

MATTER FAMILIAS

a comedy

by

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DIALOGUE SAMPLE

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ACT I

Scene 1

*KATHERINE, MOTHER, and DAD are in
MOTHER and DAD's kitchen.*

KATHERINE

I've decided to adopt.

MOTHER

Oh, honey!

DAD

Oh, no.

KATHERINE

I'm going to do it. I'm ready.

MOTHER

That's wonderful. We're so happy.

DAD

You could wait a little longer.

MOTHER

Dad, she's waited long enough.

KATHERINE

I've made my decision.

DAD

But she still has time! She could still get married.

KATHERINE

I'm thirty-three, Dad.

MOTHER

Dad, she's thirty-three. She's ready. And *we're* ready—to be grandparents!

DAD

In-laws. We should be in-laws first.

MOTHER

You can't have everything, Dad.

I think it's *wonderful*, sweetheart. Did you find an agency, yet?

KATHERINE

As a matter of fact...I've found the one. The one I'm going to adopt.

DAD

Where'd you find it? On your doorstep?

MOTHER

Dad!

KATHERINE

No, nothing like that. This is all carefully arranged.

DAD

Not one of those international adoptions, is it?

MOTHER

Dad, that's enough!

DAD

Mother, those are shady deals. Baby farms, child slavery—

KATHERINE

He's from here, he's locally grown.

MOTHER

So it's a boy! Dad and I always wanted a boy. When was he born?

KATHERINE

Well, that's the thing.

DAD

He's not born yet? That's asking for trouble. The mother could change her mind—

MOTHER

Why would she change her mind?

KATHERINE

No, what I mean is he's not an infant. He's a little older.

MOTHER

Oh, dear. Well...that's all right. If you know his background. You just have to remember he's not a blank slate, like when you have him from birth.

DAD

Where do you get the idea that an infant's a blank slate? Look at Katherine—she's a therapist. That didn't come from us.

MOTHER

What I was saying, sweetheart, is that you can't control his other influences. He could be coming to you with...baggage.

DAD

It's like being married.

MOTHER

Dad, no one is talking to you!

KATHERINE

Fortunately, I do know about his background, and I think we're very compatible. He needs a mother like me—and I need a son like him.

MOTHER

Well. What's he like?

KATHERINE

He's very smart. Good at math. He likes outdoor sports—

MOTHER

He's had some school already, that's—

DAD

What kind of sports?

KATHERINE

He mentioned Frisbee, tennis, kayaking—

MOTHER

He certainly is a precocious little—

DAD

Kayaking?

KATHERINE

Personally, he's on the quiet side. Introspective. Hasn't had much luck with girls so far, but—

MOTHER

Girls! Are you saying he's an adolescent?

DAD

So when he was born, you were what—seventeen? Eighteen? It's like you were a teenage mother!

KATHERINE

Dad, that's really not the point—

MOTHER

Oh, my God. What high school does he go to?

KATHERINE

He doesn't go to high school. He works.

He's an accountant.

MOTHER

Katherine. How old is this child you're adopting? Our grandchild?

KATHERINE

He just turned forty.

MOTHER screams and faints.

Scene 2

An office. WILLIAM is tidying up for the weekend. CLAUDE looks on.

CLAUDE

So...your dad is getting married?

WILLIAM

Don't have a dad. Haven't had one in ages.

CLAUDE

Everyone has one. Technically.

WILLIAM

Well, I never knew my "technical" dad. I was given up for adoption at birth.

CLAUDE

I get it! You're reuniting with your birth parents!

WILLIAM

Nope. I did that years ago.

CLAUDE

But you said you never knew—

WILLIAM

My “dad” died before I ever met him. I was reunited with my birth mother.

CLAUDE

Oh. How’d that go?

WILLIAM

She kidnapped me from my adoptive parents when I was ten.

CLAUDE

Wow.

WILLIAM

Mm-hm.

CLAUDE

That’s intense.

WILLIAM

She raised me in hiding, basically. She died a couple years ago—

CLAUDE

—a couple years ago. I remember that. See, I remember you had a mother who passed away.

WILLIAM

Of course, I hadn’t seen or talked to her since I was in my twenties, so....

CLAUDE

So...the mother you’re going to meet is the one who originally adopted you, because when your birth mother died, you felt free to track down your adoptive mother and become part of her life again. Right?

WILLIAM

My adoptive parents died in a car crash when I was in high school. I read about it in the paper.

CLAUDE

Man. You've really lived through some heavy stuff.

WILLIAM

I left the most recent P&L open on my computer. In case you need it.

CLAUDE

Back next Monday, right?

WILLIAM

That's right.

CLAUDE

Taking the whole week off to meet...who?

WILLIAM

My new mother.

CLAUDE

I am *really* confused.

WILLIAM

I'm not. For the first time in my life, I'm not confused at all.

Scene 3

The kitchen. MOTHER is still lying on the floor in a dead faint.

DAD

You've made your mother very upset.

KATHERINE

I realize that.

DAD

And I'm not feeling too chipper myself.

KATHERINE

I know it's not what you expected.

DAD

What's wrong with this guy? Is he retarded?

KATHERINE

He's an accountant!

DAD

So? In my department, there's a retarded fellow who fixes the copier.

KATHERINE

He's quite intelligent, actually.

DAD

I'm not so sure about that. About either of you. You're a therapist, you should know better. In your professional opinion, what in hell would make someone do a thing like this?

KATHERINE

I need someone to care for. That's what I've wanted all my life.

DAD

A husband.

KATHERINE

A child, Dad. You know I'm very maternal. But not a *child*-child. I thought about it, and I realized that what I most looked forward to was having children who were grown up and independent—with their own careers, love lives. I want someone I can have an adult relationship with, but still be—always be—his mother.

DAD

Exactly. A husband.

KATHERINE

Don't blame me for the state of your marriage. How many times have I told you to get couples counseling?

DAD

That's it. If this fellow's so great, why can't you marry him?

KATHERINE

Dad! How can you even think that?

DAD

That's probably what he's after anyway. Men will do anything to get you-know-what.

KATHERINE

You're not listening...!

DAD

But this sure is a new one.

KATHERINE

I know it's a lot to get used to—

DAD

Get used to? Your mother nearly had a heart attack. And she'll wake up with a migraine.

KATHERINE

Everything will be fine. You'll see.

DAD

I thought someday I'd have a son-in-law—

Scene 4

WILLIAM and CLAUDE are waiting for the bus. KATHERINE and DAD's scene continues simultaneously.

CLAUDE

I didn't know anything about you, William.

DAD

—someone I could have a few beers with—

CLAUDE

This is a revelation.

DAD

—go fishing—

CLAUDE

I never suspected you were so...

DAD

—play darts. It's bad enough your sister's a lesbian.

CLAUDE

...colorful.

KATHERINE

Maybe he likes darts.

DAD

Who?

KATHERINE

William.

I have to go.

END OF DIALOGUE SAMPLE