



Mumsnetters!

By Daisy Dot

ACT ONE

Scene One

The year is 2010. It is the antenatal group. Here we meet, LIZZY. She's 27, middle class, a yummy yoga mummy who is having her first baby. JACQUELINE is 43, very intelligent and blunt, having her first baby. GRACIE is 18, young but not naive having her first baby. The group teacher, MUMSNET enters, with a duffle bag. She begins to take some items out the bag, a breast pump, a fake baby, nappies, baby mat, blanket and a yoga mat. MUMSNET is running the class, she embodies the role of PATRONISING TEACHER.

TEACHER: Welcome ladies. Welcome. Please make yourselves comfortable. *(looking at LIZZY)* You look lively. All prepared?

LIZZY: Oh yes. I brought all the equipment with me. Ready to learn everything *(aside)* even if I have learnt it all before.

The TEACHER gives a demeaning smile in reply.

TEACHER: *(to GRACIE)* Don't look so nervous my dear. It's all going to be okay?

GRACIE: Oh no, I'm not nervous, I've just got a bit of trapped wind.

TEACHER: Okay then.

The TEACHER stares at them all for 30 seconds breathing in deeply. She looks at them as if they are bestowing a holy miracle.

JACQUELINE: Are we waiting for anyone?

TEACHER: Oh no. I just like to absorb the positive healthy energy in the room before we begin. You are all glowing with the prospects of new life. You must feel so whole, so womanly?

JACQUELINE: That's the last thing I feel.

LIZZY: What? How can't you? You are holding onto a miracle, a miracle being -

TEACHER: A holy justice.

LIZZY: - Yes, exactly!

GRACIE: Barf.

LIZZY: Morning sickness?

GRACIE: Oh no.

They smile at each other. There is a further 30 seconds of silence and staring from the TEACHER. All you can hear is the shuffling of chairs and the occasional cough. Someone farts. GRACIE's face shows a sign of relief. The women all look around, is no one going to admit it was them? They decide to ignore it.

The TEACHER continues to stare.

JACQUELINE: Are we going to begin soon? It's just I have to be somewhere -

MUMSNET: Hm? Oh, yes. Of course. *(standing)* Stand please and all hold hands.

The women peel themselves off their chairs, hoisting themselves up to standing. They reluctantly hold each others hands.

GRACIE: Sorry my hands are really clammy.

MUMSNET: *(abruptly as MUMSNET)* Shhh! *(calmly as the TEACHER)* Now shut your eyes. And let us all have a moment of silence and contemplation/

JACQUELINE: I'm sure we won't be getting that for a while...../

MUMSNET: *(rudely as MUMSNET)* Shhhh. *(abruptly back into a calm tone as the TEACHER)* In silence. Let us think of all those babies that have been lost....and all the motherless children of the world. You are holding such a gift. Let us not forget that. *(coming close to tears)* The connection between mother and baby starts from the moment that fertilised egg attaches itself to your uterine wall. That's right, it's your uterine wall, *ladies*. It is *your* baby. Now my first request of you all is to hunt for the sound of your baby. That's it. Hush. Make that connection stronger.

There is a moment of silence. LIZZY looks like she is trying to connect as hard as she can to her baby....in reality she can't hear shit. GRACIE looks freaked out by the sound of the baby inside her. JACQUELINE sheds a tear, it has taken her so long to get to this point. Such an endearing moment. In stomps ELAINE. ELAINE is 35, Irish and currently pregnant with her 4th child.

ELAINE: Oh bloody hell. Paddy! You stay out there you little -

TEACHER: Can I help you?

ELAINE: Yeah. *(putting her cigarette in her mouth, she rummages around her pocket for a moment, appears a crumpled up piece of paper.)* Is this the baby lessons thing?

TEACHER: This is the class for baby and mother bonding, if that is what you mean?

ELAINE: Yeah, right.

ELAINE finds her seat.

TEACHER: Cigarette?

ELAINE: What? No, I've got one already.

TEACHER: (*correcting her*) It's pardon, not what, and I can clearly see you have one already, could you please put it out?

ELAINE: - what?

TEACHER: (*correcting her*) Pardon/

ELAINE: /I didn't say nothin'.

TEACHER: I said, could put your cigarette out please?

ELAINE: Oh - yeah.

LIZZY: You know that's not good for your baby.

ELAINE: Who asked you?

LIZZY: I'm sorry, but it's not. That is all I'm saying.

ELAINE: What you talkin' 'bout? I've had 4 children and not one of em' has had a problem with me smoking. Alright?

LIZZY: How could they let you know exactly?

JACQUELINE: I find that kicking is a good sign they're pissed.

TEACHER: Of course.

JACQUELINE: And it isn't half embarrassing.

MUMSNET: What do you mean?

JACQUELINE: Since being pregnant I get this over whelming need for spicy food, and the other lunch I ordered the spiciest curry on the menu, only to have the little one kick at my bowels for 20 minutes. Which was bad timing, I ended up farting in one of the most important meetings of my life.

ELAINE: Shit, that really happen?

JACQUELINE: Yeah/

LIZZY: /your baby couldn't tell you there was a problem purely because it would be drowned by the fumes of Carbon Monoxide.

ELAINE: I think you mean Carbon Dioxide. See I took science, me. I'm smart.

LIZZY: There is more than one gas that starts with "Carbon". You know that right?

ELAINE: Now is it your job to be a patronising arse, or were you born that way?

MUMSNET: *(as MUMSNET)* Not even 5 minutes in and we have go. *(to the MOTHERS as the TEACHER)* Alright. Alright. Positive vibes ladies. Positive vibes. You are all going through the same journey. Each of you are special, and what makes you special is your own unique story of how you got here today. Who wants to share their journey first?

ELAINE: *(putting her hand up)* I will. *(ELAINE stands)* Hi, my name is Elaine -

She waits for a response as if she were at an AA meeting.

ELAINE: Alright. Basically my journey here has been incredibly complicated. I started by getting on the 33 *(trit'y t'ree)* bus, but that terminated which was so annoying. Then no one gave up their seat for me -

MUMSNET: No no. I meant, here. How did you get here?

ELAINE: Like I said the 33 bus - but that terminated -

TEACHER: No. I mean to being pregnant?

ELAINE: Oh right. Um. Well, I did it behind KFC. Or was it Iceland? Do you know what? I cannot remember. Funny how things just slip your mind.

LIZZY: *(aside)* Living the stereotype.

GRACIE: What stereotype?

TEACHER: I'm not fussed on the details of the contraception -

ELAINE: That's obvious cos there were none.

TEACHER: Yes. Sorry I meant conception. *(as MUMSNET)* Goddamn auto correct. *(As TEACHER)* Is this your first baby?

ELAINE: I am currently pregnant with my 4th.

ALL WOMEN: 4th!

JACQUELINE: But you are hardly 30.

ELAINE: Oh t'anks. I'm 33. *(trit'y t'ree)*

LIZZY: Pardon?

ELAINE: 33. *(trit'y t'ree)*

MUMSNET: (*assertive*) I think she said 33.

ELAINE: Yes, that's what I said.

LIZZY: Is it possible to get subtitles?

TEACHER: And why have you come to us today, Elaine?

ELAINE: Social worker said I had to take the class in order to prove my competence as a mother. They assume I'm going to get pregnant a few more times and want to make sure I have the proper training this time. Like you need to train to be a mother. I know how to change a nappy.

ELAINE takes a huge sip from her coffee cup.

TEACHER: You see, you may know how to change a nappy, however, do you know what it takes to be a mother?

ELAINE: Yeah. I've had practice.

TEACHER: Are you with the father?

ELAINE: We'll find out when I tell him.

GRACIE: You haven't told him yet?

ELAINE: No. Not sure whose it is.

GRACIE: I haven't told the dad either.

TEACHER: How interesting, why is that?

GRACIE: I just - he is going off to university and I don't want to inconvenience him.

TEACHER: What makes you think that you would be an inconvenience?

ELAINE: Have you not seen that great big lump, shoved on your front?

JACQUELINE: May I say something?

TEACHER: Of course.

JACQUELINE: What was your name again, sweetheart?

GRACIE: Gracie.

JACQUELINE: Gracie. You don't have to be with the father, that is never the option here. However, he has every right to know that his sperm was successful. That he made a life. You may not want him to take responsibility for the child but he deserves to know.

LIZZY: I couldn't agree with you more.

TEACHER: You're not with the father, too?

LIZZY: Oh, what? Me? No, no. Christ no. Yikes. Ha!/

JACQUELINE: - Alright, we get it/

LIZZY: /I've been happily married for 2 years. But William and I agreed, that if I wanted the baby, it will be my sole responsibility. So he knows he will be a dad, just won't take on any of the chores. He works high up in the government sector you see.

ELAINE: That answers a load of questions I didn't ask.

ELAINE goes to light a cigarette.

MUMSNET: (*as MUMSNET*) Elaine.

ELAINE: Alright, I'll smoke it outside. You don't mind me keeping it in my mouth though? Calms my nerves.

MUMSNET gives her a stern look.

TEACHER: (*as TEACHER*) Now childbirth can be a challenging time for mothers, but I am here to put your mind at ease. There is nothing to worry about.

JACQUELINE: Nothing to worry about?

TEACHER: No.

JACQUELINE: What about the bleeding?

TEACHER: Uh -

JACQUELINE: The scars? The tearing?

ELAINE: The crapping in front of everyone?

JACQUELINE: Yeah! The poo! And the antagonising pain in your abdomen and vagina?

GRACIE: Not to mention the fact that you'll have 7 or 8 strangers staring at your vagina -

ELAINE: I see that as a bonus really.

JACQUELINE: And an alien creature pushing its way out of your once, beautiful fanny?

ELAINE: Beautiful?

JACQUELINE: I like to think so.

ELAINE: Fair enough.

TEACHER: What are you worried about then, Jacqueline?

JACQUELINE: Did I just not list what I'm worried about?

TEACHER: I can see why you'd be worried. I mean having a baby at your age -

JACQUELINE: At my age, what?

TEACHER: Oh nothing. You're just a high risk patient, that's all.

JACQUELINE: Thanks. You're filling me with utter confidence.

GRACIE: Wait, how old *are* you?

JACQUELINE: 43.

GRACIE: Christ!

LIZZY: You don't look it, who's your doctor?

JACQUELINE: My doctor?

LIZZY: Yes. I assume you've had plastic surgery or botox or something?

JACQUELINE: I'm 43 not an ancient relic. It's not like you, hit 40 and go, oh well, I guess I'm old now, let's get some quack to stick pigs's collagen into my crows feet.

ELAINE: What kind of farm is this?

LIZZY: Huh? I have, and I'm barely 30.

JACQUELINE: You don't need botox!

LIZZY: (*said with a wink*) Not now after I've got it done.

JACQUELINE: (*flabbergasted*) I just - no - just - no -

ELAINE: If it's any consolation, I think you look 43.

JACQUELINE: Thank you.

ELAINE: I mean, Liz.

LIZZY: It's Lizzy? And excuse me?

ELAINE: What? It's a compliment.

LIZZY: In what way is *that* a compliment?

ELAINE: Well Jacqueline - can I call you Jackie?/

JACQUELINE: /No.

ELAINE: Well, Jacqueline, she is 43 and looks great. So to say you look like a 43 year old is a good t'ing you know?

LIZZY: I'm seriously confused.

TEACHER: Ladies, ladies. Let us be nice to each other. The women you meet here today will be women that you continue to have throughout your life. Because if you choose, you can help each other in the next 18 years that are ahead of you. Caring for another life, takes more than a neglecting husband, a far away boyfriend, a sperm donor, or a guy who shagged you behind, Iceland -

ELAINE: or KFC -

TEACHER: Yes, or KFC. It takes support from those who are going through the same things as you. There is no job like it. Being a mother is difficult. But fun. And here. In this space. On this day. Is a chance for you to share your wisdom and your insight into a world no man or child could ever understand. Stick together and I can assure you, you will bring out the best in each other.

The women sit, reflecting on what she has said. They see how it makes sense, but all decide to brush it off and move onto the next topic.

LIZZY: If I may, can I talk about what childbirth is really like?

ELAINE: You been through it before then? Cos I can tell you, from experience it ain't pretty.

LIZZY: I've read about it.

ELAINE: Yeah sure, when has a book ever helped anyone learn?

LIZZY: Many times. Anyway. I was reading. And it made me think. I know what my birthing experience will be like.

ELAINE: You don't get a choice.

LIZZY: I do.

MUMSNET: What do you want it to be like, Elizabeth?

LIZZY: Aww, my mum calls me Elizabeth.

TEACHER: I know. Back to my question though dear, what do you want your birth to be like?

