

BAD MOM

Written by

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'I want my kids brought up the way I was.. by my Mother'  
Julia Lacey

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INT. JULIA'S OFFICE - DAY

The factory warehouse of PHOENIX BBQ. Julia Lacey (late 30'S, well-groomed but messy round the edges) is closing a deal with two clients, a fat middle aged woman and a young sweaty guy.

JULIA

...I think you'll be very happy with the Vesuvius 400. We took everything people loved about the Vesuvius 300 and added a Meat Shelf. To be honest, you're the kind of buyer who epitomizes our brand - smart, sexy, edgy.

They look happy with that. Julia leads them to the office area.

JULIA (TO THE FAT LADY) (CONT'D)

I love your shoes, by the way. Are they waterproof? Right, I'll leave you in the capable hands of Sally.

Sally nods, smiling, slightly in awe of Julia. Julia shakes the buyers' hands.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's been great doing business with you. Enjoy the meat shelf.

Julia walks off smiling and heads down a corridor to her boss's glass fronted office. She pokes her head in.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Sold another fifty.

Frank (early 40's, balding, a small man) gives her the thumbs up, rolls backwards on his office chair and increases her total on the white board of employee's sales figures. She's way in front of her colleagues. Julia shuts the door with a smile. 'Gold' by Spandau Ballets begins to play in the background. She walks off. Life is sweet.

CUT TO

INT. JULIA'S CAR - DAY

Julia is driving down a residential street. She is singing along to 'Gold', now on the radio. She pulls up outside a smart house. She checks her watch. She's got a bit of time. She takes a novel out of her bag and settles back to read.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S CAR - LATER

There's a different song on the radio now. Julia closes the book. Stretches. Looks at her watch. Gets out of the car.

CUT TO

EXT. LINDA'S DOOR - DAY

Julia is standing at the door. Linda (early forties, bit overweight) opens it. Behind her is Rod (8 years old, precocious, focused). Linda looks surprised to see Julia.

JULIA

Hi Linda, hey Rod. Are the kids ready to go? Hope I'm not late, it's been a bit crazy since Mom's been away, I'm trying to do three things at once -

LINDA

Huh? I haven't got your kids.

Indiana (Linda's teenage drop out son, short, wispy moustache) comes to the door. He eyes up Julia.

JULIA

What?

LINDA

I had them yesterday, I took them trampolining, remember?

Beat.

JULIA

Oh yeah, of course! What an idiot.

ROD

Is everything okay, Mrs Lacey?

JULIA

Absolutely! Right, I'd better go and collect my children from... that other place where they are. Let's arrange that sleep over Rod!

Julia walks down the path out of view. Just as Linda is about to shut the door there's a screech of tires as Julia's car tears down the road at breakneck speed.

CUT TO

INT. JULIA'S CAR

Julia is driving down a busy road. She is pretty upset, desperately trying to remember where her kids are.

JULIA (TO HERSELF)  
 Where are they? Where ARE they?  
 Come on THINK! (Hitting herself on  
 the head). Where do they go on  
 Tuesdays?

Still driving, she starts routing through her handbag on the passenger seat, throwing everything out of it. She grabs her blackberry and scrolls through to find 'Ted-Cell', then presses dial with her chin.

TED V/O  
 You've reached Ted Lacey at Storage  
 Solutions, leave a message.

JULIA  
 Ted! Where do the kids go on  
 Tuesdays? I've forgotten where  
 they... Oh! The indoor playground..  
 God, I'm so late, can you -

The message beeps and cuts her off. Julia does a short scream and bites the phone in frustration.

CUT TO

INT. 'STORAGE SOLUTIONS' HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Ted Lacey (early forties, good hair, slightly nervy) is in a board meeting surrounded by young men in suits. His phone vibrates. At the end of the table we see his boss Kevin Delaney (early fifties, successful-looking, slicked back longish hair, fit) doing a presentation. Ted glances at his phone. It says; 'Julia: missed call'

KEVIN  
 Ted!

Ted jumps out of his skin. He looks up at Kevin.

KEVIN (WINKING AT HIM) (CONT'D)  
 Don't make me confiscate yours too.

There is a small pile of phones beside him. He's serious.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDOOR ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND - LATER

The doors are flung open. Julia comes running out.

JULIA  
 Where the hell are theeyyyyy!

Her screams trail off as she runs out of shot.

INT. CAR - DAY

Julia is now driving down a very busy road. She is trying to fight back tears. Suddenly she sees one of those big billboards advertising a Jackie Chan movie. She has an epiphany and does a dramatic U-turn. About twenty vehicles all honk their horns at her but she doesn't care.

