

MOTHER-DAUGHTER

1 act play
by
Matteo Tibiletti

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Matteo Tibiletti was born in Varese the 23/10/1978. He has always had a deep passion for film, photography and creative writing. Scriptwriter, short story teller and playwright, he often lends himself to the direction of short films or photo shoots. In 2009, he published a collection of his best works entitled “Lo sconosciuto”, The Stranger, online via www.lulu.com. He studied for five years at the Scuola di Teatro Città di Varese, a local theatre school. Since 2008, he has been one of the founding members and directors of the Associazione culturale “Compagnia Duse”, the cultural association Compagnia Duse, in Besozzo, Italy. He has been a member of the Italian cultural rights society SIAE since January 2012 as a playwright and photographer.

SYNOPSIS

A mother, her daughter and a pair of feet that stick out from behind a sofa. A difficult, raw, grotesque relationship, supported by courage and the need to survive

CHARACTERS

MOTHER

DAUGHTER

MAN

A bare scene. A bench sits centre stage. Mother and Daughter are sat down. The air is tense. Their glance is towards the audience. When they move, often their movements are perfectly coordinated. On the lower right side of the bench are a pair of legs, dressed with dark trousers and black, dirty shoes. The legs do not move for the duration of the scene.

MOTHER: Dear God.

Pause. The daughter slowly looks upwards. She stays still in this position for a few moments. The mother realizes this and turns towards the daughter, then she also turns her gaze in the same direction. Pause. The mother looks down again at the daughter, and then to the audience.

MOTHER: No. It's just an expression.

DAUGHTER: Oh.

The daughter looks towards the audience again. Pause.

MOTHER: Have you got everything?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Sure?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Positive?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Charlie?

DAUGHTER: Oops!

The daughter jumps up suddenly and looks at the mother, worried. They look at each other for a while. The mother smiles. The daughter exits left, running.

The mother turns and begins to rummage behind the bench. The legs on the bench seem to be shaken, as if she were touching something that belonged to its body.

MOTHER: Come on!

She finally manages to do what she intended. She looks towards the audience again. She is holding a cigarette and a lighter. She puts the cigarette in her mouth. She is about to light up when the daughter appears stage left holding a large stuffed bear. The mother smiles and momentarily lets the lighter go out.

DAUGHTER (with a big grin): Charlie!

MOTHER: Charlie.

The mother lights her cigarette, but the daughter suddenly moves towards her and takes the cigarette from her mouth.

DAUGHTER: Smoking is bad for you!

MOTHER: Who says?

DAUGHTER: Me.

MOTHER: To who?

DAUGHTER: You.

MOTHER: What right do you have?

DAUGHTER: Mmm... Ummmmm...

MOTHER: You see, you can't stop me from doing what I think is right just because you think it's wrong. I keep telling you, you must give motives and founded justifications in order to resort to violence.

With this the daughter sits next to the mother, she looks worried.

DAUGHTER: Did I hurt you, mother?

The mother strokes her face.

MOTHER: No, darling, you didn't hurt me... but you tore my cigarette from my mouth when I didn't want you to... Isn't that violence?

DAUGHTER: Umm... yes?

MOTHER: Of course it is, darling.

DAUGHTER: Well then I'm sorry, mother... But I just wanted to...

MOTHER: Don't worry, I know why you did it... and in other circumstances I would have appreciated it... but today is one of those days when smoking could make everything else seem less difficult to me, do you understand?

DAUGHTER: Actually, no.

MOTHER: It doesn't matter, darling... How's Charlie?

DAUGHTER (smiles): Good, good, good!

MOTHER: Good.

The mother reaches her hand out to the daughter.

MOTHER: Darling, can you give me back my cigarette?

DAUGHTER: Of course!

The daughter opens her hands and gives the mother her cigarette, which is in pieces. The mother takes the cigarette and looks at it, letting it dangle between her index finger and thumb.

DAUGHTER: Oh!

MOTHER: You see?... what did I say? Violence always generates victims.

DAUGHTER: True.

Pause.

DAUGHTER: Mother?

MOTHER: Yes, darling.

DAUGHTER: Why have we packed our suitcases?

MOTHER: We're leaving.

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh... and, where to?

MOTHER: I don't know yet.

The daughter turns quickly towards the back of the bench and looks down, then turns towards the mother.

DAUGHTER: Is he coming too?

MOTHER: Would you leave him there?

DAUGHTER: I don't know... but wouldn't waking him be like using a kind of violence against him? MOTHER: I don't think he'd wake up very easily.

DAUGHTER: He's really sleeping soundly!

MOTHER: It's a very, deep sleep.

DAUGHTER: Strange! Just a few hours ago he was so awake!... when he came into my room...

