



"The Mother"

In every case of abuse,
there is a mother

Characters

Anne (The Mother) • Bob (The Father) • Emily (The Daughter) • Charlotte (The little-school teacher) • Janet (The Friend) • Claire (The Nurse) • Erica (The pre-school teacher)

Game by **Fredrik Axelzon** • Huge thanks to Tobias Wrigstad, Olle Jonsson och Elina Åkerlind.

Translation by Tobias Wrigstad

About 3 player, 0 GMs, 60-90 minutes,

Requirements Papers, crayons and preferably some random furniture or chairs and a closed space

jeepen.org/games/modern

Like so

The game is about a family just like yours. Except not quite. It is about a family where the mother turns a deaf ear to what's happening, denies the footsteps outside her daughter's room when she is sleeping in front of the TV. The door opening. Closing. Abuse that's been going on for as long as her daughter can remember. Perhaps from the very beginning. • The game is about a mother that somehow sacrifices a child that she loves. About a child screaming for help, starving herself. And about a father that's living an OK life. Really. • And is it really so simple to do the right thing. Even after you turned away once?

Mechanics

The game is really two games going on in parallel, henceforth denoted the main game and the second game. Players one and two belong to the main game and the third player belong to the second. Player one is the mother, player two the characters the mother interacts with and player three is both the father and the daughter (i.e., perpetrator and victim). • The game area is divided into three parts. The mother and the people she meets live in the middle parts, in the leftmost is the father's office and in the rightmost the daughter's room. Player three is the only one to occupy the outermost spaces and may move freely between them.

Scenes

1: Parent-teacher meeting

The daughter is 8 years old

2: A cup of coffee

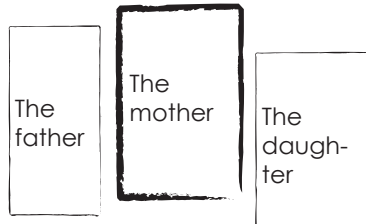
The daughter is 13 years old

3: Hospital

The daughter is 15 years old

4: Drawing in the "pillow room"

The daughter is 15 years old



Main Game

The main game consists of four scenes played in sequence. The scenes are four short snippets from a period of 7 years. The first three are chronologically ordered and the final scene is a flash-back. All four scenes revolve around the mother, and each scene has a new character for whom she must keep up the appearances. • There are instructions for each scene how to play each scene and scene endings. If the third player chooses, he may give monologues etc. inbetween the main game scenes. If not, simply keep playing the scenes without breaks inbetween.

Second Game

Player 3 plays both the father and the daughter. He is free to move between the office and the daughter's room regardless of which character he is in. The purpose of this player is to give narration and to contextualise the story and the tools are monologues and solo play. The player may shift focus to himself whenever, except in the last scene. The necessary information for the player can be found in his instruction text. • It is important that the third player dares to act out, but not steal the show entirely.



The Mother

You are Anne, the Mother, the permanent character of this game. The focal point through which this story is told. This story about a girl and a family. You have many faces -- mother and wife. You are the one that mends, that keeps the family together. The one that sacrifices herself over and over to keep your family together. Drives your daughter to school and irons Bob's shirts. Your life is a facade and your happiest moment the Friday taco dinner where nothing bad happens. It is all about the family, and surely you have had good moments too. But you are all humans, and it is only natural that people make mistakes. Obviously, what you hear is only what you think. The unthinkable simply cannot be going on. Right? And no one could say that you don't love your daughter.

Scene 1
Parent-teacher meeting
The daughter is 8 years
old

This semester's parent-teacher meeting. Bob had to work late. Charlotte is such a good teacher! • Try to explain away all problems Emily might have. Surely you are a good mother, right? The scene ends when Charlotte declares you've run out of time and the next set of parents is waiting for her. Husband too.

Scene 2

A cup of coffee

The daughter is 13 years old

Drinking Coffee with Janet, The Friend. You bond over how hard it is to raise a teenage daughter, even if you clearly have a harder time. Emily has gone completely mad and cannot be reasoned with. She shaved off all her hair, started dressing like a boy etc. • The scene is over when you ask Janet if she wants another cup.

Scene 3

Hospital

The daughter is 15 years old

Emily has been omitted to a clinic for children with eating disorders. You are talking to a nurse. How could this have happened? Question everything and blame yourself. In any case, Emily must know that you and Bob are there for her. Always. • The scene ends when some other patient calls for the nurse.

Scene 4

Drawing in the "pillow room"

The daughter is 15 years old

Meeting with the pre-school teacher Erica that shows Emily's drawings. You will have to explain everything away. You will almost do all talking. • The scene ends when you finally shut up and have nothing more to say.