JULIA

Oh thank you Jackie Chan! Thank you, thank you!

CUT TO:

INT. GYM STUDIO - DAY

In an otherwise empty studio, the Lacey kids; Rose (11, already a teenager in her mind and manner) and Kirk (8, sensitive, easily manipulated) sit on the floor in their Karate outfits. Their instructor wanders over.

KARATE INSTRUCTOR

Guys, I gotta lock up, I'm already late for my anger management group, and they get pretty irate about punctuality so-

At that point the door is thrown open and Julia comes running across the studio floor. Rose leans towards Kirk

ROSE (QUIETLY)

Think about what you want to ask for because Mom's gonna be feeling pretty bad about this.

Kirk nods, he understands.

CUT TO

TITLES; BAD MOM

POST TITLES TEASER

INT. INDOOR ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND - LATER

The doors are flung open and Ted in his suit and briefcase comes running in. The ladies on reception look up.

TED

I'm looking for my kids, are they here?

RECEPTIONIST

The only kids left are in the ball pit -

TED (AS HE RUNS)  
The ball pit?

He runs to the ball pit. He can't see Rose or Kirk so he tosses his briefcase to one side and throws himself into the thousands of plastic balls. He takes a deep breath, holds his nose and dives under to look for his kids. He comes back up but with a tiny child we don't recognize under his arm. He throws this imposter child to one side and dives under again.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. THE LACEY'S KITCHEN - DAY

The next morning. Julia is on the phone. The kids and Ted are sitting at the kitchen table, out of ear shot.

JULIA (INTO THE PHONE)  
Mom! Hi, hi, hi. Just calling again to see if you're back from your cruise. I mean it's *Monday* now and you should've been back last week, so we're all a bit concerned, that's all. Just need to know that you're alright and you got back safely. *Partly* because we need to sort out a plan for the kids, but mainly because we're worried about you! (Beat. Then quickly) So give us a call so we can sort out a plan for the kids.

She hangs up and absentmindedly pours the last of the milk into her huge cup of coffee. She then curses herself when she realizes there's no more milk. She grabs some prune juice from an otherwise empty fridge and carries it over to the table. We see now that Kirk has a guinea pig on his lap.

KIRK  
I think I'm gonna call him Elton John.

We see Rose admiring her new, decorative, acrylic nails.

ROSE  
I'm glad I went for the diamante.

JULIA  
Well they're just little thank you's for being so understanding.

TED

They better not be permanent.  
(Points to the guinea pig) Either of  
them.

Kirk is feeding the guinea pig bacon while Rose is struggling  
to pick up a fork.

JULIA (QUIETLY)

Give them both a week.

TED

Yeah, you said that last time.

Behind Ted we see there is a tortoise in a glass case. Julia  
sits down. She smiles at them all.

JULIA

Well *I* for one am going to miss all  
this when Granny gets back.

Julia pours juice on the kid's cereal

ROSE/KIRK

Is Granny back? When's Granny back?

JULIA

Why do you want boring old Granny  
back? Would Granny have let you go  
to school late on Tuesday *and*  
Wednesday and Friday? I don't think  
so.

KIRK

What are we doing for the whole of  
the summer break?

JULIA

Well lets take it a day at a time  
but today we're going to the  
warehouse!!

Kirk cheers. Rose looks as unimpressed as she make her face.

TED

Hey Rose, when I've settled in I'll  
give you all a tour of *my* office.  
Did I tell you about the drinks  
fridge in reception? It's free;  
everyone can just help themselves!  
Except the cleaners.

They all look pretty impressed with this.

JULIA

You didn't have that at your last  
place.

TED

I didn't have a lot of things at my last place. Including a promotion in six years.

JULIA

Yeah, well it's like you said to your boss when you were leaving -

TED

Nobody puts Ted Lacey in the corner!

JULIA

No, after that, about going on to bigger and better things.

TED(GETTING UP)

Yeah, exactly, and I know this isn't bigger or better but give me some time to make the right impression and I'll be climbing that ladder so fast it'll look like I'm in an elevator!(Beat) You know because I'll be moving so fast..?

Julia nods and gives him a kiss. She walks him to the door.

TED (CONT'D)

You've been doing a great job by the way. And once I get settled in I'm going to be on your team a lot more. Promise.

They look over at the kids who are admiring their bribes.

JULIA

Yeah, not long left now! Not that I'm counting down the... I love it, it's been great!

TED

Your boss doesn't mind you bringing the kids to work?