MOTHER: Shut up!

DAUGHTER: Oh!

The daughter cuddles Charlie, looking offended.

MOTHER: I'm sorry darling. But... I don't want to hear this story. I'd rather you forget it actually.

DAUGHTER: But he only wanted to play!

MOTHER: No! Look me in the eyes, darling, look me in the eyes like you've never done before, please! That asshole piece of shit did not want to play at all, got it?

DAUGHTER: Mother... you said a swear word!

MOTHER: I said more than one... you weren't paying attention.

Pause. The daughter looks pensive.

DAUGHTER: True... more than one.

MOTHER: Yes.

DAUGHTER: But you shouldn't!

MOTHER: No, normally you'd be right, but not this time.

DAUGHTER: Oh!

Pause.

DAUGHTER: I think I'm a bit confused.

The daughter looks like she's about to cry.

MOTHER: Darling... my love... please...

The daughter tries not to sob.

MOTHER: I beg you, don't...

The daughter bursts into tears.

The mother turns slowly towards the daughter. Then suddenly screams.

MOTHER: Stop it!

The daughter stops crying immediately and looks at the mother, frightened, while hugging Charlie.

Pause.

MOTHER: What time is it?

The daughter lifts the arm of the body laying behind the bench. Once she's holding the wrist, she looks at the wristwatch.

DAUGHTER: It's two o'clock.

MOTHER: Great, then it's almost time to go.

DAUGHTER: So I mustn't wake him?

MOTHER: No.

DAUGHTER: But didn't you say that we weren't going to leave him here?

MOTHER: I'm thinking.

DAUGHTER: About what?

MOTHER: Where to leave the body.

DAUGHTER: Ummmm...

Pause.

DAUGHTER: Gross.

MOTHER: What?

DAUGHTER: I had chocolate in my pocket and now my hand is dirty...

MOTHER: Do you want a hankie?

DAUGHTER: No.

The daughter starts to suck her fingers in a provocative way, and even lets out a few groans.

MOTHER: Would you please stop?

DAUGHTER: Mmm... doing what? Mmm...

The daughter keeps sucking her fingers, changing into increasingly embarrassing positions. Charlie falls to the floor. The mother looks around her, preoccupied. Then she picks up her bag and quickly hands her daughter a hankie.

MOTHER: Please, use this!

DAUGHTER: Why?

MOTHER: One day I'll explain... for now you just have to do as I say.

DAUGHTER: But I love chocolate! Dad gave me lots of chocolates, chocolate bars, chocolate cookies, cakes and...

MOTHER: Stop it, now.

DAUGHTER: Why are you saying that? Why don't you ask him?

The daughter turns towards the body.

DAUGHTER: Dad! Why don't you tell mother how happy you are when you watch me eat chocolate?

Pause.

DAUGHTER: Gosh, he's really sleeping like a big cuddly bear, isn't he? You didn't hurt him too much, did you?

MOTHER: Don't worry. He'll be better off if we just leave him be. Dad was very tired... when I walked in on him in your room he was a little too tired...

DAUGHTER: True... he was panting... when we play naughty hide and seek he starts panting like that.

The daughter imitates a carnal, breathless breathing.

MOTHER: Jesus Christ, you never stop, do you?!

DAUGHTER (stopping immediately): Why do you always shout at me?

MOTHER: Forget about it, mother's angry today.

Pause. The mother stands up suddenly.

MOTHER: Listen, you know what we're gonna do now darling, we're gonna take dad and put him in the cozy cellar, what do you say?

DAUGHTER: But the cellar's really, really dark!

MOTHER: Well that's why... dad needs to sleep and you know how difficult it is for him to sleep if there's too much light!

DAUGHTER: Well, yes... when we played he always kept the light...

MOTHER: WOULD YOU PLEASE GO GET THE CELLAR KEYS IN THE KITCHEN?!

DAUGHTER: ok.

The daughter gets up and exits right.