LIZZY: This is not about want. This is what I *know* will happen.

TEACHER: And what is that?

YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A NATURAL WOMAN BY ARETHA FRANKLIN PLAYS.

LIZZY gradually stands throughout the stage.

LIZZY: Just imagine, this baby and I have been combining and growing from each other for nine wonderful months, and I finally get to share her with this world. I will be able to feel the soft touch of her skin, smell the top of her head and know she is mine and only mine.

TEACHER: It is painful, Elizabeth.

LIZZY: Not with this baby, I just know it will be painless. I see myself in the future, baking some bread, and then *(pause)* my waters break.

GRACIE: Why bread?

LIZZY: I don't know, I just see myself baking bread. Sourdough though, not normal chemical filled regular stodge. But anyway. The contractions commence, but they don't hurt because the love for my child is so strong, the connection is unbreakable. My dear husband, William, Willy as I like to call him, will time each contraction. The baby will be born on a Saturday, just so not to mess with Willy's work schedule.

TEACHER: Are you having an induced birth then?

LIZZY: Oh no. I just know that my baby will be born on a Saturday. I can feel it. Then I will sit there on my ball, breathing deeply, sending positive and strong vibes to my holy womb. I read somewhere that in order to get your baby to join this world faster you can do pregnancy yoga. Let gravity do its work, while still maintaining inner peace. And finally, after running the birthing pool, the midwife arrives. We get in the pool which is just the right temperature, Willy and I, warm and happy. After 10 minutes of deep breathing and contracting, my beautiful baby will be born. Without the bleeding, without the scars and pain.

JACQUELINE: And the pooing.

LIZZY: Yes, thanks. And of course, without tearing. I won't need to tear. She will come straight out, Willy, will shed a tear, we will look at each other and cry together. Our baby girl is finally here.

JACQUELINE: Wow.

GRACIE sheds a tear.

TEACHER: Lizzy, that's just -

ELAINE: I have one question.

TEACHER: Yes, Elaine?

ELAINE: You said you wouldn't *tear*?

LIZZY: Yes?

ELAINE: - does that mean you have a gaping vagina?

Music stops abruptly. JACQUELINE spits out her tea.

LIZZY: No, Elaine. No it doesn't.

TEACHER: I think that this is when we draw this lesson to a close. I hope to see you here next week. It will be at the same time. Please don't be late, that's right Elaine I am talking to you.

The women remain on the stage and MUMSNET walks forward, still as her character of PATRONISING TEACHER. She steps into her spotlight and switches to being MUMSNET.

MUMSNET: Now childbirth. It's a horror show, truly and utterly disgusting on all parts. Yes it's birthing the miracle of life but still I am sure Mary shat herself in front of all those animals in the manger when giving birth to Jesus. I mean I should know, I was there. Horrific. Disgusting. And if you want to go see a real birth, just go on Channel 4 and watch One Born Every Minute, okay? But thankfully today, we are not going to show it.

On runs the DIRECTOR. They whispers something into her ear. MUMSNET stands still, she looks bewildered and disgusted. DIRECTOR runs off.

MUMSNET: I just heard from the director, that um, we *are* going to show the horrific battle ground of childbirth, if you all want to see that. Although I'm not too sure that's the correct choice, there's a lot of work in it for me. So how about this. I'm going to give you two options here. Option one. The calm composed birthing scene, or option two. The not so calming and composing birthing scene. It's up to you all. So raise your hands if you want option one, or if you want option two.

MUMSNET gets the audience to vote on the birthing scene.

OPTION ONE. Scene 2

JACQUELINE, GRACIE and LIZZY are all pottering around the stage with bowls under their arms, swaying side to side as if it were their baby.

They are making bread, more specifically buns. Each of them go to their ovens. ELAINE runs in late. They all have a calm humming noise as they roam around the stage. LIZZY realises it's time to put her bun in the oven. All the women gather round, and watch LIZZY place her bun in the oven. MUMSNET, comes along and starts the timer for her. MUMSNET walks around the stage with LIZZY, stroking her back.

GRACIE then rushes to put her bun in the oven, all the women rush over to see what she is doing. GRACIE puts it in, and 5 seconds later pulls out a perfectly baked bun. All the women, including MUMSNET, look surprised, LIZZY slightly jealous.

ELAINE drops her bowl, disturbing the calm silence. All the women look at her. ELAINE walks over to her oven, opens it quickly, shoves her bun in and slams the door.

JACQUELINE still hasn't put her bun in the oven. MUMSNET walks over to JACQUELINE, takes the bowl from her and puts it in the oven, goes over to the bread bin and takes out a pre-baked loaf. JACQUELINE smiles and thanks MUMSNET.

LIZZY stands staring at her oven. She is impatient. She begins to bang on the oven. MUMSNET comes over, takes her away from the oven and walks all around the stage.

ELAINE's timer goes off, she ignores it. The women notice her timer is going off, but ELAINE is still unaware. MUMSNET drags ELAINE to her oven, opens the door. ELAINE gets the bun out, and burns her fingers on the way. ELAINE then lights up a cigarette and exits.

All the women are now staring at LIZZY's oven. Holding their breath. Finally LIZZY's timer goes off. LIZZY calmly and composed puts her oven gloves on, opens the door and takes her bread out. All the women look amazed at how perfect her bun is.

MUMSNET walks into the circle of chairs and sets up for her antenatal group. She is now the PATRONISING TEACHER. She feels calm.

OPTION TWO. Scene 2

“Can-Can From Orpheus in the underworld” by Jacques Offenbach. LIZZY starts to feel a pain in her abdomen and starts to scream in agony. ELAINE starts to get out of breath. JACQUELINE shrieks. GRACIE starts to potter about the stage, waiting for her bun to come out the oven. MUMSNET is the midwife attending to LIZZY, JACQUELINE and ELAINE.

LIZZY: Jesus Christ this hurts! What the hell is in me! Get it out! Get it out! How long is this going to take?

GRACIE: *(reading the recipe book)* Let it prove for 9 hours. Check -

ELAINE: Paddy! Can you check how far along I am please. I have a feeling it's maybe 5cm. That's it get your fingers -

JACQUELINE: *(to MUMSNET)* Out! Get your fingers out my vagina!

MUMSNET: *(to JACQUELINE)* Are you okay? Do you want me to get you anything?

GRACIE: *(continuing to read the recipe book)* Damp towel and rolling pin, check.

LIZZY: This is more painful than I thought.

MUMSNET: *(To LIZZY)* Do you want to do some pregnancy yoga?

LIZZY: No. What I want is an epidural!

MUMSNET: *(To LIZZY)* Unfortunately Mrs Luck, you're too far along.

JACQUELINE: You are joking me! I'm only 2cm along! It has been 15 hours!

MUMSNET: *(To JACQUELINE)* I know, I'm sorry. First time mothers often take a little longer to -

GRACIE: Bake! Bake for 1 hour and 30 minutes. Seems easy enough.

LIZZY: This is by far the hardest thing I have done - ever! I'm not joking.

MUMSNET: Elaine, do you want to lie on your back for me?

ELAINE: No. How is that going to get the baby out? I'm squattin'.

MUMSNET: Alright then.

ELAINE: Could I possibly have some gas and air?

MUMSNET: You in pain?

ELAINE: What? No. Just a free way to get -

LIZZY: Hi! Hi, nurse. Yooohoo! Nurse. Please give me some goddamn -

JACQUELINE: Gas and air! Give it to me now!

ELAINE: *(takes in the gas and air)* Oh yeaaaah. That's the stuff. Woah! I'm going to have kids more often.

LIZZY: You know when you vomit after drinking and you vow never to drink again. Well I am never ever going to have this baby again.

JACQUELINE: I'm really hot, please could you dab my forehead? G

RACIE: I don't want it to burn, however it's taking longer than I thought.

MUMSNET: Jacqueline, this baby is taking longer than we expected, and the heart rate is slowing down, you're going to need to go for an emergency C section.

JACQUELINE: No please. I can do this. Please. I can do this. I want to do this. This is the only chance I've got.

LIZZY: I can't do this. I can't do this without Willy.

MUMSNET: Lizzy. Yes. Yes you can. You don't need Willy. You can do this. I promise you. Just one last push and your baby will be here.

LIZZY, starts to push.

MUMSNET: Okay Lizzy, I am going to have to make a small cut to get this baby out or he is going to tear his way out, and we don't want that do we?

LIZZY: Just do it.

LIZZY screams and there is a moment of silence. All the women peep over to see if the baby is okay. They await in anticipation for a cry. There is the glorious noise of a baby crying.

MUMSNET: Ah, there we go. Hello little one.

MUMSNET wraps LIZZY's baby in the blanket and passes it over.

ELAINE: Right, I'm bored of this now. Let's get this baby out -

ELAINE sneezes and out comes a baby. She proceeds to light a cigarette.

ELAINE: We all good here?

MUMSNET: I mean, yes. Would you like to hold your baby?

ELAINE: Alright then. Pass it here. Ah he's cute.

MUMSNET: She, she's a she.

JACQUELINE: Is it a boy?

MUMSNET: Yes. Yes it is a boy.

JACQUELINE: Ah crap - I don't know anything about boys.

MUMSNET sits down, exhausted from delivering 3 babies. She starts to fall asleep. GRACIE finally takes her bread out of the oven. LIZZY, ELAINE and JACQUELINE limp over to her, they have blood and sweat dripping from their foreheads, legs and hands. They watch GRACIE take her bun out of the oven. Their faces deeply alarmed by GRACIE's back. GRACIE looks at them, as if to say "What?". She turns her back to the audience to reveal a huge wet stain on the back of her grey tracksuit bottoms. Her waters have broken. Let the mayhem continue.

GRACIE: Oh god. It's happening. It's happening now. Help me please, goddam help me.

JACQUELINE, ELAINE and LIZZY get GRACIE prepared for birth. All three of them are panicking as they have no idea what they are doing.

GRACIE: Do you know what you're doing?

ELAINE: Not really - aw man - no I'm out this is disgusting. *(she retches)*

LIZZY: Why don't we do some pregnancy yoga, shall we?

GRACIE: I don't want to to pregnancy yoga, I want drugs.

ELAINE: Me too, after what I've just witnessed.

GRACIE: Oh god, where's the midwife?

JACQUELINE: What?

GRACIE: You did call the midwife didn't you?

JACQUELINE: Sure I did.

She gets her phone out and rings the Midwife.

GRACIE: Oh god this hurts! I mean this really hurts! I am never doing this again -

LIZZY: That's what I said.

ELAINE: I am - free drugs innit?

GRACIE: Not unless the bloody midwife isn't here!

MUMSNET wakes up - she looks around calmly. Then notices GRACIE and all the women freaking out. She runs to them.

MUMSNET: Hello, oh Gracie.

GRACIE: Muuuuummmmm. I don't know what I am doing! I can't be a mum - I - I - can't -

MUMSNET: Now, you listen to me. You are going to be a wonderful mother, and it all starts right here, right now. This baby is coming. So give me one big push okay! Ready.

All 4 women scream together.

Out comes the baby. There is a drastic moment of silence, yet again. All the women take a deep breath in. The silence persists.

MUMSNET: Come on baby, give me a little cry. Come one, little one.

The women continue to hold their breath.

MUMSNET: Come on. Please.

GRACIE: Please baby. Cry for mummy. Come on.

Finally there is a cry from the little baby. All the women let out their breath. They walk around stage with their crying infant, looking like they have been to hell and back. The screaming then quadruples. And all the women are standing walking around with their crying babies. Trying to get them to sleep, breast feeding, and crying with them.

GRACIE: Oh god! Please stop crying! Please!

MUMSNET stands still. She looks at the audience.

MUMSNET: *(aside)* Wrong choice, you bastards! I had to do *all* the work.

Depending on the options. If option one was chosen the women look calm and collected with some flour on their cheek. If option two is chosen the women walk into the Antenatal group, looking like they've been to hell and back. They all sit down at the same time, and the crying stops abruptly.

AS PATRONISING TEACHER

MUMSNET: How's everyone recovering?

LIZZY: (*lying through her teeth*) Do you know what? Surprisingly good. You know. The tear was practically nothing. (*elongated nervous laughter*)

ELAINE: Oh, did he tear ya?

LIZZY: Yes, she did.

JACQUELINE: Oh you poor thing, how big was she in the end?

LIZZY: 12 pounds.

GRACIE: Yikes. That's horrific.

MUMSNET: What about you Jacqueline, how are you coping after your emergency C Section?

JACQUELINE: Honestly, going through labour and then having to have a C section on top of that just made the pain before hand seem like such a waste, you know? I went through 36 hours of contractions for them only to turn around and tell me I needed to be cut open, as they gouged my baby out. Christ.

