

# LIVING WITH MOTHER

## TOLD YOU I WAS ILL

BY

Alexander Kirk

### SCENE 1

ATMOS: INT – KITCHEN – EARLY EVENING

F/X LISA IS SCRUBBING AT A PLATE IN THE SINK

LISA: I don't trust dishwashers. All them chemicals in them tablets with powerball technology or whatever it's called. I mean what's in the powerball? You don't want chemicals around your crockery do you....*(Stops scrubbing)* Is that clean? Mmmm. Can't be too careful. *(starts scrubbing again)* Need a better light in here.....can't tell if it's clean or not..... Oh there's a draft. I can feel it round my ankles. Must be them windows in the conservatory. I knew I should have had them replaced.... And Luke will be catching his death out there

in the cold at this time of night. He'll get flu or the pneumonias. And I'll be catching my death in here with that draft. I read in the paper that there's an academic going round.

E/X

**DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS. LUKE ENTERS**

LUKE: Hi Mum.

LISA: Oh there you are. I've been worried sick. What time do you call this?

LUKE: Half past eight.

LISA: It'll be dark soon. Where have you been?

LUKE: Went to Lee Valley to see that Pixar film. Early showing.

LISA: Have you washed your hands?

LUKE: Mum. Don't start. What's the matter?

LISA: I'm just worried like any mother would be..... And there's a draft.

LUKE: Well it's hardly cold is it? You've got the heating on full again.

LISA: (*Suddenly pathetic*) Well you youngsters don't feel it like I do? I mean I'm not as young as I was.

LUKE: You're fifty two mum hardly about to drop dead are you.

LISA: Don't son, don't tempt fate like that. The ceiling could collapse or a plane fall out the sky. Who knows what's in store for us. Or some horrible disease lurking around the corner to kill us all stone dead.

LUKE: Mum.....

LISA: I know, I know. You think I'm going dolally.

LUKE: *Going dolally?*

LISA: Oh yes mock your poor mother why don't you. Your mother who cooks and cleans....

LUKE: We have a cleaner.

LISA: Cooks then.

LUKE: Right..... What's for dinner?

LISA: Take away. Left yours in the microwave.

LUKE: Thanks. How long have you been washing that plate?

LISA: Have to get it clean.

LUKE: How long?

LISA: An hour....

LUKE: Mum, go and sit down and watch the tele or something will you. You'll wear the pattern off.

LISA: Alright, alright.....There that's clean...Is that clean son?

LUKE: Yes it's clean.

LISA: Right..... Let it dry. I'll go and relax. I think Autumn Watch is still on. Oh, put the snake under the door will you? There's a draft whistling right through.

LUKE: Yes.

LISA: And make us a nice cuppa tea would you love?

LUKE: Yes.

## SCENE 2

ATMOS: INT – KITCHEN - EVE

F/X KETTLE BEING FILLED, FLICKED ON AND SLOWLY BOILING

LUKE: I mean she's always been a bit, shall we say, odd. Always. For as long as I can remember. And talk about wary of germs. She used to wash my underpants in Detol. Paranoid about touching anything dirty. She drummed it into me. First day at school I was the only boy wearing marigolds. I didn't know any better. Still your Mum's your Mum hey. But I think I've turned out relatively normal. I have a job in insurance and

a....er.... and a girlfriend. That's where I've been tonight; with Sandra. Properly romantic. Didn't go to the cinema at all. We've been walking through the park in the soft glow of the setting sun. Watching the geese come into land on the pond. Hand in hand...Oh, I'm in love. *We* are in love. Wow, sounds funny when you say it out loud. Sounds great..... As you might imagine I haven't told Mum yet. Scared it will kill her..... me being her only child and Dad being.....well Dad being a sperm donor if we're being honest. But that's what I'm about now. "Get it all out up front, in the open" as Sandra says. "No messing". So tonight is the night I impart the news. I have been keeping Sandra as a bit of a secret, well a big secret really but Sandra has suggested I need to tell Mum about her. Well more of put her foot down a bit. And to be fair she's right. I've met *her* parents....lots of times..... So here we are. Been building up to it...So....yes...Here we go....I'll tell her. Yeah tell her right now.

LISA: *(OFF)* Luke! Make sure you wash that mug!....And use a clean spoon. Oh hell I think I've got pneumonia. I shan't be long for this world. I can still feel that draft!

LUKE: Yes Mother!.....*(TO SELF)* Maybe I'll wait until the morning.

**SCENE 3**

**ATMOS:** INT - KITCHEN - MORNING

**F/X** MICROWAVE WORKING AND THEN IT PINGS

LUKE: Your porridge is ready Mum. I'm er .... off to work.

LISA: Thanks son. Make sure you take a brolly today. Rain forecast you know.