JULIA

No. I had them in most of last week after school. He didn't even notice they were there.

CUT TO

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - DAY

Julia is sitting in front of Frank's desk. In the background we see Rose and Kirk's faces pressed up against the glass of the office



FRANK

.. It's the fifth time this month.

JULIA

I don't think that's correct, I -

FRANK

I've got over thirty two cameras in this building Julia; there is *nothing* that I don't see.

Behind him we see a bank of CCTV screens showing various shots of the warehouse. On one screen we see a man walk out of the rest room. Frank presses his intercom.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Wash your hands Mario.

Frank turns back to Julia.

FRANK (CONT'D)

While you're on my time, your first priority is to sell BBQs. Your second priority is to sell BBQs. And your third priority is...?

JULIA

To sell BBQs?

FRANK

Inventory checks. I can't have you distracted.

JULIA

Of course, sorry, it's just it's the summer break and my mother usually looks after my kids but -

FRANK

Well you better make sure you've got childcare tonight for the launch event because I'd like you to do our main presentation this year.

JULIA (TAKEN ABACK)

Seriously?

FRANK

I know I'm springing this on you but you're the best sales woman we've got. And that includes some of the men. I need you to nail it tonight. My advice; Everyone loves the meat shelf. Keep mentioning the meat shelf

Julia nods, overawed. There is suddenly a bang followed by a yelp from outside the office. Frank looks at his CCTV screens

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Your son is trapped under a large  
box.

JULIA  
I'll get rid of them.

CUT TO

INT. JULIA'S CAR, PARKING LOT - DAY

Julia is in the driver's seat, the kids in the back.

ROSE  
Where are we going?

JULIA  
We're going to find Granny.

She puts her foot down. They screech out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE MARIAN'S HOUSE

Julia is knocking on Marian's front door. There's no answer. Just as she's leaving she suddenly catches a glimpse of something moving inside the house. Julia creeps forwards cautiously to have a closer look. She presses her face up against the window. She can clearly see her mother lying behind the sofa, trying to hide. She opens the mail box.

JULIA (SHOUTS)  
Mom! I can see you behind the sofa.

After a minute the door opens. It is Marian. (70, very sprightly, nice looking) apart from the panic in her eyes, she looks amazing - all tanned and healthy.

MARIAN  
Julia, is that you?

JULIA  
Of course it's me! Why were you  
lying on the floor?

MARIAN  
Oh... I fell over.

JULIA  
Behind the sofa? Its a six inch  
gap.

Marian and Julia stare at each other. There is a stand off.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MARIAN'S HOUSE. DAY

Marian, Julia and the kids walk are in Marian's sitting room. As they talk Marian is untying Kirk's shoes and putting them on the right feet. Julia's eye twitches.

JULIA

Why didn't you call? I've been worried sick about you.

KIRK

Did you have fun on the cruise Granny?

MARIAN

Best time of my life. I swam with a tuna.

KIRK

That sounds awesome!

MARIAN

One night we even had pizza with grapes on it!

ROSE

Mom thought you'd drowned.

Julia gives Rose a little shove.

JULIA

Why don't you guys play outside while I talk to Granny?

MARIAN

Oh, hang on. Got something for you.

Marian grabs a bag of presents. She pulls out two decorative wrestling masks. Gives them to the kids.

ROSE/KIRK

Thanks Granny.

Rose gives her a big hug. Julia's eye twitches again. She tries to join in the hug but it's too late. The kids run outside. There is an awkward pause.

JULIA

We've had the best few weeks while you've been away.

MARIAN

I'm very glad to hear that.

JULIA

They missed their Granny's egggy toast though!

MARIAN

Well I've missed them -

JULIA

Really? Great. Well why don't I pick them up at 9 ish? Then you've the whole afternoon to catch up. You can tell them more about the fruity pizzas.

Marian sits down on the sofa. Julia looks at her. Marian composes herself for a second.

MARIAN

Julia, don't take this the wrong way, but having a break gave me a bit of time to think about things. And as much as I love being with the kids, I sometimes feel like I'm being taken for granted-

JULIA

What? You know how grateful we are! What do you think all the Mother's Day cards are for?

Marian takes a huge set of keys and puts them on the table.

MARIAN

I've been doing a lot of soul searching while I've been away and I think I need to take a step back. Maybe you and Ted should talk about employing someone to look after the kids.

Julia stares at her, gobsmacked

JULIA

What? Why? What are you going to do with yourself? It's dangerous for someone of your age to slow down like that.

MARIAN

Well, I've met someone. On the cruise. He's a wonderful man. His name's Vagner.

