

Title on the screen:

MOTHERS

Pictures flow slowly across the screen throughout the scene, images of motherhood, and joy. Then motherhood and despair...

NEIL: They feel like they are walking in a permanent state of sorrow. Grief. They can never relax.

NIKLAS: There are mothers like that, just waiting for the phone call that says your child has been found dead. It is the eternal horror.

WRITER: I don't think anyone can help me, Mother. Maybe he stretched towards the heavens out of sheer joy. Maybe he was angry. Maybe he just was. Felt the air. Felt free.

SUZIE: His only claim to fame is his notoriety, an infamy born from striking down the weak and the vulnerable.

MAI LISE: We don't know why. *Beat*

NIKLAS: A woman kneels before a statue, of The Virgin Mary. This woman is clearly in pain. She is crippled and we see the impact on her body, the physical impact of attempted dignity ... when all is lost ... when the heart is broken ... when the blood is ashamed ... when the bones, are filth.

MAI LISE as THE MOTHER: Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed be the fruit of thy womb. Hail Mary full of ... grace. Hail Mary Full of Grace ... the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among ... women - and blessed is the fruit of thy womb - blessed is the fruit of thy womb - Jesus ... Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and ... and ... at the hour of death.

(Pause)

MARY: Amen.

(Pause)

Do not be afraid. It is only me.

The Mother looks around, as if to find an explanation for the inexplicable. **THE MOTHER:** You?

MARY: Sometimes. Today, yes, I am.

THE MOTHER: I ... I ...

(Pause)

MARY: Didn't you want a conversation with me? **THE MOTHER:** I- I didn't ... are you ... ?

MARY: Yes, as far as it goes, I am. I'm here. I am talking to you. Because you were talking to me, and it would have been rude to ignore you. Don't you think?

THE MOTHER: I suppose so.

(Pause)

MARY: Well. Here we are.

THE MOTHER: I didn't expect ... this. *(Pause)*

MARY: What *did* you expect?

THE MOTHER: Usually it is very quiet here.

MARY: You're cheeky! 'Usually' you say. There's nothing usual about you coming to the church and praying dear. We haven't seen you here, oh in ages. Years I should say. Why you were a virgin last time you spoke to me.

THE MOTHER: I'm sorry. I haven't.

MARY: Don't be sorry! Don't be sorry, and don't be late. ~~As an old dance teacher of mine used to say.~~

(Pause)

THE MOTHER: Something terrible happened.

MARY: Yeah? ~~(She picks her tooth with a toothpick...)~~

THE MOTHER: Not just one thing. It's. Some terrible things have happened. **MARY:** I know.

(Pause)

MARY: Not just a pretty face. Me.

(Silence)

MARY cont.: Cat got your tongue?

THE MOTHER: No-I-

MARY: No-I-no-I-I-it's just just-well-I-stammerstammerstutterstutterspit it out old girl, there are no secrets here! Though rest assured I'll not tell the Boss ... if you don't want me to. *(Beat)* Stupid old cow!

NEIL sotto voce: Kate, do you think this will cause trouble?

NIKLAS: No! It is harmless satire!

THE MOTHER: - oh please don't, please. I can't be here if you do this. **MARY sharply:** What do you want dear? Comfort?

(Pause)

THE MOTHER: Yes.

(Pause)

Then, looking away, almost whispering ...

Please.

MARY softly: I understand your pain, my love. It is a mother's pain. I am sorry I was testy when you first came in, I have become defensive over the years. Very few listen to me. All they want to do is yabber; you didn't yabber. Thank you for that.

THE MOTHER in pain: You're ... welcome. **MARY:** Did anyone follow you here?

THE MOTHER: No. They are leaving me alone. For now. They are all at the court house. My ... my ... he ...

MARY: Your son is in the spotlight now, isn't he?

THE MOTHER: My - son. My ...

NIKLAS softly: She looks as if she is going to break. Holding back an ocean, a flood of tears. Trying to keep her dignity. Her veil is slipping and she has difficulty adjusting it.

MARY: Hush now my love. I know what you are going through.

THE MOTHER vicious, full of hate: I doubt that very much! You fu - *(She stops herself.)*

MARY raising an eyebrow: Like mother like son.

THE MOTHER: I'm sorry! I get caught, I don't know what's up and down. I don't

know what's right anymore!

(Pause)

THE MOTHER cont.: Perhaps he was right. Perhaps in a hundred years, they'll all say that my son ... was right. That he ... *had* to do these things - these ... terrible things.

For ... for the greater good.

MARY: I can tell you now, from an informed position, that your son never was - and never will be - right. Not when it comes to doing good. Good might come, but not from him and he ... can never take credit.

He is *bad*. He is a *bad* man ... But he is your son. And there lies the problem. **THE MOTHER:** Is it my fault?

(Silence)

I loved him so. I don't understand anything.

MARY: I was in your position once, long ago. In the mists of time, although it will always feel like yesterday. It will always feel like today. My son was also in the spotlight. Oh how they hated him and wanted to rip him apart. They dragged him through the streets and spat on him. History likes to say that they were wrong, they did not understand he was the Son of God. I say he was no son of god. He was son of Mary.

Your son is no son of history. He has done no great thing.

The only special thing about him is that he killed people. He shot them in the head in the face. Children.

He made himself into a tin pot general He decided he was special. Above the laws of the land . Above the laws of man and God.

But still. He is your son.

THE MOTHER: I don't know what I could have done. Could I have done anything? To ... stop him? All I ever wanted was grandchildren.

MARY: Me too, love. Me too. We're relegated to the back seats.

THE MOTHER: *You're not.*

MARY: Oh I am, I am. My son was taken from me. Yours removed himself. Didn't your dear horrific child say recently: "the only person who can make me unstable ... is my mother"?

(Abber, The Grotesque stirs angrily at this)

THE MOTHER: I wish that was true.

MARY: Yes, don't we wish we could have destabilised our sons? Pulled the rug out from under them so they fell from the high horses they put themselves upon. All king and no kingdom. And woe betide the land that is ruled by a child.

(Silence)

THE MOTHER: Your son died. Mine will live.

(Pause)

I wish he was dead.

MARY: They say there is no greater breach in nature than when a mother outlives her child –

Abber, The Grotesque blows a raspberry. A hearty fart-blast, a rude and amusing sound. Everyone on stage looks at him. He holds their gaze. He fart-blasts again. THE WRITER looks like

she wants to vomit, so appalled by it she is. Title on the screen:

BROTHERS