LIZZY: But it's worth it though. That pain.

GRACIE: Oh shut up! No way was it worth it. All I have now is a screaming vomiting machine.

LIZZY: It really shouldn't vomit that much.

GRACIE: No? Is that not normal?

JACQUELINE: Well, spit up is, but not full on vomiting. Maybe you should go get them checked out.

MUMSNET: How are you all coping? Jacqueline?

JACQUELINE: Not good.

GRACIE: Neither, they keep me up all night.

LIZZY: (*again lying*) Oh, really? My little angel is perfect, already sleeping through the night. Babies aren't really that complicated.

ELAINE: I'm with Liz/

LIZZY: /Lizzy not Liz.

ELAINE: /babies are easy as my first husband. Put some whiskey on their dummy, a little bit of warm milk before bed and you're good to go.

LIZZY: Is that what you did with your ex husband?

ELAINE: If you swap warm milk for fallacio then yes. Actually I guess that is warm milk in the end.

LIZZY: Ew!

ELAINE: I'm jokin' with you ladies. They only cry for three reasons. Poo in their nappies, hungry, needing your almost saggy sore tits and the most likely one which is tiredness. That is all.

LIZZY: I wouldn't put it like that.

ELAINE: And how would you put it then? I mean it's not like they've got unpaid bills to cry about.

LIZZY: I mean - okay you've got a point.

ELAINE: Ah ha!

MUMSNET: Jacqueline, how are you holding up?

JACQUELINE: Yeah, fine. My mother is over this weekend and she is helping me look after the little one while I recover from the surgery.

MUMSNET: Isn't that nice of her?

JACQUELINE: Uh huh.

LIZZY: I thought your mum would be too old for that sort of thing?

ELAINE: Or dead.

JACQUELINE: Um no, she's only 64.

LIZZY: Wow! She must of had you young then!

JACQUELINE: 21.

GRACIE: That's old.

MUMSNET: Your mum helping you out Gracie?

GRACIE: No.

LIZZY: Oh, did she not approve?

GRACIE: (*un-phased*) Oh, what no? She's dead.

LIZZY: Oh, I'm sorry. She must've died young.

GRACIE: No, not at all, she was *ancient*. 64, when she died.

JACQUELINE shuffles in her chair.

MUMSNET: That must be difficult not having you mother around?

GRACIE: No, she was a right bitch.

MUMSNET: Language please.

GRACIE: Sorry, she was a right piece of work. She died when I was 14. It was kind of a relief when she died.

MUMSNET: What do you mean?

GRACIE: She was so pushy, tried to get me into modelling and acting and all that, which I hate! Who the hell wants to be an actor? Seriously? A child actor at that. Just, no.

LIZZY: I don't get it.

JACQUELINE: What don't you get?

LIZZY: You're not pretty enough to be a model.....

GRACIE: That's coming from "Mrs I haven't lost my baby weight yet, even though in my 6 month plan I intended to lose it within the first 3 weeks of my baby being born".

LIZZY: Losing baby weight isn't that easy. It's not like in the movies where it just seems to disappear.

JACQUELINE: They have have these things called personal trainers and bags of spare time because they can afford a full time nanny.

LIZZY: You saying I can't?

GRACIE: You don't need a personal trainer, see?

GRACIE stands up and shows her really flat stomach.

GRACIE: I've lost already lost all my baby weight.

LIZZY: Still not skinny enough to be a model though.

GRACIE: Excuse me?

LIZZY: Sorry that came out much ruder than expected.

ELAINE: I have to agree with you though, Liz/

LIZZY: /Lizzy not Liz.

GRACIE: What?

ELAINE: You just don't look like the type of girl to be on the side of a bus ya know, more the back end of the bus. The last thing I really want is to see your ugly mug on a billboard.

GRACIE starts to tear up.

MUMSNET: Oh sweetheart, don't cry.

GRACIE: Oh what? No I'm not crying at *that*.

ELAINE: Then, what are you crying at?

JACQUELINE: The fact your mother is dead and will never see your first child?

LIZZY: Is it that even though you've lost all the baby weight you're still grotesque?

ELAINE: Or that your face is so ugly that it would put people off from buying the clothes that you're modelling?

GRACIE: No it's none of that.

MUMSNET: Then what?

GRACIE: I just realised - (*almost inaudible through the tears*) - I forgot to put the washing on.

ELAINE: You what?

GRACIE: (*crying*) I just - oh god -

GRACIE breaks down into tears. Then JACQUELINE starts to, so does LIZZY and eventually ELAINE joins in.

MUMSNET: Woah, woah, woah. What is all this?

GRACIE: It's just - you -

LIZZY: I know, it's just I can't - (*bursting into tears*)

JACQUELINE: (*crying loudly*) Deal with it - everything is just so hard -

ELAINE: (*also crying*) I know, I can't look after more than one child, what am I thinking about having another baby?

MUMSNET: Oh, ladies, ladies. I am so sorry.

LIZZY: What are you sorry about?

GRACIE: You gave us hope! Lecturing us on how easy it all is, but really. It is very very hard.

MUMSNET: Now, I never said it was easy.

JACQUELINE: I thought maybe there would be something easy, but no. There is nothing.

ELAINE: *(wailing)* Oh Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

All the women continue to weep.

JACQUELINE: I have waited so long for this baby, and now, all I want to do is throw it out the window. He wont stop crying.

ELAINE: I know how you feel! Me too!

GRACIE: And me.

LIZZY: Me too!

JACQUELINE: At least you have a husband that will help.

LIZZY: Are you kidding me? *Willy* is just as useful as a massive coat on a hot summer's day.

ELAINE starts to laugh to herself.

MUMSNET: What is so funny Elaine?

ELAINE: Liz, just said *Willy*.

JACQUELINE: That is quite funny.

GRACIE: Bastard things got us into this state.

MUMSNET: Now, now. Let's not make fun Lizzy's husband's name.

LIZZY: Why? His name is certainly apt.

Their crying soon turns into laughter. All the women are laughing, they are not entirely sure what they are laughing at.

MUMSNET: What a roller coaster of emotions. So it's safe to say that you're all coping then?

LIZZY: Of course.

ELAINE: Just needed a good cry that's all.

JACQUELINE: It's usually better not to cry in front of the little one.

GRACIE: Especially when they're crying.

MUMSNET: Well ladies, this is the last session with, mother and baby bonding. It was a delight to meet you all. I hope you all choose to stay in touch. Believe me. You will need each other to get through this.

ELAINE: You've got that right. Ah crap! Sorry. I've got to go and pick up Jordan from Asda in 20. Then I've got work at 6.

MUMSNET: Didn't you get any maternity leave?

ELAINE: Yeah, I took it all. It was 3 (t'ree) weeks, long time. Don't want to get fired now.

MUMSNET: But -

ELAINE: Thanks for ya help! See ya!

ELAINE gets up and stomps off.

LIZZY: Fancy a glass of wine then, ladies? Since Elaine isn't here.

MUMSNET: Now, I hope that you aren't going to exclude Elaine.

LIZZY: What? No.

MUMSNET: Good, she has a lot to add to this group.

LIZZY: (*embarrassed*) Yes. So, wine ladies?

JACQUELINE: I've got nothing else on.

GRACIE: Sure, my curfew isn't until 7.

LIZZY: Huh?

GRACIE: Oh, I was joking. Don't worry.

LIZZY: Oh right. Phew.

GRACIE: It's 10, not 7.

SCENE 3

It has been between 6 months and 6 weeks since they've all had sex. They are all horny as hell.

Note to Actors:

LIZZY romanticise everything. Think sex is clean cut and easy. Just lay on your back and go on top occasionally. Simple.

JACQUELINE is a complete utter whore. Had every single person you can think of. Never disclaims who she has slept with. A lot of younger boys like her and so she has a new boyfriend each week. Yet still she has major confidence issues.

ELAINE has no boundaries. Doesn't really enjoy sex, she knows it is supposed to be fun, that is why she has multiple partners. She also uses it to get what she wants. It's something she is used to being not special or important. Just men using her.

GRACIE has only had sex once, and that is when she got pregnant. So very unaware. Knows a lot about oral etc but nothing much of a kink.

LIZZY is dressed in perfect negligee. Perfect perky everything. GRACIE is in her clubbing clothes having pre drinks by herself. JACQUELINE and ELAINE are sitting at the dinner table with their dildos.

They go up to the kids and ask them to put their headphones on and to watch their iPads.

ELAINE: *(aside)* Oh shut up. You know you put them in front of a screen when you can't be bothered to look after them. So shut it!

LIZZY: Anyway. We are doing it for their own protection. We are getting to the sex bit now.

GRACIE: I mean, how much do you want your kids to know about what you post on the internet to random strangers?

JACQUELINE: Oh yes. And you have all posted some corks.

The women sit around, drinking their wine.

ELAINE: Soooo, now the kids have headphones on, I can swear again?

MUMSNET: Don't see why not?

ELAINE: Oh thank fuck for that. Jesus cuntin' christ, not shittin' swearing has been getting on my goddamn tits. Oh man. Am I ready to fuck again, or what?

MUMSNET: Right. Elaine. We've done pretty well keeping this play clean without swear words again. So please. Use some other words that aren't so explicitly rude. *(whispering)* In case the kids can hear you over their headphones.

Elaine: Ah fuccccccccccc.....

ALL WOMEN: Elaine!

ELAINE: *(huffs)* Like living in religious state. *(addressing audience)* I bet your kids first word was 'fuck'? No? Mine was.

LIZZY: No, Elaine, it wasn't, because they are responsible parents. Unlike some.

ELAINE: Like you?

LIZZY: What?

ELAINE: I mean that's definitely not water in your bottle. Some high end gin, that happens to smell like water/

LIZZY: Maybe it smells like water because it is water/

GRACIE: /Does water have a smell?

ELAINE: No one's that healthy.

LIZZY: Well Elaine, maybe I am.

MUMSNET: Can you two just button it? I want to get on with this please. Right. Sex! A typical topic in any play. It's how we were all made. And yes, every single movie with a group of women in it, can't seem to talk about anything else, other than sex and positions, babies, being horny, not being horny and of course the ultimate question of "does he make you cum, vaginally?" But here today, we have 4 women, speaking the words of many women's thoughts, these are some of the oddest stories I have ever read. Let's start off with this posting which was -

ELAINE: Is it too soon to have sex after having my little one?

JACQUELINE: I thought Diamond, was born 3 weeks ago. Surely you can wait a little longer. It's got to be a little sore down there.

ELAINE: Eh, after baby number 5 they just slide out. Squat, plop and a cry. But I like have this burning sensation between my legs, you know?

LIZZY: You sure that's not thrush?

ELAINE: Oh yeah, could be.

GRACIE: Could the burning feeling be the fact you just squeezed a life out?

ELAINE: I didn't have a crap today.

GRACIE: No. I meant -

MUMSNET: Gracie, just leave it.

LIZZY: My question is, do you get your partner to wash his hands before sex?

ELAINE: How can he do that when we're behind Iceland?

LIZZY: Me and Willy went out to this black tie event. It was a celebration for his recent promotion. He spent a lot of the evening shaking everyone's hands, greeting his new employees, then we got into the dirtiest cab I have been in, ever, and he then *fondled* cash and *shook* the dirty cab driver's hand. When we got back, he wanted a slice of the Lizzy Pie, which I wasn't going to say no to, but I asked him to wash his hands. Normally we shower separately before we copulate so didn't think it would be too much to ask if he would wash his hands. But he just got super offended and left me with nothing. He disappeared into the bathroom for about 5 minutes, no it was 8, I thought to wash his hands, but he just got undressed, rolled over and went to sleep.

JACQUELINE: I get where he is coming from it is a bit of a mood killer, well not unless he has some sort of issue with hygiene.

GRACIE: Eh, I don't mind a bit of dirty sometimes. Like a musky gross smell you know?

LIZZY: Oh absolutely not. If my husband wants to go anywhere near my *Catherine* then he has to wash his hands or shower.

ELAINE: Catherine the name of his better looking lover?

LIZZY: No, it's the name for my (*whispers, while discretely pointing at her nether regions*) lady garden.

ALL WOMEN: Catherine?

LIZZY: Yes, Catherine, after Kate Middleton.

ELAINE: Oh I'm sure she would be glad to know that you named your bits after her.

LIZZY: It was Willy's idea.

ELAINE: Sure it was.

JACQUELINE: First he names your bits, what's next your tits?

LIZZY points to her right breast.

LIZZY: Pinky.

LIZZY points to her left breast.

JACQUELINE: and Perky?

LIZZY: What? No. The brain.

All the women laugh.

LIZZY: Oh shut up. What do you call yours then?