JULIA

No.

MARIAN

Yes. That's his name.

JULIA

No, you can't just leave us for some man you met on a *boat*, it's just a holiday romance.

MARIAN

No its not. He's asked me to marry him. And I've said yes.

JULIA

He's asked you to..? And you said...? What did they *do* to you out there on the ocean?

MARIAN

I just want to make the most of the time I have left.

Julia stares at her. She can't believe this.

JULIA

I don't know what to say Mom, except I never thought I'd see the day when you'd abandon your own grandchildren to get your leg over. I hope you and your so-called Vagner realize the error of your foolish ways before it's too late.

MARIAN

I'm not abandoning anyone, I'm happy to help out until you're feeling more confident. I know you find it hard to cope.

Julia sees that Rose has walked back into the room. She is watching Julia's reaction (through her wrestling mask).

JULIA

Why would I find it hard? I'm their mother. Looking after my kids is the most natural thing in the world to me; it's like breathing. In fact thank you, *thank you* for giving me this opportunity to spend more time with my children.

Rose looks at her, not quite sure whether to believe Julia.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me I need to use your bathroom.

CUT TO

INT. MARIAN'S BATHROOM /TED'S OFFICE - DAY

Julia is on the toilet, talking to Ted on the phone.

JULIA

Mom doesn't want to look after our kids any more! She said we've been taking her for granted!

TED

Oh come on - what about all the Mother's Day cards? Look don't worry, it's okay, we'll get by, we'll get a baby-sitter or -

JULIA

A baby-sitter? I don't want some stranger looking after our kids! I want my kids brought up the way I was - by my Mother (PAUSE) Hello? Hello..?

CUT TO

INT. TED'S OFFICE - DAY

Ted flings his phone in his bin as Kevin approaches his desk.

KEVIN

Ted, I'd like you to play tennis with me tonight.

TED

What? Okay. (Beat) What?

KEVIN

I don't usually ask the newbies but Tom McCrean's cholesterol has kicked off and you look like you can handle a racket. I'll get my assistant to email you the details. Don't let me down Ted.

Kevin is about to leave when he sees Julia's photo on the desk.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Nice pic. Bet she was a looker.

Ted's phone starts ringing. Beat. Kevin takes it out of the waste paper basket and puts it on Ted's desk. He walks off.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Julia, dressed in a smart work suit, with an apron over the top, walks into the kitchen armed with her revision cards. Kirk is watching Titanic on DVD.

JULIA

Turn that off Kirk. I don't want you having any more nightmares about dead Irish people.

KIRK

It'll be different this time, I swear.

Julia puts the cards down and looks in the fridge for food.

JULIA (CALLING OUT)

Who ate everything? I mean seriously.

Julia opens drawer stuffed full of Chinese takeout menus. Takes one out and grabs the phone. Rose walks in.

ROSE

Can we go out for dinner?

JULIA

No Rose, I'm sorry I've got to work

ROSE

But you said to Granny that you want to spend more time with us.

JULIA

Yeah I did but this is important.

ROSE

Oh and we're not!

JULIA

Yes you are but maybe not tonight.

ROSE

Granny would never do this.

JULIA

That's because Granny retired in 1989!

Rose barges past her. Julia drops the take-out menus and her revision cards.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Oh God. I need a drink.

KIRK  
Can I mix it?

JULIA  
No you can't... oh okay, but easy  
on the lemon this time.

Kirk goes to the fridge. Takes out gin, tonic and lemon. He's obviously done this before. The front door opens and Ted bounds into the kitchen. He's in a very good mood. Rose scowls at him.

TED (TO KIRK)  
Ooh, I'll have one of those. (To  
Rose) You look so pretty when you  
make that face Rosie.

ROSE (SCOWLING)  
Whatever.

TED (TO EVERYONE)  
Well I have some good news. I have  
been asked to play tonight's  
management tennis game! It's going  
to be Kevin and me versus a couple  
of the young bucks from logistics.

Julia looks up in a panic

JULIA (LOOKING UP)  
What... tonight?

TED  
Yeah.

JULIA  
Ted. You can't do it tonight. I've  
got my sales event and I have to do  
the presentation! You're looking  
after the kids.

TED  
You never told me that!

JULIA  
I didn't know! You didn't tell me  
about your tennis game.

TED  
I have to do this Julia. Kevin said  
don't let me down, I think that  
means, you know, *don't* let him  
down.



ROSE  
I can look after Kirk.

TED  
Can't you call your mother?

JULIA  
No, childcare wise she's dead to us.