Third Party

You play all the characters that The Mother meets. You are the one offering normality. Your task is to lift and support the game.

The Scenes

Scene 1

Parent-teacher meeting
The daughter is 8 years old

You are Charlotte, a good teacher. At least everyone thinks you're good. Crayons, blunt scissors and the alphabet. Emily is home from school often. She is silent and alone. Often complains about stomach aches, headaches, etc. Thank God she's got good parents. That always takes the strain from these parent-teacher meetings. You're not worried. It will work out in the end. It always does. • The scene ends with you announcing that there is another set of parents waiting for you so the time is up.

Scene 2

A cup of coffee
The daughter is 13 years old

This is a great cup of java! You are Janet, The Friend at some Starbucks in a shopping mall, surrounded by cheap bags. Thank God, teenagers eventually grow into their twenties! Otherwise, there would be no ending to the pain and suffering. And how great it is that you became mother almost the same time, so you can support each other. • The scene ends when Sussanne asks if you want another cup of Java.

Scene 3

Hospital

The daughter is 15 years
old

You are Claire, the nurse. You've seen this happen before and it is always hard on the family. Watching your kid starve itself to death. Be hospitalised and supervised visits to the bathroom. Most likely, this case has gone on for ages. Looks like the girl has a decent set of parents, though. What was her name again, Anne?

- The scene ends when you choose to have another patient call for you from an adjacent room.

Scene 4

Drawing in the "pillow
room"

The daughter is 15 years
old

You are Erica, a pre-school teacher at Sunny Ridge Pre-School where things are as usual -- no resources and too many kids that need help. Who has time to keep up with writing the journals?

- Naturally, kids have vivid imagination, and most likely this is nothing to get too worked up about. But you still feel it warrants attention. Strictly routine, though.
- You will be mostly silent in this scene. Your job is to collect the drawings Ellinor makes and sends as paper airplanes into the middle section of the scene. No accusations.
- The scene ends when the mother has nothing more to say.



Father & Daughter

You play both the father and the daughter. Your job is to contextualise the scenes taking place in the middle of the game area by doing **monologues** and **solo scenes**. You will deliver a father without making this his story. Whenever you move from your office to the daughter's room, you can turn into the daughter that starves herself. Another character, but with the same function.

Bob

You are the father. You are the king of this family. You are the provider, the man who makes sure there is food on the table, that Emily can go to school in the right jeans and the right jacket. You are also man that sometimes do the unthinkable. And that's that.

Emily

You are the girl lying on your bed reading your comic books, chatting on MSN and doing your homework. You are the girl that throw paper airplanes out the window watching them escape a way that you cannot. You are the girl that throws up on the bathroom, that is nervous when she hears footsteps in the stairs. The girl that cannot hide. The girl that brushes her teeth to get rid of the taste. That show up for breakfast like nothing have happened.

Scenes 1–3

The Scenes

When you are in the office, you're the dad. You are in your office chair watching the other players. Sometimes you'll talk on the phone, loud so we can hear what you say, watch Bloomberg and the stock rising and falling, yell at your secretary over the intercom. Make paper airplanes of stupid documents and aim at the trashcan. You get to show what the dad is like.

You are free to do whatever you want. You can donate money to doctors without borders. Maybe your day job is taking care of kids at the social services. Or maybe you are just a mean son of a bitch in general, even at work. You may call even your daughter. This show is yours.

Whatever you do will leak into the other scenes and that is the point: be interpreted, read as metaphors. If you close the deal, you can celebrate with a family vacation. Or maybe just take your daughter to Paris. If the market crashes, we fear for what may happen tonight. Whatever you do it will be an insinuation and you must use that well. Where are you when your daughter is at the hospital -- fearing for her, for yourself, high on weed betting on horses, or hurting yourself with the office stapler?



Playing the daughter in her room is hard. Don't do it too often. The same things go for her as for her dad, but be more quiet and take up less space. Maybe even whisper a little. You are always "in play" and adapt to the scene in the middle of the game area. Don't feel pressured to act or talk all the time. Just by lying on your bed and humming a little, you'll be great. Remember that the only way to get focus here is to steal it.

Scene 4

In the last scene, you will play only the daughter, at 5 years of age. You will sit in your room and draw, the GM should have crayons and paper for you. Draw stick figures with huge cocks, drawings with sexual innuendos that a normal 5-year-old girl wouldn't draw. Then make paper airplanes of them and throw them into the middle area. You don't need to say anything if you don't want to. Silence is golden too. And when the mother stops speaking, the game is over.