**PAUSE**

I say, take your brolly today....What you looking at the ceiling for?

LUKE: Mum. I....I....I have something to tell you.

LISA: You've not lost your brolly?

LUKE: No...something else.

LISA: Yes?

LUKE: Well, well.....Deep breath. I have a girlfriend. We have been going out for a year, over a year actually and her name is Sandra. Sandra Crisp.

**PAUSE**

LISA: 'Cos if you've lost brolly you best get yourself a new one from the market on your way to work hadn't you.....

LUKE: Mum, Mum! Did you hear me? I said.....

LISA: I heard.

LUKE: Well?

LISA: I heard alright.

LUKE: And?

LISA: So that's it is it? I knew something was wrong. A little  
tramp worming her way into the house, into my son's  
affections, into his trousers. Oh you are so easily led. God  
knows what diseases she's got.....

LUKE: I knew I shouldn't have told you. We're in love!

LISA: In love.

LUKE: Yes I love her more than anything or anyone!

LISA: Oh, Oh. Fetch my heart pills quickly son.

LUKE: Mum?

LISA: My pills! Arrrggggh!

LUKE: Hang on you don't have any heart pills.

LISA: (*Suddenly alright*) Well I bloody well should do. And I will do  
after a shock like that. My heart's in my shoes.

LUKE: Listen mum. She's lovely. It's perfectly natural for me to have a girlfriend. I'm twenty five years old for God's sake. I'm not a child anymore. I have had girlfriends in the past. I only told you about Sandra because it's.....well because it's serious.

LISA: She's not pregnant is she?

LUKE: Of course not.

LISA: Thank God. Oh, You can't imagine the trouble I had giving birth to you. Two days solid it was.....

LUKE: Okay. Okay. Look, I'm off to work Mum. We can talk about this later. But you need to get used to it. I knew you'd go off on one. I'm off to work. And I'm not taking me brolly!

**DOOR SLAMS SHUT.**

#### **SCENE 4**

**ATMOS:** **EXT - PARK – DAY.**

**LISA WALKS AND SITS ON A BENCH.**

**F/X:** **DUCKS ON A POND**

LISA: Oh they make my skin crawl do them birds. Why anyone would want to feed them I have no idea. Plenty of people

going hungry in the world and they're feeding birds. And letting your kids near them is asking for trouble isn't it. Oh look at that little girl. Right at the water's edge and her mother clearly doesn't give a toss if she falls in or not. You can tell....see it on her face. Probably smoked when she was pregnant.

*DEEP SIGH*

I over reacted. I did and I know I did. I'm sure Sandra Crisp is perfectly alright.....Just not for my son. You see, I can't lose him. He's still a child really. And I'm the one who's kept him safe from harm. Me. Alone. And there's so many things out there waiting to get you. But I protected him..... I can still see him in his baby blue romper suit and dust mask playing in the back garden. His little safety goggles used to steam up something rotten. Ah bless..... So, I've sent Sandra sodding Crisp a little missive, a little shot across the bows. Found her e mail easily enough from Luke's computer and fired off a few choice words. Nothing sweary, just firm and to the point. I suggested she sinks her claws into some other naive young boy. Sandra Crisp though; I mean what sort of stupid name is that?

## SCENE 5

### **FRONT DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES**

LUKE: Mum! Mum!

LISA: I'm upstairs love.

LUKE: Can you come down please?

LISA: What is it son? Good day at work?

LUKE: Did you think she wouldn't show it to me Mum?

LISA: What's that son?

LUKE: The e mail you sent to Sandra.

LISA: Oh she probably took it the wrong way.

LUKE: Mum. She showed it to me. She was in tears.

LISA: Oh.

LUKE: Yes Mum. "Oh". She is the woman I love remember. You need to accept it. And she's coming over for dinner tonight.

LISA: Dinner?

LUKE: Yes tonight. You are going to be civil and welcoming and nice to her...otherwise.....

LISA: What son?

LUKE: Otherwise.....

LISA: Now listen to your Mother. I know best.....

LUKE: Otherwise, I will be moving out sooner than you think.

LISA: Don't be silly Luke.

LUKE: I bloody well *will* move out!

LISA: Oh....oh .. Okay son I'll be nice to the poor girl and welcoming and just as you say. I'll even apologise.

LUKE: Promise?

LISA: Promise.

## SCENE 6

ATMOS: **INT - CAR – EVENING**

LUKE: Sandra says I should have left years ago and got a place of my own. But lots of people still live at home at twenty five don't they. Especially in these hard times. Who can afford a mortgage?.....Well actually I can as it happens. Nothing fancy. Small place, one bedroom, near work perhaps. Been saving up since I left school to be honest. Big decision though hey.....God I hope Mum doesn't do her shoe cleaning thing

tonight. That's one of the reasons I never bring friends home. Mum soaks their shoes in a tray of bleach before they're allowed in. She should be on medication or something but the doctor has enough on his plate with the hypochondria without getting into all her other problems. There was a point that she was down the surgery every single day with a different mythical illness. God, she could send the NHS bust single handed. And if there's a phobia she's either had it, got it or getting it tomorrow. Right here's Sandra's place. Pick her up, back home, have dinner with Mum and sure it'll be fine.

