHERHOOD

By Lisa Loomer

(A woman walks on with a happy looking diaper bag. She's kind of an odd mom out. Not sarcastic...a bit bewildered and wry. She's fine with the kid, easy... The rest of her new life she's still trying to figure out.)

ODD MOM

(to audience)

Oh hi. This bench taken?

(sits)

Cool.

(sees son, calls out; lightly)

Put it down, Harry. Down, babe. The tricycle is a means of transportation.

(laughs)

He's three. Everything's a penis.

(She takes out a cigarette.)

God, I hate the park. If anyone had told me I'd be sentenced to five to ten years in the park... I'd have stuck with a cat.

(re: cigarette)

Oh, this is clove by the way.

(takes a drag)

All right, it's not clove, but it's the park. See, the park for me is like... Dante's Purgatory. Not Dante's Inferno—that'd be exciting, you'd meet interesting people... But, I mean, day after day of whose turn is it on the swing? Couldn't we just let 'em duke it out? I mean, I used to go to an office... Like—in a building? I was a type A personality! Okay, B minus, but still...

(takes a drag; smiles)

Look, I know he's a boy, you gotta take 'em outside. They will not play Scrabble. They'll throw the pieces at the cat. And they won't miss 'cause they're boys.

(lightly)

And you can't just let his dad take him to the park, cause, hey--“Where was Mom? Working?” He'll be in therapy the rest of his life—

ODD MOM (cont.)

(notices; matter of fact)

Harry? No, honey--put the little girl down. Put her down, babe.

(waits; easy)

Put her down and use your words, Harry.

(beat)

Not those words—

(laughs)

Hey, remind me to cancel Showtime--!

(Mom 1 enters, startling her. She's perfect. And eight months pregnant.)

MOM 1

(perky)

Excuse me, is anybody sitting there?

ODD MOM

(trying for cheery)

Oh no!

(Odd Mom moves over.)

MOM 1

I love your diaper bag!

ODD MOM

Yours too!

(Mom 1 looks at the cigarette and coughs meaningfully.)

ODD MOM

Oh, don't worry about this, it's clove.

(Mom 1 calls to her child on the swings—near Harry.)

MOM 1

Dakota! Just tell the little boy, "Go away." Do not let him do that with your Barbie!

MOM 1

(to Odd Mom)

QUEEN ESTHER
By Michele Lowe

I pick up Sammy at Lois Baum's house—he plays with her daughter Amy on Thursdays when I work late—and as he's putting on his boots, Lois pulls me aside and says You know Purim's in a few weeks and the kids want to get dressed up in costumes for the Megillah reading at temple.

And I say Oh great, we'll have to get something, and she says, Listen I don't know how to tell you this but your son already has something in mind. He wants to go as Queen Esther. He told me he wants to wear a wedding dress. Look, she says, we don't know each other that well, but I love my pediatrician and he might be very good for you right now. He's very empathic. She hands me a piece of paper with the doctor's telephone number on it and Sammy and I leave.

When Sammy was three, he wanted a Cinderella dress from the Disney Store. It was two shades of blue with a little cap sleeve. We told the salesclerk it was a birthday gift for a little girl in his class, but when we got home, he put it on. He wore it every night for three weeks and then I shredded it in the washing machine. He never mentioned the dress again and neither did I.

When he was five my mother bought him a Buzz Lightyear costume for Halloween. He begged me to take it back and buy him a Sleeping Beauty dress. I couldn't.

All this time Sammy's father is trying to find Sammy a sport. Every other weekend he's all over Sammy: this is how you throw a football, this is how you hit a forehand, this is how you dribble a basketball. Sammy's coming home with a broken finger, a twisted ankle, a bloody nose, but he never complains.

I call Sammy's father and ask if he could tone down the ESPN lessons but he laughs at me. He likes it, he says. He's gonna be the next Derek Jeter. And I think, sure—if Derek Jeter likes to wear a little black dress and pearls.

So after my conversation with Lois I decide to skip Purim this year. I tell Sammy, We'll bake hamantaschen and go visit Gramma. Sammy loves to bake and he says Fine. So the costume thing goes away.

A few days later, Sammy comes home with a huge black and blue mark on his arm. He tells me he walked into the art cabinet.

MICHAEL'S DATE
By Claire LaZebnik

My son tells me that a girl in his English class agreed to go to the movies with him on Friday night, and I manage to say “Oh? Cool,” in the most relaxed, unconcerned, hey-it’s-your-life-not-mine kind of way.

I get her name out of him but not much more, so I check out her picture on his Facebook page. She’s actually kind of cute. And, look—she *commented* on one of his statuses! “Ha-ha. LOL.”

What a doll! I love her already.

At bedtime, I pop a xanax along with my calcium and wonder if Michael’s as nervous about this date as I am. God only knows. I seriously doubt he’d talk to me about his feelings. He’s male, he’s a teenager, and he’s autistic. The perfect trifecta for emotionally shutting out your mother.

Friday night, Michael puts on a button-down shirt. I blow my hair dry, dust on a little make-up, add a shpritz of perfume, and spend an hour trying to find *something* to wear that doesn’t make me look fat.