KIRK (PANICKING)  
Granny's dead?

JULIA (TO KIRK)  
No. (Back to Ted) Look, this is bad, I don't know any baby-sitters -

TED  
It's fine I'll just ask my mother.

JULIA  
You're mother's senile.

TED  
She's just eccentric.

JULIA  
She thinks she's French, Ted!

TED  
Right. Let's deal with this calmly and maturely.

Ted takes a coin out of his pocket.

JULIA  
Oh yes that's very mature... Heads!

Ted reveals the coin. It's tails.

TED (LITTLE AIR PUNCH)  
Yes! Phew. YES!

JULIA (STARING AT TED)  
Right, well we'll talk about your reaction to this later. (She thinks hard) I suppose I could ask Linda again she's usually around in the evenings -

ROSE  
I am perfectly capable of looking after Kirk on my own-

JULIA/TED TOGETHER  
No!

ROSE

This is so unfair! I'm almost 12  
for God's sakes. I cannot WAIT  
until I can move out of this crappy  
house, get a job in Krispy Kreme  
and buy my own apartment!

Julia & Ted stare at her, and then both burst out laughing.

CUT TO

EXT. NIGHT

LINDA'S HOUSE

Julia knocks on Linda's door with the kids. After a few seconds it's opened on the latch and Indiana (in a T-shirt) peers through the gap. He sees it's Julia and immediately shuts the door. After a few seconds it's opened again. This time he's bare-chested. Rod pops his head out too.

JULIA

Hi. Is erm.. is your mom there? I  
tried calling but there was no  
answer.

Indiana rubs his belly, his eyes locked with Julia's.

INDIANA

Mom and Dad are out. So I'm in  
charge of the house. All of it.

He strokes his pathetic moustache. Julia suddenly sniffs the air, then leans in so the kids don't hear.

JULIA

What's that smell...is that weed,  
does your mother know you're  
smoking marijuana in the house?

INDIANA

Does your husband know where you  
are right now?

CUT TO

INT. JULIA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ted is waiting for Julia (He's dressed in a real mismatch of sports clothes, a navy bandana, some ropey old sneakers)  
Julia walks back in with the kids. They've got Rod with them.

ROD

Good evening Mr. Lacey. Are you  
going to a costume party?

TED (TO ROD)  
 Huh? No. (To Julia) I see the plan's  
 changed, what are we doing?

JULIA  
 Shut up. I'm thinking.

Julia looks around. She sees the Chinese menu. She has a plan.

INT. A CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The kids are sitting at a table. Julia is fussing about. In front of them is a portable DVD player, a cell phone and massive order of Chinese food.

JULIA  
 ..I'm just across the road, I'll be  
 back every ten minutes, Rose, call  
 me if there's a problem. If anyone  
 asks you say that your mother is  
 getting money from the ATM.

KIRK  
 Okay Mom.

Julia goes over to the waiter. Pops 50 dollars in his pocket.

JULIA  
 I need you to watch them like a  
 hawk while I'm gone, especially  
 that one (She points to Rod) It's  
 not mine.

The kids start watching cartoons and eating spring rolls. Julia is about to change her mind when she sees how happy Rose looks, all in charge. Julia smiles.

JULIA (MOUTHING OVER) (CONT'D)  
 Extra pocket money.

ROSE (MOUTHING BACK)  
 Damn right.

CUT TO

INT. THE SALES EVENT - NIGHT

The room has been set out for the presentation with a platform and screen at one end. A few clients have arrived, while Julia's colleagues are pouring drinks. Julia is nervously running through her revision cards.

JULIA

The El Chichon comes in all sizes,  
from 45 inches for everyday use, to  
our 70 inch party BBQ model -

Julia looks out at the audience. She looks at her watch. She  
grabs her coat.

CUT TO

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The kids are counting as Rod stuffs his face with spring  
rolls.

KIRK/ROSE

..eight, nine-

Julia rushes in.

JULIA

Okay, good. Three kids. Everyone's  
still here.

Rod looks up, his mouth stuffed full of Chinese food.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Don't eat too many of those, Rod.

She slips the waiter an extra five dollars and runs out.

CUT TO

EXT. FLOOD LIT TENNIS COURT. NIGHT

Kevin(decked out in his best white tennis gear) and Ted are  
playing doubles. Kevin is playing like a machine, returning  
anything that's hit at him. Ted has zoned out, just standing  
at the back of the court. The two execs are desperately  
trying to win a point. Suddenly Kevin steps aside.

KEVIN

Yours Teddy!