JACQUELINE: Doesn't need a name. Speaks for itself.

LIZZY: Gracie?

GRACIE: Does my *mini* need a name?

LIZZY: No, it's just a little fun.

ELAINE: Is no one going to ask me what I call mine?

LIZZY: No Elaine, we're not because we all know it's going to be weird and gross.

MUMSNET: Can I guess?

ELAINE: Go for it.

MUMSNET: Pina Colada.

ELAINE: You are joking me.

MUMSNET: Did I get it right?

ELAINE: Did you read my mind?

MUMSNET: No, just the script.

ELAINE: Do you want to know why I called it that?

MUMSNET: Why?

ELAINE: I called it that because, it's creamy and I have been told in the past it tastes a lot like coconut. Plus if you eat pineapple it is supposed to make your cum taste better.

LIZZY: Who told you that? That can't possibly be true.

GRACIE: It's true, I've heard that before.

MUMSNET: I can confirm that is, indeed a fact.

JACQUELINE: And I can confirm that, that is 100% true and delicious on a cupcake.

LIZZY: Oh my god, that is disgusting.

MUMSNET: So when was the last time you all got to some '*action*'?

LIZZY: 6 months, Willy didn't really want to have sex with me after I started to look fat. Ruined his appetite.

MUMSNET: Fat isn't the right word. More, noticeably pregnant.

ELAINE: What? No, she was fat.

LIZZY: Yes, thank you. Well he didn't find me attractive and later admitted to me that he thought the baby might rip his penis off.

MUMSNET: *(to ELAINE)* Not sure if it could reach the baby to be honest.

LIZZY: What's that supposed to mean?

ELAINE and MUMSNET: Nothing.

MUMSNET: What about you Jacqueline? When was the last time you got some action?

JACQUELINE: 3 months, 3 days, 10 hours and 30 minutes. Not that I'm counting or anything. I have to agree with Lizzy though, when you are visibly preggers, the hope kinda floats on having sex, with strangers especially. I did however come across a few lads who had a weird kink about pregnant women.

MUMSNET: Bizzare. And Elaine, when was the last time you - you know?

ELAINE: Shagged! Did the dirty?

MUMSNET: Yes.

ELAINE: Hopefully, this afternoon, but I ain't making no promises.

MUMSNET: Is he taking you anywhere nice?

ELAINE: *(very proud)* Yeah. Centre Parcs.

GRACIE and LIZZY laugh. GRACIE stops, LIZZY continues.

LIZZY: And they say romance is dead!

ELAINE: What's wrong with Centre Parcs? I'm going up in the world, it's one up from Butlins.

LIZZY: I wouldn't know.

GRACIE: You know what they say about Centre Parcs?

LIZZY: *(Laughing)* That it's a trampy place for the less fortunate to go to.

MUMSNET: *(Sternly)* No, not at all.

JACQUELINE: Who says that?

LIZZY stops laughing.

LIZZY: Um -

GRACIE: That's such a bitchy thing to say.

JACQUELINE: Just ignore her Elaine.

MUMSNET: She is being bang out of line.

JACQUELINE: How long are you going for?

ELAINE: About 3 days. (*seeking approval*) What's wrong with Centre Parcs?

MUMSNET: Nothing.

GRACIE: (*giggling*) You sure?

JACQUELINE: I wouldn't take you for a snob Gracie. I thought in fact it would be your kind of thing going to Centre Parcs.

MUMSNET: Lots of thrills.

GRACIE: Really?

JACQUELINE: It's such an adrenaline rush, going through the treetops!

GRACIE: Is that what you call it?

JACQUELINE: Yes....tree jumping?

GRACIE: I don't know what kind of person you think I am but I am certainly not that!

JACQUELINE: There's kayaking too.

MUMSNET: You told me you loved that!

GRACIE: I'm so confused.

JACQUELINE: What's there to be confused about?

GRACIE: My aunty always said to me that if *he* asks you to go to Centre Parcs with him for the weekend, he is only expecting one thing.

JACQUELINE: What?

MUMSNET: Strenuous activities?

GRACIE: Sort of. Um.... (*mouths*) Anal Sex.

JACQUELINE: Sorry I couldn't quite hear that.

GRACIE: (*whispering*) Anal Sex.

JACQUELINE: Speak up.

MUMSNET: ANAL SEX!

GRACIE: If he takes you to Centre Parc he is expecting Anal Sex! *Silence.*

The women laugh at GRACIE.

MUMSNET: (*aside*) True story.

GRACIE: WHAT! IT'S TRUE. DON'T LAUGH AT ME.

JACQUELINE: I'm sure that's Centre Parc's main selling point!

MUMSNET: (*said in a soft voice for an advertisement*) Join us for long walks in leafy glades or cycle through the picturesque woodland. If it's raining, why not try to persuade the missus to take it up the wrong 'un?

ELAINE: It's not the wrong hole, it's just a different one.

GRACIE: *Clearly* they don't advertise it, but it's true. My aunt said we could never go on holiday there because she didn't want her bum to get sore.

JACQUELINE: And you directly linked that to anal sex?

GRACIE: Wouldn't you?

JACQUELINE: No, Gracie, I wouldn't because there are many activities there that could hurt your bum - like slides, kayaking, assault courses -

GRACIE: And anal sex?

ELAINE: I've done it a few times, not my cup of tea - I was shitting through the eye of a needle for the rest of the week.

LIZZY: Isn't bum sex just for Fridays?

ELAINE: Maybe in your household!

MUMSNET: Let's move on.

MUMSNET goes over to GRACIE and puts her hand on her shoulder.

MUMSNET: Gracie, when was the last time you had sex? Did you have the same problem as the other women, no one finding you attractive as soon as you start to resemble a boat? No one is here to watch and judge you.

GRACIE: *(referencing the audience)* They are -

MUMSNET: Ignore them, it's not like they've come to watch you perform!

GRACIE: Can I be honest with you?

MUMSNET: Of course. This is a safe space.

GRACIE: I haven't actually had sex since my first time....when I got pregnant.

JACQUELINE: Oh honey.

GRACIE: To be honest I think, I'm too scared to. My first time wasn't that great and then the after effect was even worse.

ELAINE: No one's first time is great. Hell, mine was in the school toilet, he took me from behind just so he could keep a look out.

MUMSNET: How old were you?

ELAINE: 15.

LIZZY: If you were my daughter, I wouldn't let you have sex until you were 40, married and with kids.

ELAINE: Is that when you lost it then Lizzy? 40 years old? Married with kids?

LIZZY: It's Lizzy, not Liz. And I'm 27. So, no?

ELAINE: Oh, just seems you are a frigid bird. You seem like the kinda woman who would take the spunk out of her husband's wank tissues just to get pregnant.

LIZZY: Don't be so absurd. Willy doesn't wank.

ELAINE: Ha! Willy doesn't wank.

MUMSNET: That's a new one.

JACQUELINE: Oh honey, come on. Don't be so naive.

MUMSNET: Of course he has to bash it out sometimes. We all do.

LIZZY: No, my husband has never wanked, and do you know how I know that?

GRACIE: How?

LIZZY: I just do. Our souls are bound. So.

GRACIE: I have to say, I can't go a day without, you know - playing around in my "garden".

ELAINE: Oh I'm the same. I really need this trip to Centre Parcs though, I lost my dildo the other day.

MUMSNET: How does one lose a dildo?

JACQUELINE: Please explain.

ELAINE: It was just the other day. My daughter found my dildo, Harry, I like to call him. She thought it was a rocket ship and without my knowledge she took it to school for show and tell. That was a hard one to explain to the teachers. She became so attached to it that I had to buy her her own one, just so she would give me mine back.

LIZZY: Oh god.

ELAINE: It wasn't cheap either, it was bloody expensive considering it was a second hand one off eBay...

All the women look at ELAINE in complete disgust.

LIZZY: Please tell me it was clean.

ELAINE: I obviously cleaned it in the bath. But I forgot it was electric, so it doesn't vibrate anymore. And that's what she like about it, the fact the "rocket ship" vibrated when it took off, so I had to give her mine. Now I'm left with this broken non-vibrating dildo.

JACQUELINE: What did you wash it in?

ELAINE: Bleach.

JACQUELINE: That *can't* be good.

MUMSNET: Right I think that's enough sex talk for now. I think I am actually scarred for life. Elaine, enjoy Centre Parcs.

GRACIE: I hope your bum doesn't get too sore.

ELAINE: T'anks.

MUMSNET: Alright, kids you can take your headphones off now. We are moving onto the topic of - Terrible Twos!

SCENE 4

JACQUELINE: Terrible Twos indeed.

ELAINE: My little angel is no more. She is more like a little devil. If I say the word “no” to her the whole house erupts. I walked in on her throwing her cupboards around her room in anger the other day. She didn’t like the fact that she’s going to have another brother or sister. The house is busy as it is.

JACQUELINE: He just likes to poo in the middle of the floor. Yes, he is toilet trained and out of nappies but he likes to prove *that*, by pulling down his pants and squatting in the middle of the lounge and taking a huge steamy poo on my brand new, white shagpile rug.

GRACIE: Barry has taken a liking to eating anything and everything. Yesterday I caught him eating my Mac lipstick. Oh god, I hope he is gay. Then it will all be worth it.

LIZZY: You’re lucky that your little one will eat. I have tried everything and she just doesn’t want to. She is allergic to eggs, gluten, strawberries, chocolate and bacon. I mean we carry her epipen everywhere and she just doesn’t want to eat. She’ll only eat grapes and raisins, which are practically the same things. Any recipes you ladies could recommend?

ELAINE: Scrambled eggs? My ones love that. With a little bit of butter.

LIZZY: She can’t have eggs.

ELAINE: You could’ve said.

LIZZY: I did, you just weren’t listening.

ELAINE: Ha, yeah.

JACQUELINE: I mean, knowing you, I’m guessing you sit there with the epipen on the table?

LIZZY: What? No. Not on the table.

MUMSNET: It’s in her hand the entire time.

JACQUELINE: Wow. Not that I don’t admire your concern, but don’t you think that’s a little neurotic?

MUMSNET: Yeah, I wouldn’t put the little one under so much pressure you know. Have you tried cooking with her?

GRACIE: Yeah, maybe sit her on the counter top while you cook?

JACQUELINE: That’s not a bad idea.

LIZZY: Oh no, I couldn’t do that.

GRACIE: Why not?

LIZZY: What if she ate everything? And she ate something she was allergic to.

ELAINE: At least she would be eating.

LIZZY: Christ. Wait are you pregnant again?

ELAINE: This time it is twins, hence why I look so massive. Like the Titanic. Bit like you Liz.

LIZZY: It's Lizzy not Liz. And how many kids is that now?

ELAINE: Lost count if I'm honest. You can hardly talk, you're pregnant again.

LIZZY: I know, isn't it a miracle? Plus we are moving to a bigger house. I am just so tremendously excited.

LIZZY is on her gloating cloud, waiting for the other mothers to envy her. It is then rudely interrupted by ELAINE.

ELAINE: Now I have a question?

MUMSNET: Yes?

LIZZY: *(coming down from her cloud)* Please, if it is to do with your gross body, I do not want to hear about it.

ELAINE: I promise you. It is a light, reasonable and responsible question, okay?

LIZZY: Alright, the floor is yours.

ELAINE: Thank you. Christ you'd think it would be the worst question in the world.

LIZZY: Go ahead.

ELAINE: I am.

LIZZY: Go on then.

ELAINE: Alright!

MUMSNET: Come on ladies, stop it now.

ELAINE: So my question is - what is the best way to deal with an awkward itch, you know in ya down belows?

LIZZY: Christ! Can we just have one conversation not involving your fanny?

ELAINE: Without a fanny I wouldn't be here. Seriously, what do you all do?

GRACIE: May I respond?

MUMSNET: Go ahead.

GRACIE stands up. And starts to cross her legs and rub them together vigorously.

GRACIE: Like that?

LIZZY: Oh god.

JACQUELINE: See I do something else.

JACQUELINE stands, she puts her hands into her pockets and starts to scratch her private parts.

ELAINE: What if you don't have pockets?

GRACIE: That's true, most women's clothes don't have pockets.

JACQUELINE: I know right!

LIZZY: It's honestly never made any sense to me. We are the ones who need to carry more, why not give us bloody pockets!

ELAINE: Alright Liz/

LIZZY: Lizzy, not Liz.

ELAINE: /didn't know it meant that much to you.

LIZZY: Since you asked. This is how I deal with my awkward itch. Not that I get them.

LIZZY just stands completely and utterly still, with her eye twitching at the thought of the itch.

GRACIE: She's not going to hold out for much longer.

ELAINE: Come on, just itch the scratch.

MUMSNET: I think you mean scratch the itch.