MOTHER: You gotta have patience. I must breathe. I must remember to do so and to think of something relaxing. I must. I could faint from one moment to the next. What did they say in that movie? "Do you believe in god? That's the wrong question. Does God believe in us?" Well, I believe... I believe that he believes me... And if he does he knows that what I did couldn't be avoided. We all makes mistakes, right? I've made a few... but you just need to breathe, breathe deeply and recuperate what you can. Breathe and recuperate, yes, this is the solution. You marry a man, you believe in him and then after while you realize he's not the man you thought he was. Well, that can happen. It's normal... we all have a distorted view of the present and sometimes we are deceived by appearances. Just look at my daughter... I haven't given her a name yet. It's that wrong? I don't know, but I don't think it's necessary to give people names. I am her mother and she is my daughter. Poor thing, I sometimes wonder whether it's my fault... but heavens above, she's a rape waiting to happen and what's worse is that she doesn't even realize it! She lives in a parallel universe! And sometimes, I'm envious of her!... she can avoid the suffering that we must endure, effortlessly ... But us, how can I say... normal people. No, normal my ass... was that asshole (points behind the bench) normal?! Fuck! He said he couldn't find a reason for our love... he was having a hard time. He hadn't touched me in months! And I say... look at what he was refusing to touch! Am I missing something? I don't think so... and I'm not a prude! I'm passionate! I'm a slut! Yes because, there's a big difference between being a whore and being a slut. Sluts love sex, but not the kind to fill a void, if you can excuse the disgusting pun... no! Sluts love sex as the highest level of passion and physical love. Sluts look for sex, selecting their available human material very carefully, and wouldn't just sleep with the first man they see, no way! Only with those who are worthy of tasting the forbidden fruit... oh what lovely words... "forbidden fruit"... what the fuck am I saying! I killed that asshole, I don't know what to do with the body, my daughter is a nymphomaniac... for a chocolate she'd fuck an entire football team and I'm here worrying about how much of a slut I am! Where were we?

At that moment the daughter enters with a very short, sexy dress.

DAUGHTER: Tadaaa! Do you like it, mother?

MOTHER: Where the hell did you get that?

DAUGHTER: Dad gave it to me yesterday!

MOTHER: Christ!

DAUGHTER: No... dad gave it to me!

MOTHER: Darling, I wasn't saying that our Lord descended to give you that gift, (to one side) that's all we need! (to daughter) I'm talking about your father... and his ideas... darling, you can't wear that dress.

DAUGHTER: Why?

MOTHER: Because we're not going to a swingers' party, we need to take local transport... and...

DAUGHTER: Doesn't it suit me?

MOTHER: No darling... if only it didn't... (to one side) fucking hell! If only there were something she looked bad in... I hate her! (to daughter) It's just that, you see... it's inappropriate.... Do you understand? We don't want to be inappropriate, do we? You see how mother is dressed?

DAUGHTER: You mean badly??

MOTHER: (to one side) The nerve!... I just hope that I don't find out she's messing with me! (to daughter) No, darling, mother dresses nicely, why are you saying that?

DAUGHTER: Mmm... dad said that if you'd had more taste perhaps you would have had more men.

MOTHER: Ah... interesting... well, dad meant that if I'd had more taste I would have found much smarter men.

DAUGHTER: Is dad stupid?

MOTHER: Shhh! He can hear you!

The daughter laughs. The mother looks at her and laughs, then turns to the audience.

MOTHER: She must have got it from someone!

DAUGHTER: What are we going to do now, mother?

MOTHER: Shall we move the idiot to the cellar?

The daughter laughs.

DAUGHTER: Shhh!

MOTHER: Oh right... he'll hear us!

Mother and daughter move to the sides of the bench and go to lift the body when the stage falls into darkness. Black.

When the lights come back on, the daughter is standing centre stage, hugging Charlie and pacing backwards and forwards nervously. Quick movements. She bites her nails, she sometimes speaks to Charlie, she adjusts her dress, she messes with her hair.

DAUGHTER: I'm getting bored! (shouting stage right) MOTHER, I'M GETTING BORED AND I'M COLD, AND AFRAID!

Pause.

DAUGHTER: I'm afraid. Yes, I'm afraid and that's bad, isn't it Charlie? If you knew what I was afraid of... but I don't know. Mother always yells at me. Nothing I do is right. Isn't it true, Charlie? You know, Charlie, you're the only friend I have. Mother says that there aren't any nice people out there. That's why it's hard to find people you can trust. Real friends. That's what mother says. I

don't know whether to believe her... dad's a good person... if not mother wouldn't have married him, right? But now she's saying he's an mmmmmmm (covers her mouth as if she couldn't speak) and a mmmmm (as before). Understand, Charlie? You do not swear! Dad is good, he doesn't swear at me... even when he's with me and kisses me all over... he's so sweet... when he takes me and lies me down (she lies down on the bench), he caresses me (she caresses her body) and tells me I'm his little girl. My dad really loves me Charlie. (she sits up suddenly) Mother doesn't love him. And I don't know if I love her. If she doesn't love dad, why should I love her? She doesn't cuddle me like dad does... she calls me "darling" and "my love" and then she says "don't do this, don't do that". You know Charlie, I think I hate mother. If only she would take me like dad does (she lies down again), if they both caressed me. We would really be a happy family... If mother and dad both cuddled me... mmmm (her hand moves between her legs and the mother enters at that moment).