Ted, completely taken by surprise, tries to ready himself but  
instead gets smacked on the forehead by the ball, somehow  
sending it just over the net.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Game set and *match!* Well played!

He high fives him. Ted is both delighted and concussed.

CUT TO

INT. THE SALES EVENT - NIGHT

Julia is on stage wearing a headset microphone as she talks the audience through a Power-point presentation. Next to her is a large item covered with a sparkly cloth.

JULIA

...in the past five years Phoenix BBQs have been at the forefront of outdoor grilling design, with such favorites as -

Julia flicks through the Power-point showing different models

JULIA (CONT'D)

The Vesuvius, The Tambora, The Pinatabu... The Krakatua, the -

Julia's phone starts vibrating in her pocket. We see panic flicker across her face. Someone coughs in the audience and she looks up

JULIA (CONT'D)

What? Sorry I thought someone was talking to me.

She walks to the lectern and surreptitiously checks her phone. There is a text message from Rose; 'CAN WE ORDER A BEER?' Julia freezes. The audience waits. She sees Frank sitting at the back. He doesn't look pleased.

JULIA (CONT'D)

But, erm...right, sorry, tonight we are proud to present our most state of the art BBQ yet.

Julia moves to the covered item and yanks the sheet away. The audience perk up a bit and look pretty interested.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentlemen; The El Chichon. As you can see it boasts a reinforced glass frame but it also includes our newest breakthrough in BBQ design... the 'Meat Shelf'.

The audience look impressed. She steps back behind the lectern. There is another text message from Rose; 'KIRK'S TOOTH FELL OUT. THERE IS BLOOD'. Julia tries to keep her composure. She presses the Powerpoint control. The slide doesn't move.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Bare with me, can we move that slide forward? Sorry. I should've checked this...

Nobody is coming to aid her. The crowd starts mumbling.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
 Could somebody..? I can't seem to..

A female colleague approaches. The woman is fiddling with a laptop and the remote. After a minute she stops.

WOMAN  
 I don't know what to do.

Julia stares at her, exasperated.

JULIA (RUSHING NOW)  
 Do you know what - don't worry  
 about it. We can do this without  
 some fancy slide show  
 (She puts her cards down on top of  
 the BBQ)  
 Because I truly believe the El  
 Chichon speaks for itself.

She starts twiddling with the knobs on the front of it. It lights up. She turns to the audience.

JULIA (REALLY RACING THROUGH IT)  
 (CONT'D)  
 This is more than your average 45  
 inch grill with galvanized castors,  
 this is literally the grill of a  
 lifetime.

As she talks the audience begin to point at the BBQ. Julia thinks she is winning them over. Behind her we see her cue cards have caught alight. Julia looks over at Frank for his approval. He is gesturing wildly. Julia turns to see her notes going up in smoke.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
 Oh what..? No!

She tries to flip the cards off the top of the BBQ but there is now smoke surrounding her. Suddenly the fire alarm goes off. Frank sprints down the aisle and up onto the stage.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
 It's okay Frank it's all under  
 control -

Just as she says this the sprinkler system turns on. Frank in his mad dash is unable to stop. He skids right across the wet stage and straight off the edge. Julia and the audience gasp as one. Julia peers over the edge of the stage. Frank's is flat on his back. A crowd of people run over to check he's alright. While everyone is fussing over Frank, Julia grabs her coat and creeps out.

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

## INT. THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Julia, with singed eyebrows, walks into the restaurant, deflated. Suddenly she freezes on the spot. A stony faced Marian is sitting with the children. Kirk waves his tooth and gives her a gappy, bloody smile. Julia stands there for a second then quickly switches on a smile and strides over.

JULIA

Great, you've ordered! Let's eat!

Julia moves her wet hair out of her eyes and sits down.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oh hi, Mom. (She picks up a half eaten bowl of noodles and starts spooning them onto a plate) What brings you here? I was just parking the car so I'm a little -

MARIAN

Rose called me. Where've you been?

ROSE

What happened to your eyebrows?

JULIA (GIVING ROSE A STERN LOOK).

I don't want to talk about my eyebrows.

MARIAN

Can I have a word with you please Julia?

JULIA

Sure. Anything you want to say you can say in front of Rose and Kirk. And Kirk's best friend Rod.

Julia smiles over at Rod. He is staring into space.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Okay Rod? You okay?

He looks at her and does a very loud, very long burp, then goes back to staring, open mouthed, into space. Julia waves her hands in front of his eyes. Marian leans in to Julia.

MARIAN

You can't just leave your kids in a restaurant.