ELAINE: Whatever.

JACQUELINE: Come on Lizzy, don't be stubborn!

LIZZY: I am going to get through this itch.

GRACIE: Why does *Catherine* itch any way? You been borrowing Elaine's pants? Again.

LIZZY: Right I never did that in the first place.

ELAINE nods and mouths "She did" to everyone else.

JACQUELINE laughs. They all stare intensely at LIZZY, waiting for her to cave in. LIZZY sits down abruptly.

JACQUELINE: You all good?

LIZZY: Of course, the itch has merely subsided.

LIZZY crosses her legs and rubs them together, ridding herself of the itch.

ELAINE: Ah, see my new man got these pants. They look great but, they don't half go up my front bottom, ya know.

LIZZY: Oh my goodness please. Please can we not go on and on about front bottoms, awkward itches and the fact we have unsustainable shaped bodies. We get it. Let's move on. Okay.

ELAINE: OOOOWEEEEEOOOOO.

LIZZY: Oh shut up.

ELAINE: Tight arse...I mean loose arse.

MUMSNET: Girls. Please. What did you all think about the Royal Baby?

LIZZY: *(slightly flustered at the thought of Prince William putting the car seat in perfectly)* I don't know about you but I was thoroughly impressed with the way William put the baby car seat in the Rolls perfectly! Oh goodness. My Willy couldn't do it that perfectly!

JACQUELINE: How many times do you think he practiced?

LIZZY: Oh not many, he's a natural. The perfect dad. You can tell.

ELAINE: Bollocks!

JACQUELINE: That posh prick probably had his whole day consumed by the car seat lessons. I mean what else is there to do in those castles and palaces?

LIZZY: Just - uh -

GRACIE: Now, now. It must've been difficult for him/

LIZZY: Thank you/

GRACIE: /those lessons must have caused a lot of pain to his well manicured hands and on top of that he had to do all that waving. What a hero. It must've been such a trial.

MUMSNET: Come on girls, let's not, belittle the poor man, he's been through enough, losing all that hair.

GRACIE: Speaking of Dad's, do you think it's time for me to tell Barry's dad?

LIZZY: It has been 2 years, and he doesn't know?

GRACIE: Not yet. He finishes his uni course this year, and I thought maybe, now is the time to tell him?

JACQUELINE: Would he believe you?

GRACIE: What do you mean?

JACQUELINE: If someone told me that I've had a baby that's been alive for 2 years, I'm not sure I would believe them -

GRACIE: You've got a point, oh crap, what am I going to do?

ELAINE: You know what you should do?

GRACIE: If it's go on Jeremy Kyle, I already thought of that and no. I can't. My Aunty said I couldn't.

LIZZY: I don't think "*going*" on a man, would help your problem anyway. That's how you got into this mess.

ELAINE: Huh?

GRACIE: Oh bugger. What do I say?

JACQUELINE: Are you sure you want to tell him?

GRACIE: Yes I'm sure. It'll mean he can look after him on occasion, so I can start my life again. Have some support.

MUMSNET: If that's what you feel you need.

GRACIE: It is.

LIZZY: What are you going to say to him?

GRACIE: I was hoping you'd all help me out with what I should say.

JACQUELINE: Alright.

MUMSNET: I'll be him. What's his name dear?

GRACIE: Matt.

MUMSNET: Right, I'll be Matt. Shagged you and never called back Matt. Right let's do this.

MUMSNET embodies MATT's essence.

GRACIE: Oh god, that's him!

MATT: Hey babe. What you sayin'?

LIZZY: Oh, babe?

GRACIE: Yeah, babe was his thing.

LIZZY: Ew, I hate that nickname. I'm not a pig.

GRACIE: I have something to tell you.

MATT: What is it, babe?

GRACIE stares at him, completely overwhelmed and speechless.

GRACIE: Oh god, look, I can't do this.

JACQUELINE: Let me try.

GRACIE: Okay.

JACQUELINE stands up to MATT and opens her mouth.

JACQUELINE: ...

The women look to her for the answers.

JACQUELINE: Nope, I've gone blank. I'm sorry, I cannot think of anything.

GRACIE: You're a lawyer for christ sake, you argue for a living.

JACQUELINE: I know, I'm sorry.

LIZZY: Why don't I try?

LIZZY faces MATT.

LIZZY: Now look here. You are a daddy.

MATT: Yeah I am. (*winks at LIZZY*).

LIZZY: Oh god. I didn't mean - you disgusting boy.

GRACIE: That is something he would say.

LIZZY: And you lost your virginity to this bloke?

GRACIE: (*Shamelessly nodding*) Yes. Yes I did.

LIZZY: Well, mister. You are a dad and you need to get used to that and start helping me out, so that I can get my life back on track.

ELAINE: Oh god, you're all terrible at this.

LIZZY: Like you could do it better?

ELAINE: You're joking me right, I've done this many many, many times, let me show you how it's done. Sit your arse down Liz.

LIZZY: Lizzy, not Liz.

ELAINE: So you go up to the sucker and say. You writing this down? Seriously take notes.

GRACIE gets out her pen and paper and starts to make notes on everything ELAINE is saying.

LIZZY: Gracie, you aren't seriously going to take some notes.

GRACIE: What? She's the only one out of all you who's actually done this.

ELAINE: You ready? I haven't got all day. So you go up to him and say. (*standing face to face with MATT*) Listen up you babbling moron. This time 2 years ago I found out I was pregnant with your baby. And I chose not to tell you because, I wanted you to have a life. And now it's payback time. It is time for you to give me those 2 years back. Because let's face it, you owe me big time. And if you do not, I will tell your mother -

GRACIE: His mother left him before he went to uni -

MUMSNET: (*as MUMSNET*) She's didn't actually (*as MATT*) I lied about that just to get in your Primark panties,

JACQUELINE: Sympathy is a great aphrodisiac.

ELAINE: Like my dad used to say. *All* men are bastards. Now. You. You are going to meet your son. Love him, and look after him for 4 days a week, including evenings so that I can start my career. And if not, I will

tell your mother. And she, I can guarantee, won't be happy with you but what she will be happy with is a beautiful grandson. That you are now going to look after for 4 days a week. Then you hand over the baby, and bugger off for a cup of tea or a Guinness.

GRACIE: But - how do I know if he's going to be suitable?

ELAINE: Who cares? He'll work it out.

GRACIE: I care, I mean I have put a lot of work into my son and I don't want him to come and ruin it.

ELAINE: Ah, I'm sure it'll be fine.

GRACIE: And you said you've done this before?

ELAINE: For my first 3 babies yeah.

GRACIE: And how did that go for you?

ELAINE: Not great, they told me to F OFF and I was stuck with the little ones.

GRACIE scribbles out everything she wrote down.

GRACIE: Thanks for the advice Elaine, real helpful! Oh, what am I going to do?

MUMSNET: You'll work it out, honey. It's going to be fine. I will see you all in three years.

MUMSNET and ELAINE exit.

SCENE 5

LIZZY, JACQUELINE and GRACIE are all in a coffee shop. Laughing and talking to each other. MUMSNET is their waiter.

LIZZY: Gosh, it's so much quieter without Elaine. I quite like it.

JACQUELINE: Yeah.

GRACIE: Remind me again why we didn't invite her?

LIZZY: We didn't invite her because she is a vulgar woman who has no standards and between us, has no boundaries concerning class.

GRACIE: That's a bit harsh, don't you think she might need us?

LIZZY: What? No? She is doing absolutely fine on her own. As am I.

JACQUELINE: Let's hope we don't bump into her then, I think she would be pretty peeved to see us all together.

LIZZY: She isn't the kind of woman who would, be around this area anyway, you know? I mean, it's expensive.

GRACIE: I'll say, £5 for black coffee.

LIZZY: You shouldn't be having caffeine anyway so -

ELAINE walks past.

LIZZY: Oh Christ! She's here. Everybody, hide! Just go.

LIZZY is the only one to hide. ELAINE enters the cafe.

ELAINE: Alright girls, didn't know there were a meeting today?

JACQUELINE: There, isn't.

ELAINE: What you all doing here then?

JACQUELINE: We just happened to bump into each other.

ELAINE: And have a three course meal?

GRACIE: Ha ha....yeah.

ELAINE: Well, alright then. You do you. Just, don't tell Lizzy you two met up without her. She really needs someone you know. I mean her husband don't seem to be doing much. I know how that feels. It can get lonely sometimes. Anyway, I will leave you two, to it. Enjoy your pudding, as they say.

JACQUELINE: Thanks. Have a good one!

ELAINE leaves. LIZZY stands up.

LIZZY: Oh. Well then. Ha!

GRACIE: Yeah.

The women exit.

SCENE 6

Enter MUMSNET.

MUMSNET: I read somewhere that when you are a parent. Days feel like years and years feel like minutes. I guess in a way that is true. 2 more years have passed since we saw the ladies and it's their first born's, first day at school tomorrow. So let's see how they are coping shall we?

Enter ELAINE, LIZZY, GRACIE and JACQUELINE. They are all discussing something.

MUMSNET: How are you all feeling about their first day of school tomorrow?

LIZZY: Please don't, I'm feeling *so* emotional.

JACQUELINE: I know, I don't know if I can say goodbye to my little one. I am going to miss him so much.

GRACIE: (*Bitterly*) Matt is coming with me.

Beat.

MUMSNET: That's got to be good for Barry to see both his parents there?

GRACIE: I guess so, I just don't get on with Matt so much. He wanted Barry to go to a Catholic school because that's what he did and that just annoyed me. I do not want my only child being indoctrinated?

JACQUELINE: Where are your kids going again?

GRACIE: Gate Hill School.

LIZZY: That's a private school isn't it?

GRACIE: Yes. Indeed. 6 grand a term.

LIZZY: Oh, that's quite cheap.

ELAINE: (*Pissed off at LIZZY*) Seriously?

JACQUELINE: How are you affording that?

GRACIE: I'm not, Matt's mother is fitting the bill. Since I don't want him to go to a Catholic school I apparently *have* to send him to a private school.

JACQUELINE: Why is his mother so involved?

GRACIE: Has been ever since I told him. She thinks I am too young to know how to look after *my* child.

LIZZY: You want to talk about mother in laws! Mine is the worst.

GRACIE: I have got you beat, hands down.

LIZZY: Oh yeah? My mother in law calls my baby a different name when I am not around.

GRACIE: Mine is a pushy bitch and -

MUMSNET: Woah, woah, woah ladies. Let's not argue.

The women nod at each other.

MUMSNET: Instead, let's turn this into a full on match of "who's got the worst mother in law?" Enter the ring ladies.

The women set out the stage to look like a boxing ring. The bell rings 'ding, ding'. In steps GRACIE and then LIZZY. JACQUELINE is preparing GRACIE for the ring. ELAINE is preparing LIZZY for the ring.

ELAINE: You've got this Liz. You have got this. Do not let me down! Alright!

ELAINE slaps her on the arse.

JACQUELINE: Now, you've got a lot of people counting on you.

GRACIE I'm nervous, coach!

JACQUELINE: Smell that?

GRACIE: Oh it might be some of Barry's poo.

JACQUELINE: No, it's the smell of a little bitch in the ring. And you are no little bitch. You're a big bitch. Now what did I say?

GRACIE: I'm a Big Bitch!

JACQUELINE: I didn't quite hear that!

GRACIE: I'm a Big Bitch!

JACQUELINE: What?

GRACIE: (*shouting*) I'm a Big Bitch!

JACQUELINE: Damn right you are! You've got this!

MUMSNET: On my right hand side, some people call her Liz but she likes to be called Lizzy! We have a pushy mother who will be just as bad as her mother in law one day - she weighs 8.5 stone and is 5ft 6 and is a yummy yoga mummy! Give it up for Lizzaaaaaay!

CROWD CHEERS.

And to my left, we have a young naive big bitch - she weighs 7 stone and is 5ft 2 - give it up for Graceeeeeaaaaayyyyyy!

Now ladies. Clean game.

Shake.

The women attempt to shake hands but realise they have boxing gloves on so just fist bump.

Let's go to war!

The women start to box each other!

LIZZY: She reorganises my house when she comes to visit!

LIZZY punches GRACIE.

GRACIE: Oooof! - she feeds Barry lemonade and coke when I specifically asked her not to give him any processed sugar!

GRACIE punches back, slightly harder.

MUMSNET: First few punches, looking good!

LIZZY: She gave my sister in law - 24 Karrat gold earrings for Christmas - know what she got me? Guess!? Guess?!

ELAINE: The same?

LIZZY: No, she got me a pair of socks from the charity shop! They still had the price tag on them!

LIZZY backs GRACIE even harder.