## SCENE 7

ATMOS: INT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

F/X LUKE'S CAR SCREETCHES TO A HALT OUTSIDE. CAR DOOR

OPENS AND SLAMS. THEN HOUSE DOOR OPENS AND SLAMS

LUKE: I've taken her home!

LISA: Who's that?

LUKE: It's me. I've taken Sandra home.

LISA: Who are you? You're not my little Luke. Is that John Major? Don't worry I did vote for you sir. What year is it? Is the Queen

still alive? Fish and chips for tea? Must be Friday. What time does the ship sail? We have to be home for seven.....

LUKE: Yes very good Mother. You tried the early onset dementia trick last year when you didn't want me to go paintballing.

LISA: Did I?

LUKE: Yes.

LISA: Oh I forgot.

LUKE: Well once bitten twice shy. It won't work. Sandra was in tears and never wants to come here or see you again.

LISA: I did try. I did.

LUKE: No, Sandra tried and you were determined to ruin everything.

LISA: She brought flowers!

LUKE: Exactly.... for you, to be nice.

LISA: Might as well have rubbed dog dirt on the walls. I've told you so many times: Nature is full of germs and diseases. I can't have flowers in the house.

LUKE: Oh don't start with that. You love flowers and well you know it.

LISA: Only when I've steam cleaned them. You don't know what you can catch from flowers. Terrible diseases on the leaves and insects.....

LUKE: (*Finally losing it.*) Do you know what Mother! You are the only disease in this house and you've been slowly infecting me with your madness! Your stupid fear of everyone and everything. A selfish drive to keep me here and away from out there. Out there and real life! And Sandra is the antidote, the serum for life, a new life mother. Life in the real world away from you!

LISA: I...I

LUKE: I'm sorry Mum but Sandra said it's you or her.

LISA: Oh.

LUKE: And I choose Sandra.

LISA: Well, I'm sure it'll be fine son. She can come round and....

LUKE: No Mum. I'm moving out first thing tomorrow. Going to stay at Sandra's place until we can sort out somewhere to live together.

LISA: Oh.

LUKE: Yes. Mum, "Oh."

**SCENE 8**

**ATMOS:** INT – LUKE'S BEDROOM – LATER THAT EVENING

LUKE IS PACKING HIS SUITCASE

LUKE: Well. That's it. I've done it. I've said it. Can't believe it. It all spilled out in one go. I just stood there and said it. Hope I wasn't too harsh. She's fragile I know..... Oh, she'll be fine when she gets used to it. It's just that Empty Nest syndrome. Read about it in the Metro. Your kids go off, spread their wings and leave you alone in the house. Quite common apparently. Yeah, she'll be right as rain before she knows it. And who knows, she might me a Grandmother before too long.

**F/X:** MASSIVE CRASH OF PLATES AS LISA COLLAPSES DOWNSTAIRS

LUKE: Mum? You alright?.....Mum?

LUKE RUNS DOWN STAIRS AND INTO THE KITCHEN

LUKE: Mum? ....Oh yes very good Mum. You've done the heart attack thing too often you know. Get up Mum it won't work!.....Mum?

**SCENE 9**

**ATMOS:** INT – HOSPITAL ROOM – MORNING

**F/X:** BEEP OF A HEART MONITOR

LISA: It's amazing how serious they all get when you say you've got pains down your left side and you're short of breath. Forget Meryl Streep it should be me who gets the Oscar for that performance. Luke's outside now crying himself silly. Blaming himself for not believing me the first time. Telling me I was a hypochondriac all these years. I don't want him to feel guilty. I just don't want him to leave me. He doesn't know what I went through to get him. He can't imagine how precious he is to me. So tiny he was, so small, so pure and complete. I wanted to hold him forever, hold him close to my heart and hear him breathe, smell his soft scented skin and wipe his eyes when the world tried to come in..... I think of him all the time. Out there in the big wide world where anything could happen couldn't it? Mixing with the wrong types, wearing hoodies, drinking alcohol and Lord knows what ..... I've got nothing else you see. No one else. He's mine. My lovely perfect little boy..... Maybe one of the nurses will be round with a cuppa tea soon. Then I can make a miraculous recovery. Well not a full recovery of course. I imagine I'll still be very weak and I

shouldn't be left on my own..... Oh hell there's a draft in here.

I'll catch my death.

## **CREDITS**