JULIA

I didn't leave them in a restaurant  
I simply took them to a restaurant  
and then I popped out for a few  
minutes. A few times.

MARIAN

Anything could have happened Julia!

JULIA

No, anything couldn't have  
happened. Because I gave that guy  
\$55.

She looks around for the waiter.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Where's that guy I gave \$55 to..?  
Where is he? (To a passing waiter)  
Excuse me, I'd like to speak to the  
manager please.

A man appears behind her. It's Vagner (62, long haired, bald  
on top, open shirt) Julia turns to him.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oh, okay, I'd like to report one of  
your staff going missing with \$55  
of my -

MARIAN

Julia this is Vagner. Vagner, this  
is my daughter Julia.

Julia stares at her mother's new lover. He looks like a sexed  
up Terry Gilliam. She can't compute this information.

JULIA

What?

VAGNER (TO JULIA)

It is wonderful thing to meet you.

JULIA

What?

VAGNER (TO MARIAN)

She is very like how you said she  
is. (To Julia) Joolie, your  
children are very lovely children.

JULIA

Yes, thank you I can see that.



VAGNER (REALLY SMILING)

I think will be good for you to spend times with them now that Marian is taking her seat back on me for awhile.

JULIA

Right, well I didn't even understand that but I'll thank you to stay out of family affairs

MARIAN

Julia you have to take responsibility for this -

JULIA

Responsibility? You're the one who's leaving us for Argentina's answer to Meatloaf here.

MARIAN

I'm not leaving you -

JULIA

I would lay down my *life* for these kids, even Rod, if it came to it, if I *really* had to, if I'd no choice. I can't believe you would doubt me for a second. Let's go, kids. (The kids don't move)NOW!

The kids get up. Kirk wraps his tooth in a napkin. They leave.

CUT TO

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Julia and the kids are walking towards her car. Marian runs to catch them up.

MARIAN

Julia. Stop! Wait... Julia!

The kids scramble in the back of the car. Julia turns to Marian.

JULIA

I can't believe my *own* mother is making me feel like a bad mother!

MARIAN

I never said you were a bad mother!

JULIA

You never screw up, do you? Oh no! You've never nearly drowned the kids because you left the bath running; you've never stayed at work longer than you have to just to have *one* extra hour of quiet; you've never fallen asleep during their nativity because you've seen it 9 times and it's boring! Well, I've *done* all those things - so you don't have to *say* I'm a bad mother, because I already know it!

MARIAN

Look at the little finger on your right hand. The one with the top missing.

Pause. Julia's looks at Marian like she's lost it.

JULIA

What? Where the cat bit me?

MARIAN

When you were three I let you play in a laundry basket so I could finish watching Days of Our Lives in peace. You rolled the basket down our stairs and your finger got snagged on a carpet nail. I was so ashamed I told your father the cat bit you. He had Chewie put down.

Julia gasps. Marian looks mortified.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

I know what I know now because I made my mistakes with you.

(She holds her hand out)

I'm not going anywhere. I still want to see the kids, just not every day.

JULIA

What, and you think I do!

The kids are now listening. They are staring out at her from the back seat. Julia clocks them look up at her.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Because I *do*!

Julia takes a deep breath. She takes Marian's hand. They hug.

MARIAN

I'll always be there for you. I promise.

JULIA

Thank you. (Beat) Can you be there  
for me on Friday at 6.30?

MARIAN

No.

Suddenly Vagner is behind her, hugging them both in his huge  
arms. They are now trapped in an awkward three-way hug.

JULIA

Let me out.

CUT TO

INT. THE CHINESE RESTAURANT - LATER

Ted throws the door open, still in his tennis gear, runs in.

TED

I'm here now! I'm here to help -

A couple of diners and a waiter look up at him. He quickly  
exits.

CUT TO

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julia is knocking at Linda's door with the kids.

JULIA

Rod, erm... don't tell your mom  
what happened tonight. Unless she  
asks. In which case don't lie. But  
go easy on the details.

Rod sort of nods. He looks green. Linda opens the door.

LINDA

Hey, there you are! What the hell  
happened to your eyebrows?

JULIA

Oh just, trying something out...  
Look, erm.. Linda, I think you  
should know that when I came round  
earlier (She whispers) Indiana was  
smoking pot in your house.

LINDA

What?

JULIA

Yeah, there was a very strong smell  
of marijuana.

LINDA

Oh!(She laughs with relief) Oh no, no, we've had this before, I've spoken to Indy about the smell and it's actually a new aftershave he's using. He's shown me the bottle.

JULIA

Right.. okay, and you believe that?