GRACIE: She used to call me *every* 15 minutes to see make sure Barry was safe!

GRACIE strikes LIZZY two more times.

MUMSNET: Oh - what a hit! I don't know what she is going to come up with next!

With each line said is a punch, the pace of the scene starts to increase rapidly.

LIZZY: She gives my dear son presents but not my darling daughter!

GRACIE: She hates my daughter's skin colour!

MUMSNET: Let's see if Liz has anything else in her.

LIZZY: It's Lizzy, not Liz! My mother in law, groped my dad at my engagement party!

GRACIE: She mocks my dead mother!

LIZZY: Sent us a bill for our own wedding present, *she* bought us!

GRACIE: She pretends the child is hers when she goes out.

LIZZY: Told me I looked fat in my wedding dress!

All the women pause. The game stops. The music stops.

JACQUELINE: Oh my goodness, I am so sorry Lizzy.

LIZZY: It's just so hard! She even sent me scrapbook with newspaper clippings of different diets!

MUMSNET: Oh honey!

All the women go to comfort LIZZY.

LIZZY: (*snapping back into fight mode*) Oh shut it! Let's keep going!

The game continues.

GRACIE: Alright then! She demands to see the birth certificate to make sure I didn't steal the child.

LIZZY: She shagged this guy just so she could get a new tiger skin rug!

GRACIE: She is the reason I got pregnant! She poked holes in Matt's condoms!

GRACIE strikes LIZZY across the face and falls to the floor. MUMSNET goes down to LIZZY and counts down from 10 -

MUMSNET: And we have a KNOCK OUT PUNCH! BOOM!

Lifting GRACE's arm up! The crowd cheer! The bell goes "ding, ding".

Back in reality.

ELAINE: One of my mother in laws is a peroxide blonde, ageing, botoxed, face lifted, breast enhanced alcoholic who yells abuse down the phone, said the 'c' word in front of my children.

LIZZY: That's not that bad - I mean you swear in front of your children all the time.

ELAINE: Yeah but I don't say cu -

MUMSNET: Okay! Your mother in law has got a point though, Gracie. You are very young. GRACIE: Yes, but I know what *my* child needs.

MUMSNET: Of course, without a doubt. What I was going to say, you are very young and people will think to take advantage of your sweet nature. You've got to fight back. Throw a few punches their way.

LIZZY: *My little angel is going to Saint Catherine's. The one up the road from your kid's school Elaine.*

ELAINE: Again, Liz. No one asked.

LIZZY: I just feel I am going to be counting down the hours until she gets home. I really am going to miss her.

GRACIE: Me too.

JACQUELINE: Time for another baby then.

GRACIE: Oh god no!

LIZZY: I'm already pregnant!

All the women scream and jump up and down.

ELAINE: How come you don't get this excited when I tell you I'm pregnant?

JACQUELINE: Because Elaine, we will celebrate when you are not pregnant. Seriously what number are you on now?

ELAINE: I cannot say.

MUMSNET: *(aside)* 7.

JACQUELINE: Exactly.

MUMSNET: How are you feeling about your child starting school tomorrow, Elaine?

ELAINE: Blessed. It's almost like the day the baby is born I am countin' down the days until they are at school. Man, I need a piss, again!

LIZZY: Me too.

They sit in silence. Anticipating a reaction.

MUMSNET: Aren't you going to go then?

ELAINE: What? No. It takes forever. Going to wait to get home.

LIZZY: Yeah, it's much cleaner at home. I just hate public toilets.

MUMSNET: Yes, being pregnant does make things more difficult but you don't want to hold on for too long and these toilets are quite clean.

ELAINE: No doubt there is a queue though. *(to LIZ)* I bet you are one of those women who takes an age, you're the one causing all the queues.

LIZZY: What queues?

JACQUELINE: You haven't noticed?

LIZZY: Seriously, what queues?

JACQUELINE: The endless stream of women queueing to use the loo, however when you look over to the men's toilets there is no line at all! What do women do?

ELAINE: They can't all have their periods at once!

JACQUELINE: Exactly!

LIZZY: Can't say I've noticed it.

GRACIE: Some people might have a medical condition.

ELAINE: What "I'm a slow cowitus" ?

GRACIE: No something like IBS.

JACQUELINE: Yes, but men have that too!

GRACIE: It could always be my 4 year old son in there, doing a poo. It's impossible to rush him. He seems to prefer pooing in public toilets, he likes to perform.

MUMSNET: Thank you for that enlightening story, Gracie.

JACQUELINE: My dear sister takes her trousers off and hangs them on the door to do a wee or a poo, says it feels more natural.

LIZZY: Wait, no one else does that?

JACQUELINE: Um...no?

ELAINE: I do get why people might take their time, I mean it's a free poo, isn't it?

MUMSNET: How so?

ELAINE: Free toilet paper and free water. Every little helps.

GRACIE: *(said like the Iceland advert)* And that's why Mums Crap in Public Toilets.

ELAINE stands up and taps her back pocket as they do on the ASDA adverts.

LIZZY: I think that's the ASDA thing not Iceland.

ELAINE: Oh yeah.

GRACIE: I find it a rather traumatic ordeal.

ELAINE: What? Going to ASDA?

GRACIE: No. Going to public toilets.

ELAINE: Why?

GRACIE: *(said with a quick pace)* Well, the germs, the people, the idea that a million people have used the toilet before you. And knowing some people don't wash their hands. The wee on the seats. Cocaine on the back of the toilet. Crap on the wall. Sick. Blood. Snot. Having nowhere to hang your coat or handbag. And worst of all the constant fear that there won't be enough toilet roll. Oh yes. And the persistent worry that someone will hear you open up your pad in the toilet. I mean the suspense is unbearable!

LIZZY: At school I got my friend to put on the hand dryer.

JACQUELINE: Wow!

GRACIE: So that, that is why I hate public toilets. And even when I desperately need the loo, I still do not go.

MUMSNET: Well good luck tomorrow gals! I am wishing you all the best.

Act Two

Scene One

4 years later. ELAINE is 44, she is not pregnant. JACQUELINE is 52 and is now a Judge. LIZZY is 36 and is having her midlife crisis, a little early. GRACIE is 27 and is newly engaged to a lovely man. The women are sitting outside in Winter, they all have their coats on and a blanket around their knees.

LIZZY: *(Sipping her wine)* Anyone else want to murder their kids?

A drastic moment of silence. Tumbleweed goes across the stage.

JACQUELINE: What was that now?

LIZZY: Hm?

GRACIE: You just said -

ELAINE: Anyone else want to murder their kids?

JACQUELINE: Yeah, I definitely heard that.

GRACIE: Me too.

MUMSNET: Oh good, I thought I was going mad.

LIZZY: You all must be imagining things. Ha. Who wants to murder their kids? Ha!

JACQUELINE: Me.

MUMSNET: *(aside, referencing the women)* Me.

GRACIE: *(to JACQUELINE)* You do?

JACQUELINE: I waited so long to be a mother, and now, all I have is this obnoxious 9 year old who just goes on and on about things that I already know. I'm a Judge in the Crown Court for Christ Sake - I think I know it's illegal to steal! And he - he says it as if it's news.

GRACIE: Tell me about it - I cannot go one day without wanting to put my hands around his little neck just to shut up the boring blabber.

LIZZY: I HATE IT. I hate them. I hate me. Increasingly I hate my husband. Hate it.

MUMSNET: Hate is quite a strong word.

LIZZY: Exactly, and that's how strongly I feel.

JACQUELINE: How old are yours now Lizzy?

LIZZY: 9, 8 and 6. ALL GIRLS. Absolute nightmare. All they do is fight.

ELAINE: Girls are the worst!

LIZZY: Right!

ELAINE: Boys are actually so much easier to deal with.

LIZZY: I prayed to have 3 girls, but now I find myself praying for God to change their decision.

MUMSNET: Girls fight so much more violently, there is a lot of emotional torture going on. Boys leave physical scars, girls well, they leave not only physical burns and scratches but emotional gashes that last life times. They really know how to get under your skin. Girls not only emotionally torture their siblings but their mothers are also prime targets.

LIZZY: Right! I have never felt so insecure.

ELAINE: God your kids must be awful if they taint even an inch of your ego.

LIZZY: Seriously though, I regret almost everything I do.

MUMSNET: Your girls know exactly what you're thinking, Elizabeth. Don't let them inside your head. Let it be water off a duck's back.

GRACIE: Girls are the worst.

ELAINE: What are you talking about? You don't have any.

GRACIE: Yeah I know -

LIZZY: Yeah, so don't try and get on in this -

ELAINE: You have no idea how we feel.

LIZZY: Try'na copy us.

ELAINE: Nah, listen, Gracie. I don't think you understand how lucky you are to just have one boy. You too, Jacqueline. Look here, I took my 12 year old out shopping to get her some bras, well, not bra's more training bras. You know, she was on the brink of bloomin'.

MUMSNET: She had started growing buds.

ELAINE: Yes. I figured I go and get her some bra's from M&S. My cousin works at M&S so got us a great discount. I may or may not have stolen something for myself. Anyway. When we got home, her sisters run into see us and go into her bag. They find these, bras and demand that she has what her sister has, I mean I would've got them for her but A) they don't need them and C) I can't afford them, and I'm not stealing them again. So I told them that they couldn't have them, and they seemed fine. After my afternoon catch up of Jeremy Kyle, I walked into the kitchen to get some water and found tiny cloth watermelons EVERYWHERE, they had cut them up. My two 8 year olds and my innocent 6 year old had shredded them. Little bitches.

ALL WOMEN: Oh god!

ELAINE: And that's not the worst part. They had cut Diamond's hair as well, like super short. So I ended up with my 12 year old in tears, my two 8 year olds looking like dykes or boys or whatever and my 6 year old running around the flat with scissors.

GRACIE: Thank God I have a boy.

ELAINE: I have two boys now, since their hair is so short.

JACQUELINE: I thought having the occasional argument about him not bathing was bad, but now I've heard that - wow.

MUMSNET: I can understand why you would want to murder them. *(aside)* Now kids - your parents don't really want to kill you -

LIZZY: Who said you could speak for me? I didn't ask you to. I wanna kill my kids.

JACQUELINE: You're joking.

LIZZY: *(crazy eyes, saying each word on each breath)* No no - I do. Little pixies. I just imagine opening that bedroom door, and smothering them until there is not one, single breath left.

MUMSNET: Disturbing.

LIZZY: Alright! I'm joking!

LIZZY imposes fake laughter. The women join with her. LIZZY abruptly stops and gives all the women crazy eyes.

JACQUELINE: Why did you call all us together then Gracie?

MUMSNET: She's got some exciting news!

GRACIE: I have some exciting news!

MUMSNET: Told you.

ELAINE: You're not engaged are you? News flash - people get engaged everyday - who gives a crap?

MUMSNET: Remember my rule from earlier.

ELAINE: No.

MUMSNET: If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all.

ELAINE: Oh right. Yeah. I was joking anyway.

JACQUELINE: Go ahead, tell us the big news!

GRACIE: I'm engaged.

ELAINE burst out laughing.

ELAINE: Oh man I was jokin'! What a bummer!

LIZZY: Elaine!

ELAINE: Sorry.

GRACIE: He took me away for the weekend -

LIZZY: Where to?

ELAINE: Paris, all the wankers take you to Paris.

LIZZY and JACQUELINE: Elaine. If you don't have anything nice to say don't say it at all! ELAINE: God you really can't take a joke can you! Where'd he take you sweetie?

GRACIE: Paris...

ELAINE: Thank god! I thought you were going to say Centre Parcs or somethin'.

MUMSNET: Elaine. I am going to block you from this conversation if you continue.

GRACIE: So - we were at this artsy café, he got down on one knee and proposed.

LIZZY: How romantic. My Willy didn't propose.

GRACIE: What do you mean?

LIZZY: I used his card to buy myself a ring and told him we were getting married.

ELAINE: Does that work?

JACQUELINE: She is clearly joking! Right?

LIZZY: Um. Yeah sure. Ha! What looney would do that?

ELAINE: Good idea. I might try that out.

JACQUELINE starts to fan herself.

GRACIE: You okay?

JACQUELINE: Yeah, just really hot.

GRACIE: But it's the middle of winter and we are sitting outside?

JACQUELINE: Yeah, I know.

JACQUELINE takes her coat off.

GRACIE: It's 1 degrees, put your coat on you crazy woman!

JACQUELINE: I can't. It's so hot.

MUMSNET: I see what this is. It's the menopause.

LIZZY: Shush! I don't want other people to hear!

MUMSNET: Oh get over yourself! Literally 50% of people have it at some point in their lives, the other 50% are just gonna have to get used to that.