MOTHER: (to one side) Mother of God... she's getting worse by the hour! (to her, with a hand over her mouth) Ummm... Ummm... darling, are you ready.

The daughter, leaving her hand between her legs, looks at the mother.

DAUGHTER: Mother... I was just thinking about you!

MOTHER: Oh... great...

DAUGHTER: And I was thinking about dad too... yes, yes.

MOTHER: Marvelous!

DAUGHTER: I was thinking about you, and dad, all three of us together like a real family!

MOTHER: Yes, darling, you can tell me the details another time OK, we're late, we must go.

DAUGHTER (getting up suddenly): Have you decided where we're going?

MOTHER: I think so.

DAUGHTER: Where?

MOTHER: We're going to grandma's, OK?

DAUGHTER: But Grandma Adele is dead.

MOTHER: (to one side) Oh, great! Because she thinks that her only Grandma is my mother in law! (to her) Darling, you remember that I have a mother too, right?

DAUGHTER (disappointed): Ah... umm... umm...

MOTHER: My mother is your grandma too... remember? Grandma Clelia.

DAUGHTER: Umm... umm...

MOTHER: Grandma Clelia loves you too... you know that right?

DAUGHTER: Yes, but Grandma Clelia is sick...

MOTHER: Well... she's old, and she's got some health issues but she loves you...

DAUGHTER: Grandma Clelia never gives me chocolate!

MOTHER: Grandma Clelia is a diabetic, (to one side) for fuck's sake! (to her) Darling, that's enough talk, let's go please, it's best that we leave before someone else gets here.

DAUGHTER: Who should be coming?

MOTHER: I don't know, maybe some friend of dad's... (to one side) that's all I need right now!

DAUGHTER: Yes, yes, dad's friends! Dad says that they're my friends too!

MOTHER: Exactly... no, my love, it's best that dad's friends don't come here... because dad is sleeping. DAUGHTER: Dad is sleeping because you hit him over the head.

MOTHER (understanding that she's not getting anywhere): I told you, your dad suffers from insomnia.

DAUGHTER: That's not true, when he slept with me in bed...

MOTHER: My love! Calm down, dad asked mother to give him a big smack over the head because he was a little cranky and couldn't get to sleep.

DAUGHTER: Aren't we going to tell him we're leaving?

MOTHER: No, no, he knew we were leaving.

DAUGHTER: When did you tell him, if you only decided 5 minutes ago?

MOTHER: (to one side) So she can be smart when she wants to ... (to her) I've been telling him for ages that sooner or later I'd be leaving.

DAUGHTER: To go to Grandma Clelia?

MOTHER: To Grandma Clelia!

DAUGHTER: And you told him I would go with you.

MOTHER: I told him just before he asked me if he could sleep a while.

DAUGHTER: Ah...

MOTHER: Great... can we go now, darling?

DAUGHTER: Ok. (smiles).

Mother looks at her, hugs her tightly.

MOTHER: You're my little darling, you know that right?

DAUGHTER (smiles): Yes mother... so you really love me?

MOTHER: Did you doubt that?

DAUGHTER: You're always yelling at me...

MOTHER: I yell at you because I love you... otherwise I wouldn't say anything to you.

DAUGHTER: Really?

MOTHER: I told you that to resort to violence, you must have a valid motive. My motive is you.

DAUGHTER: Oh...

MOTHER: You see?

DAUGHTER: Yes... I think I understand

MOTHER: Fantastic. (to one side) Thank God! (to her) shall we go?

DAUGHTER: Yes.

MOTHER: Got everything?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Sure?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Positive?

DAUGHTER: Uh-huh.

MOTHER: Your suitcase?

DAUGHTER: Oops!

The daughter covers her mouth with her hand, lets go of Charlie and exits. The mother takes a cigarette from her bag, goes to light it, then sees her daughter entering, holding a suitcase. The mother lets the lighter go out.

DAUGHTER: Suitcase. (Smiles).

MOTHER: Suitcase

The mother goes to light her cigarette. The daughter leaps towards her and takes the cigarette from her.

DAUGHTER: Smoking is bad for you.

MOTHER: Who says?

DAUGHTER: Me.

MOTHER: To who?

DAUGHTER: You.

MOTHER: What right do you have?

DAUGHTER: I'm your daughter... that's my motive.

MOTHER: (to one side) Bitch... well, at least she got it! (to her) I love you, darling!

DAUGHTER: Me too, mother!

They both exit. Pause. The sound of a door creaking. From stage left, a man enters, in pain, crawling. The man reaches the bench. He sits with his hand on his head. He puts his hand in his pocket, takes out a bar of chocolate. He looks around. He eats a piece of chocolate. He shakes his head.

MAN: Sluts!

The man keeps eating the chocolate. Black.