LINDA (STOICALLY)

I have chosen to, yes. So, what did you guys do this evening?

JULIA

Not much really, we just -

There is suddenly the loud roar of an engine. They turn to see a moped mount the grass verge and head directly towards the kids. Julia(in slow motion)looks at the kids faces, they all look panicked, especially Rod. Without thinking she flings herself in front of them all, bracing herself for the impact. She hears the moped screech to a halt and then, after a second, looks up. The driver walks towards her. It's the waiter from the Chinese restaurant.

JULIA (CONT'D)

What are you doing, are you insane? You nearly -

MOPED GUY

You left my restaurant without paying! I follow you all the way here! I got business to run!

LINDA

What's going on?

JULIA

You can't endanger my children just because I forgot to pay a few dollars! I'm gonna kick your ass!

MOPED GUY

Your son ate 35 spring rolls!

He points at Rod. He thrusts the bill at her.

JULIA

Okay, for starters, he's not my son and secondly; (To Rod) how the hell did you eat 35 spring rolls!?

She looks at Rod. He goes to speak, but instead vomits on the moped guy's shoes. Julia sheepishly opens her purse.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Is that service included?

INT. JULIA'S SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Julia is slumped on the sofa with the kids, drinking a pint of wine, her eyebrows drawn back on. Kirk tops up her glass.

JULIA  
Thank you, Kirky.

He kisses her and smiles his gappy smile. Julia turns to Rose.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Look, I know everything's a mess at the moment but I'm gonna fix this, okay? I'm really sorry about this evening -

KIRK  
Are you kidding, you took us out for dinner and I saw Rod be sick through his nose. It was a great night, Mom

JULIA  
Oh. Okay. Well, good, that's good. We'll do it again soon. And thanks for drawing my eyebrows back on. How do they look, Rose?

Rose shrugs

ROSE  
Weird. I'm going to bed.

The kids both go upstairs. Julia picks up her compact mirror and look at her eyebrows. She sobs and drains her glass. Ted walks into the sitting room. He sees Julia slumped on the sofa and throws down his racket and bag. He gives her a kiss.

TED  
Hi. I came to help out with the kids but you'd gone. How'd it go?

JULIA  
I accidentally started a fire and set the sprinklers off. Frank's in hospital. I only kept my job because people were so impressed that the El Chichon stayed alight in a heavy shower. Apparently we sold nearly 200 of them tonight.

She wipes a little tear away.

TED  
Hey, hey, don't cry.

He sits down beside her. Pause.

JULIA

This isn't working Ted.

TED

What? No, Julia...? Please, I feel terrible that you got left with the kids but this isn't the answer. Please, please don't leave me.

Julia stares at him, perplexed.

JULIA

No! This isn't working - this, what I'm trying to do. I can't be a mom, saleswoman and a wife all at once. I'm just doing three things badly. I'm going to have to give something up.

TED

Julia, you don't have to give up *anything* okay? You just have to learn how to juggle *everything*. And if you drop something, then I'll always be there, to help you pick it up. (He smiles kindly) And then you can get right back to the juggling.

Julia looks at Ted. Beat.

JULIA

I'm not a clown, Ted.

TED

Maybe juggling's not the right word.

JULIA

What if I keep getting it wrong? What if I get it so wrong the kids turn out bad? Rose hates me already and I haven't even begun to mess up her life yet!

TED

Julia, I hated my mother and she gave me the most perfect childhood I could have wished for. I had a pony *and* a BMX. So brace yourself. There's nothing you can do about it.

Julia nods.

JULIA

That kind of helps.

TED

Yeah, there you go, see? It's about looking on the bright side. And we've still got a few good years left with Kirk.

Julia smiles at him. He pulls her towards him.

TED (CONT'D)

Come here. (They hug. Beat.) Why is there a portion of Chicken Chow Mein in the mailbox?

THE END.

TAG

INT. THE KITCHEN - MUCH LATER

Julia walks into the kitchen in her nightdress. Turns the light on. She goes to the fridge, there's nothing in there, she mumbles 'who ate all the... seriously' under her breath. She goes to the bin and takes out the Chow Mein. She grabs a fork and is about to sit down when a note suddenly pops through the mail box. She looks very confused but goes over and takes the note. Opens it. It reads; "I want you." She looks confused for a second and then opens the door. Indiana is there, stroking his moustache. Julia stares at him.

JULIA

What are you *doing*?

INDIANA

What are you *doing*?

He leans in for a bad teenage kiss. Julia slams the door on him. She grabs her chow mein and takes it upstairs.