JACQUELINE: Oh god I do wish the pause part of that word was working right now! I am burning up. I think there is actual steam coming off my body.

ELAINE: Do you remember when I went through it?

LIZZY: Oh yeah you had that weird smell. Like an eggy smell.

GRACIE: But it wasn't quite eggy though was it?

LIZZY: No, no it wasn't. It's hard to describe. It was disgusting though.

ELAINE: Yes, t'anks.

JACQUELINE: I have been going through this for the last 5 years. It's actually disgusting. I feel so hideous. And look!

JACQUELINE takes her top off.

ELAINE: Put your surprisingly perky tits away.

JACQUELINE: Not until I have shown you - this!

She turns around and shows all the spots on her back. She has bad back-ne.

GRACIE: Oh -

LIZZY: My -

ELAINE: Puss filled -

MUMSNET: Heaven!

JACQUELINE: Isn't it disgusting? Ever since I hit the menopause that is what it's been like. And I used to love wearing backless dresses.

LIZZY: Why not get a facial for your back?

MUMSNET: Is it bad that I want to squeeze them all?

GRACIE: No it is not... this is delicious.

ELAINE: There is something deeply wrong with you.

LIZZY: That is one thing I am looking forward to about my kids turning teenagers, the spot squeezing!

MUMSNET: Oh yes! It is delectable!

ELAINE: Now I hate to be rude -

LIZZY scoffs at her remark.

ELAINE: But we are in a public place. Can you put your jiggers away please?

JACQUELINE: Actually I think I am going to sit like this - it's nice and cool.

ELAINE: No it's far from "cool".

JACQUELINE: You girls don't mind do you?

The women look at each other, not knowing how to respond.

JACQUELINE: Thanks gals.

LIZZY takes a sip of wine.

JACQUELINE: I went out on a date the other week, it was a disaster. My friend introduced me/

LIZZY: /you have another friend?

JACQUELINE: Yeah...?

LIZZY: Ha! Of course.

JACQUELINE: She introduced me to this civil servant, Jerry I think his name was. The date was going well, at the beginning, but it was what he did at the end. He lent over to me, garlic breath and whispered something to me.

LIZZY: What was it?

JACQUELINE: He just whispered the word “*penetration*” in my ear. I could feel the condensation of his breath on my neck. I felt so sick. I stopped the cab and got out. It wasn’t what he said that made me nauseous, it was his foul weird smelling breath that nearly got me heaving. It was like I was pregnant again.

GRACIE: That sounds hideous. Also what made him think whispering that word to you was going to work? Next time, he should take a mint.

JACQUELINE: Yes!

GRACIE looks up from her phone looking concerned.

MUMSNET: Everything okay?

GRACIE: Not really, I’m getting worried. Barry doesn’t seem to get on with Josh.

JACQUELINE: I’m sure he’ll get used to him. It takes time for kids to adjust. Has Matt met Josh?

GRACIE: Matt ignores him.

LIZZY: Clearly Matt still likes you -

MUMSNET: Well, yes he told her!

All the WOMEN gasp.

GRACIE: That was our secret!

LIZZY: Spill?

GRACIE: He wanted me, Barry and him to be a family. Offered me to move into his new house.

LIZZY: What did you say?

GRACIE: It was tempting, I was going to say yes. I mean Barry would have his dad, all the time, and it would be great for him - but - I then walked into the garden with Barry one afternoon and there Matt was, shagging Ella Arrowman in the hot tub. And I guess, I just knew that's *exactly* what it would be like even if we were together.

JACQUELINE: Cheeky Fucker.

MUMSNET: *(aside)* From now on, we will use the abbreviation of CF.

JACQUELINE: Seriously though, a hot tub? They are essentially sex ponds, really truly disgusting. I wouldn't want to get in one with anyone.

LIZZY: With the state of your back I don't think they would let you into their hot tub.

ELAINE: Cheeky Fucker though -

MUMSNET: That's not the worst CF story, there are worse stories believe me. There really should be an award ceremony for some of the CF stories you've got ladies.

GRACIE: Yes, there should be.

A silence lingers between all the women.

MUMSNET: Let's do it then.

The stage goes slightly darker, and there is a spotlight on each one of the women. MUMSNET approaches a microphone dressed in a fine dress with a gold envelope.

MUMSNET: Hello and welcome to the annual CF awards. They asked me to host this year as apparently I am the epitome of CF stories. Tonight we will see a winner collect an award for each category! The award was moulded off Gracie's son's recent art work - yes it is a clay penis but we won't tell him that! Ha! Right let's get on with the show.

In our first category we have, CF Neighbours. And the nominees are, Elizabeth, for her neighbour borrowing her lawn mower and it being returned with a dead rabbit inside. Gracie for her Delivery madness dispute and Jacqueline for her neighbours dumping their new born on her for one week just so they could go on holiday without her knowing.

And the winner is - Gracie for her Delivery madness dispute.

GRACIE stands up completely overwhelmed by her award.

GRACIE: Oh my goodness, thank you so much! I cannot thank you enough for this. Wow. Where to start! Let's start with a thank you to my neighbour! I would like to thank my neighbour for being such a CF. He asked if I could be in to take a special delivery as he couldn't be in that day. And after I said yes he had all his parcels delivered to my house, including a grand piano. So thank you to Mr.Wanker for getting me here today.

GRACIE takes her award and sits down.

MUMSNET: Ah wonderful. The next category is CFs and food. This award is usually disputed about on twitter and other forums, there are too many to choose from but tonight we have narrowed down the nominees, all four of them. *(pause)* The nominees are Gracie for her Sandwich page flicking incident, Elaine for her Pay Food and dump dispute and Jacqueline for her, bit into everything and put it back fight.

And the award goes to. *(pause)* Elaine for her Pay, Food and Dump dispute. Please come up and collect your award!

ELAINE goes to collect her award.

ELAINE: Ah bugger, I have left some fanny condensation on my chair, damn.

She reaches the microphone and accepts her award.

ELAINE: Ah Jesus, thank you so much. I couldn't have done it without my ex boyfriend of mine. Put all his food in my trolley, then said he forgot his wallet and asked if I would pay for it....which I did. And then well, he dumped me once he had loaded it into his car.

The women wince in pain. ELAINE goes to sit back down.

MUMSNET: There have been some good stories tonight, ladies and gentlemen. Some of them *you* wouldn't believe. Such as people charging you for a playdate that they invited *your* kid to. Or that one bastard eating all the gluten free biscuits because they look nicer, even though he has no dietary restrictions. Or the dick head neighbour asking you to mow your lawn because it spoils their view from their house. There are many many more stories that you can find. But for tonight that is it. Until next year. Let's see what other people think they can get away with shall we? Thank you. And Good Night! Back to the dinner.

JACQUELINE: I'm struggling to get mine to even go near a shower. I don't want my only son looking like a scruff bag when he goes to school. We went to a wedding last weekend, my sister's wedding and it - was - embarrassing. She didn't ask him to be a flower boy or anything, she had this whole Arian look going for her wedding. All blonde, all beautiful and all blue eyed. Which my son isn't. I did over heard her saying that she thought he was "dirty" - and that was after I forcibly made him have a shower.

LIZZY: He's not *that* terrible looking.

JACQUELINE: How nice of you to say. Plus all the flower girls got paid by the guests. The bride and groom gave them a money box each and they went round table to table taking collections. At first I thought it was for charity but no, it was for the kids. They got at least a tenner from me, I bet they got about a grand each, and they weren't even related to her.

LIZZY: That's weird.

ELAINE: With my second wedding the Mother of my ex husband wore a replica of my wedding dress.

LIZZY: Oh god.

ELAINE: I do admit, that it was a generic one ordered off eBay. And it wasn't really a wedding dress. But it was white. Sort of.

LIZZY: I went to a wedding where, I was a bridesmaid for a cousin when I was 17. My aunt's pervert husband kept making inappropriate comments about my cleavage and what he'd do if he were a younger man. I told y father what was going on, and he sneaked up behind him, tapped him on the shoulder and punched his lights out, which was awkward as there wasn't anyone to walk my cousin down the aisle in the end.

MUMSNET: Serves the bastard right if you ask me.

GRACIE: I've got that beat. So everyone of my friends are at that age where they're getting married etc and at last weeks wedding, the vicar spent a large proportion of the ceremony discussing the bride's and groom's personal flaws in some grave detail (*imitating the priest*) ...and you, Jennifer, are prone to spending money without thinking of the consequences, gluttony a huge sin. You must rein that habit in. Kudos to him though, she spent 15 grand her dress and it wasn't even that pretty or well fitting. The priest then went on to say (*imitating the priest*) Of course, we all know James has an eye for the ladies and for his part he must learn to behave more modestly if he expects to keep you. Lust too is a sin, James. On and on he went. There was just such an awkward feeling in the room, my fiancé was absolutely wetting himself with laughter. I have to admit so was I, they used pitch themselves to be these perfect people, they were always the couple you would be jealous of. It was nice to know that, that wasn't the case.

JACQUELINE: Christ, I hope your wedding wont be like that.

GRACIE: I'm not getting married in a church for starters.

JACQUELINE: When is the wedding then?

GRACIE: Not for a few years I don't think.

LIGHTS FADE.

MUMSNET stands walks centre stage.

MUMSNET: Right, we are going to jump a few years into the future. Here's a little update on the women. It's been 6 years since we last met the women - Gracie is *finally* getting married, but not to the original man she got engaged to 6 years ago. Lizzy got a job as a ballet teacher at her daughters school, she needed something to occupy her as her husband takes weekly business trips to foreign locations. Jacqueline is doing really well, she had a few flings with other guys but hasn't found anyone just yet -

A MAN walks onto the stage. MUMSNET looks at him. He looks at her. She looks at him. He looks at her. She looks at him. She is waiting for him to speak. It takes him a while to realise.

MAN: Is this where the Dadsnet play is?

MUMSNET: Um, no. That's next door.

MAN: Oh right. Thanks for letting me know.

MUMSNET: No problem.

He stands and stares at MUMSNET.

MUMSNET: Is there any reason why you are still here?

MAN: Oh, you want me to go?

MUMSNET: Yes, we are in the middle of a play. You're being quite rude.

MAN: Oh right, you sure you don't need any help?

MUMSNET: Pretty sure.

MAN: I'll just go then, you said Dadsnet is through here?

MUMSNET: Yes.

MAN: Cheers.

MAN exits.

MUMSNET: Like we need another play with an all male cast. As I was saying. Where was I? God he has really distracted me. Right. Elaine. Elaine, well she is doing okay. Not had any more kids. Luckily. But yes. Gracie eventually got Lizzy to organise her hen party, which meant Elaine reorganised the entire thing.

"Filthy/Gorgeous by the Scissor Sisters starts to play. Gracie walks in. JACQUELINE is 58, GRACIE is 33, ELAINE is 50 and LIZZY is 42. GRACIE is having her Hen Party. The women are all getting dressed in the mirror.

MUMSNET: First issue of the night, what to wear. Now just to recap. Grace is the youngest, she's 33 now. Elaine is 50, not that her age will restrict her clothing choice. Lizzy is 42 but has a smokin' bod still. And Jacqueline is 58, she wears a robe and a wig most of the time so has no idea what to wear outside of work.

JACQUELINE stands in her wig and gavel with her hammer.

JACQUELINE: I cannot wear this.....can I?

MUMSNET: Well no, you look too -

JACQUELINE: Serious?

MUMSNET: That's one way to put it.

JACQUELINE: What I wouldn't do to be young again.

GRACIE: *(On the phone)* Young. I'm too young to get married?

LIZZY is wearing a school girls outfit with her hair in pony tails.

MUMSNET: *(to LIZZY)* Trying to get down with the kids are you?

LIZZY: Is it too much?

MUMSNET: You did say no costumes on the invitation.

LIZZY: I did?

MUMSNET: Yes.

MUMSNET: *(aside)* I only put it there, to avoid this exact situation. That skirt is far too short Liz.

LIZZY: Please, it's Lizzy.

MUMSNET: Dressed like that, it's Liz. Trust me.

LIZZY: Fine, I'll change. God!

ELAINE: *(getting her side caught in the her dress zip)* Ah fffff -

JACQUELINE: *(looking at herself in disgust)* uck!

LIZZY: *(to MUMSNET)* Wait does this show too much of my -

ELAINE: Tits. I'm 50. I can wear what I like. Let's get my tits -

GRACIE: *(shouting off stage)* Out! Get out of my purse, Barry. *(back on her phone)* This is totally -

MUMSNET: Unacceptable. Elaine, you can't seriously wear that?

ELAINE: Wear what?