I beam at Chloe when we pick her up. “Hey, there! How ARE you? It’s SO great to meet you!”

“Uh, yeah, that’s my mom,” Michael mutters.

They sit side by side in the back seat. I can’t stop glancing at them in the rearview mirror: talk about cute—it’s like having two puppy dogs back there.

I drive them to the cinema. *Hey, look at me! I’m dropping off my son and his date. His date!* Maybe this is the beginning of a whole new era for us. You see, Michael was diagnosed with autism when he was three. He couldn’t talk or make eye contact and he flapped his arms all the time. I’d say it’s miraculous that he goes to a regular high school now, except I remember the billions of hours of speech and behavioral therapy it took to get him there.

And now he’s on his first date.

STARS AND STRIPES

By Jessica Goldberg

WOMAN

Day before he left for Afghanistan we got the same tattoo, a small blue star on our right shoulder. Probably seems like a weird thing for a mother and son to do together, or so my ex loves to tell me, “that’s not right, no mother and son should be getting tattoos like that”. But then he didn’t raise him so what does he know?

Last time Brian was home on leave he told me ‘mom I seen things’. And that made me really sad because, well, because you want to know the world your boy has seen, you know? You want to see it first. You know what I’m saying? Like, you want to be the one to always go first into the dark, make sure there’s nothin’ scary there, and if there is, you want to be the one to make it safe. So it’s just, it’s just frustrating that you can’t do that. ‘Cause that’s what a mother does and knowin’, knowin’ you can’t, well, that is *hard*.

But, as my ex says, Brian’s a grown man, and you should be proud.

Well I am proud! So proud. I’m proud of all my children, but he’s my soldier! Life on the line was never gonna’ be good enough for him like it is for his daddy. Brian always wanted somethin’ more. He was never gonna’ have no life of fixing windshield wipers onto trucks. After high school Brian worked EMT for a while, but that still wasn’t enough. Then one day he called me up so happy, ‘I found my calling mah’ he said, ‘I joined the Army, I’m gonna serve my Country’. Well, I just about fell off my chair, all I could think was: we are at war. You are going to have to go to war.

He did three and a half months of basic training at Fort Carson and was gone.

Now working EMT in Detroit is no piece of cake. That keeps a mother up at night, but it is nothing like this. Nothing like this at all. This is like... constant. ALL THE TIME. From waking to sleeping, and sleeping too, ‘cause you’re dreaming it. Half your time you spend trying not to look at the TV, at the newspaper, other half of the time you’re like why does no one care? Where is everyone?

Then one day there’s a knock on the door. I’m standing in the kitchen when it comes, I’m fixing dinner, I hear it: the doorbell, the knock. There’s three of them, that’s how they come, in threes--two guys in dress greens and a chaplain. They come like that and you know. My name, they’re saying my name, then his, they’re saying his name: Brian. What? Brian. I’m not prepared at all. I can’t hear.

IF WE'RE USING A SURROGATE, HOW COME I'M THE ONE WITH MORNING SICKNESS?

By Marco Pennette

A muzak version of "Jingle Bell Rock" plays in the darkness. A department store. Lights up on a MAN holding shopping bags filled with presents. Santa Claus is in the distance. He suddenly turns to us, frustrated.

MAN

Un-fucking-believable. First words out of his mouth -- "Have you been a good girl for Mommy?"

(shakes his head)

Why am I surprised? They all say it -- Waitresses, salespeople. "Where's your Mommy?" "Is Daddy giving Mommy a break?" Why should Santa be any different? But instead of pretending I didn't hear it, I turn to him and yell, "Hey, Fat Boy, she doesn't have a Mother!"

(back to us)

Okay, actually, I say nothing. I've got this thing with confrontation. I once had to see a therapist to help me break up with my other therapist. Besides, is it really my job to educate them all? I never asked to be the poster boy for gay parenting. I just wanted a child. Growing up, it was never a question I'd get married and have a family. It wasn't till I was twelve and my father couldn't get us tickets to "Annie" and I started hyperventilating on the kitchen floor that it became clear that I probably wouldn't be marrying a *woman*. When my partner, Steve, and I decided to take the leap into parenthood, we'd been together eight years. That's like fifty-six in hetero-time. Our gay friends reacted in their typical low-key demeanor.

(mock terrified)

"A baby?! What are you thinking? You own a suede sofa from Armani Casa!" The straight folks were also supportive in... their way. One of them actually said, "Isn't it hard enough to raise a child in a normal family?" We crossed her off the godmother list. The first thing we had to do was find an egg donor and a surrogate. It's preferred if these are two different people. The agency we were working with soon matched us with a potential surrogate -- Donna. A perky lesbian from Simi Valley. Healthy, a mother of two. Her profile said she wanted to help gay people become a family so she can show her kids the brave new world they live in.

So, we have this very bizarre "first date" at Starbucks with Donna and her girlfriend and basically try to cover everything in two hours -- "Where'd you go to school?" "Would you abort in the event of Downs Syndrome?" "Oh, we love Xena Warrior Princess, too!" Six lattes later we're all jittery and love each other and