MUMSNET: That -

JACQUELINE: Monstrosity. Seriously, when did I let myself get so -

GRACIE: Frumpy! My wedding dress isn't frumpy it's -

LIZZY: Sophisticated! Just beautiful and sophisticated. Thanks to yoga no one could tell that I've had 3 kids.

GRACIE: *(shouting down the phone)* Oh you are kidding me! Yes I get that there are four weddings and a -

JACQUELINE: Funeral. I look like I am going to a funeral.

They all stare at their reflection.

LIZZY: *(wearing a long black dress)* Oh I look good. You can't go wrong with a little black dress.

MUMSNET: Nu uh. Everyone loves a nun.

JACQUELINE: Theme. No no it wasn't a themed party was it? Should I be wearing a costume?

MUMSNET: If it is, you can wear your work outfit!

JACQUELINE: Shut it. Where's the -

GRACIE: Invitations. That's right, I sent you the template invitations a few weeks ago. Remember?

JACQUELINE: That's it. I remember now. It's not a themed night. No penises. No sashes and no -

ELAINE and LIZZY are now standing at a bus stop together, waiting for the others.

ELAINE: Fun! That is what tonight is about. Lots and lots of fun! That's why I've got this whistle -

She blows it.

LIZZY: I'm genuinely blown away by what you think is fun....please make sure that you're good, for Gracie's sake.

GRACIE: Oh for God's sake. Right I'm hanging up the phone. It's my hen party so I need to get ready *(she hangs up the phone. aside)* What is even the point of having a wedding planner?

ELAINE: There is no point on you trying to damper my mood. I am too, buzzed.

LIZZY: Whatever. Where's Jackie?

JACQUELINE: (*lying face down in a pile of clothes*) I don't know what to wear.

GRACIE: I don't know what to wear. I mean I don't have any clothes. (*as she rummages through a pile on the floor*)

MUMSNET: See you don't want to look like a mum, but you want to look sexy but not a slut and not like you're trying too hard either. It's a rather huge dilemma.

JACQUELINE: Oh I bet Lizzy is all sorted. (*imitating LIZZY*) Oh you can hardly tell I've had three kids, I'm just super slender and sophisticated. It's the yoga.

LIZZY: Breath in, and breath out. This is going to be an evening of positive energy - (*she spots the bag that ELAINE is holding*)

JACQUELINE: Seriously, what do I wear? I mean is this okay? I really have nothing to compare it with, not sure what middle aged women wear?

LIZZY: Paper bag? Elaine, what's in the paper bag?

ELAINE: That's for me to know and for you to find out.

LIZZY: If it's a bunch of -

JACQUELINE: (*coughs*) Ah I've peed myself a bit -

GRACIE: Do I need to change my pants? It's not like anyone's going to see them -

LIZZY: Where is she?

JACQUELINE: Here! I'm here. Sorry. What a nightmare! Choosing what to wear. If I could I would just walk around naked -

ELAINE: Ah none of us want that.

LIZZY: (*directed at ELAINE*) No we don't.

ELAINE: Right I've forgotten something so, be back in a jiffy -

LIZZY: We'll meet you -

GRACIE: There. I look fantastic. Can't go wrong with a little black dress.

MUMSNET: No, you can't.

LIZZY and JACQUELINE are sitting in the bar. There is a bottle of Prosecco on the table with 4 glasses. GRACIE arrives.

GRACIE: Hello ladies. Woo!

MUMSNET: Now is the part where everyone proceeds to compliment each other. But never will say what they mean. Let me translate.

GRACIE: Jacqueline! You look gorgeous. I love the dress. It hangs on you so well -

MUMSNET: Which is code for, good that it's loose, lose a bit of weight fatty.

JACQUELINE: Oh thank you. I mean I look like crap compared to you.

MUMSNET: Now she genuinely believes that. But she also knows that if she was Gracie's age, she would look a million times better than she does currently.

LIZZY: You both look, astonishing.

MUMSNET: Digging for a compliment.

LIZZY: Especially you, Gracie.

MUMSNET: No one going to compliment her?

LIZZY: You just look very, bridal.

MUMSNET: If no ones going to complement her then I'm going to have to. I seriously think she's going to explode if she doesn't get it soon.

LIZZY: Seriously. Beautiful.

GRACIE: You too.

LIZZY: Aww thank you. I know. Couldn't tell I've had three kids, could you?

MUMSNET: However Gracie does significantly look better than Lizzy.

LIZZY: *(to MUMSNET)* Skinny bitch, she doesn't even do yoga.

MUMSNET: I know right! What is up with that?

ELAINE enters stage left. The women are stage right. LIZZY's phone rings. She answers.

ELAINE: Where are you?

LIZZY: What do you mean, where are we?

ELAINE: I can't see you, this place is so packed.

LIZZY: No it's just me and the others.

ELAINE: How many others did you invite?

LIZZY: Just, Jacqueline, Gracie and myself.

MUMSNET: Cheers.

LIZZY: Where are you?

ELAINE: I'm at Blinds, where are you?

LIZZY: Shutters.

ELAINE: Well, you're clearly in the wrong place.

LIZZY: The invitation says, *(she gets out the invitation)* Blinds. Did you change this?

ELAINE: No. Come to Blinds then, get your arses a move on.

LIZZY: Right apparently we are in the wrong place.

The women sigh and stand up. JACQUELINE takes the bottles of Prosecco and they walk to ELAINE's side of the stage. They all look quite worried.

ELAINE: Why the hell are you all dressed like that?

MUMSNET: I don't think I need to translate for Elaine. She's pretty transparent with her views.

LIZZY: Like what?

ELAINE: Like you're going to a funeral.

JACQUELINE: That's what I thought.

ELAINE: Jeeesus! Right.

GRACIE: Elaine this is such a dodgy part of London, like, I was scared we were going to get mugged. I much preferred the other place.

LIZZY: Me too.

ELAINE: Lizzy was going to give you a forgetful night -

MUMSNET: - won't they forget it anyway because that's what alcohol does?

ELAINE: Yeah, but it would've been forgetful for all the wrong reasons. Here you will forget the night for the right reasons. Put this on.

She throws several Hen Party trinkets to the women.

LIZZY: The invitation said no sashes and no penises.

ELAINE: Which would mean no fun! Let's get this party started!

JACQUELINE: *(examining the penis)* I've never seen one look like this.

ELAINE: Let's get some music going. We have our own private booth and aux cord for the first hour, next hour...whatever and then we go into the main club. Alright? All the drinks that we consume in here are free, so drink as much as you can.

GRACIE: How much did this cost you?

ELAINE: Nothing really.

LIZZY: So what did you do with our money that we contributed to the venue?

ELAINE: What money? Music, any requests?

LIZZY: Can we have a party classic?

JACQUELINE: Like Abba...

LIZZY: I was thinking more Madonna...

GRACIE: I was thinking more Rihanna.....

MUMSNET: The generation gap is proving to be interesting.

ELAINE: Right. Let me just put it on shuffle and see what happens shall we...

ELAINE attempts to hit shuffle on her iPod using her index finger, but it doesn't work.

ELAINE: They're constantly changing the layout. Now where's shuffle?

LIZZY: *(using her index finger)* Give it to me. It's right - huh - that's odd they really have moved it

JACQUELINE: *(also using her index finger)* Pass it over. I work with computers all the time so - seriously where is it?

MUMSNET: There is one huge telling about when you're a mother. And that is, that you use your index finger to type or use any technology. And you will press the same thing about 5 times thinking it will make a

difference some how. It will be with utter purpose, almost like you are deliberately trying to annoy people around you. See.

JACQUELINE presses the same button 5 times, huffing while she does it.

GRACIE: Let me have a look.

All 4 women are surrounding the phone.

JACQUELINE: I need my reading glasses.

GRACIE: Ah ha! There it is. Hiding in the corner.

She presses it a few times, it still doesn't work. Eventually on the 5th try it works.

Music plays, there is a montage of movement that the women do to show the deterioration of the night.

Music stops.

JACQUELINE: What was that hideous music they were playing?

The women all holding up GRACIE, who slurs the occasional response.

LIZZY: I think it was R&B -

ELAINE: What does R&B stand for again?

GRACIE: Rough and Black.

LIZZY: No. No it doesn't. SHHHHH.

GRACIE stops walking. She then leans over and vomits on their shoes.

GRACIE: I love you all so very much.

JACQUELINE: We love you too.

LIZZY: Speak for yourself she just vomited on my Jimmy Choos.

GRACIE: Like a train. Choo...Choo.. oh I'm going to be sick again.

JACQUELINE: We need to get her to bed. Lizzy don't you live near here?

LIZZY: Yeah.

JACQUELINE: Do you have a spare room?

LIZZY: Several.

ELAINE: Great. We'll all stay at yours then.

JACQUELINE: Thanks again Liz. This way is it?

LIZZY: Uh yeah.

All the women slam into the house. They are all standing by the door. LIZZY takes all their glitter and feather bowers away.

JACQUELINE: What you doing that for?

LIZZY: I do have some rules, that I would appreciate you would all follow.

JACQUELINE: Such as no feather bowers or glitter?

LIZZY: Specifically not purple feather bowers and definitely no glitter.

GRACIE: Why no glitter?

LIZZY: Glitter is the herpes of arts and crafts.

ELAINE: Only if you get a vajazzle!

LIZZY: What?

ELAINE starts to undress, alongside GRACIE.

LIZZY: What are you doing?

ELAINE: What does it look like we are doing?

LIZZY: I looks like you are about to sleep on my sofa completely naked, which is another rule. No naked bodies on my sofa.

ELAINE: That's an insane rule. You're telling me that you don't sit naked on your sofa. You don't have hot, naked, sex, your sofa?

LIZZY: Ew! No! Please, get yourself dressed. Right I am going upstairs. The kitchen is there, glasses in the top and I will be down in the morning. Jenny wakes up quite early so don't be alarmed if you wake up to her watching cartoons. Can one of you get Gracie a bucket, I don't want her to throw up all over my lovely new carpet. It's under the sink.

JACQUELINE: What the carpet?

LIZZY: No, the bucket.

JACQUELINE: Oh yeah, of course.

ELAINE: I'll sort that for you, don't you worry.

LIZZY: Goodnight all, love ya.

LIZZY leaves the room. ELAINE and GRACIE continue to undress and lie on the sofa. JACQUELINE walks around her house judging every single corner of it.

The next morning.

LIZZY enters the room. GRACIE is still asleep on the sofa. ELAINE is wearing just a t-shirt. JACQUELINE is getting dressed.

LIZZY: What the fuck are you all doing?

ELAINE: Woah! Language!

ELAINE exits to go to the toilet.

MUMSNET: Yeah, Lizzy that's not okay. We agreed -

LIZZY: Oh shut up! I said no naked people on my sofa.

JACQUELINE: What? Gracie isn't naked.

JACQUELINE walks over, lifts the blanket up to prove a point, GRACIE is naked.

JACQUELINE: I guess she used that glitter for something in the end, it really is the herpes of arts and crafts.

LIZZY: What? There is glitter. No, no, no.

JACQUELINE: Don't worry it's all stuck on her lady bits. By the way Jenny is in there, wrapping her sandwich for football later.

LIZZY: You didn't let her use the clingfilm did you?

JACQUELINE: Yeah why?

LIZZY: Rule number 2, no one under the age of 99 months is allowed to use clingfilm!

JACQUELINE: I mean -

ELAINE enters.

LIZZY: Elaine are you wearing anything underneath that?

ELAINE: No. By the way, she said she needed face paint for the match today, you didn't have any so I got some charcoal from the fire and wet it a bit. She's good at tennis you know, we practiced this morning, in the kitchen.

LIZZY: *(boiling)* Putting aside the fact you broke 3 rules in just your sentence there, can I ask where are your under garments?

ELAINE: Oooo under garments, that sounds fancy -

LIZZY: - Elaine!

ELAINE: I am washing them in your sink, didn't quite make it in time last night, I used the dish brush if that's okay? I would not go in the downstairs crapper for a while, there are no windows and I made a stink filled deposit in there.

ELAINE sits on the sofa. LIZZY starts to fill with rage.

LIZZY: Get. Off. My. Sofa. Get your filthy pants out my sink. And get out.

ELAINE: I was promised breakfast.

LIZZY: No you weren't.

ELAINE: I was too!

LIZZY: Oh my god. Get out! All of you.

JACQUELINE: What about Gracie?

LIZZY: Please. Just leave.

ELAINE: Why?

LIZZY: Because Elaine none of you have even the remote respect for my house rules. Don't let anyone under the age of 99 months use clingfilm, no poos in the downstairs loo, no using charcoal for face paint, don't wash your pants in my sink. No glitter. No feathers. No snowboarding on the stairs. No skipping in the lounge, no tennis indoors and especially no sleeping on my sofa naked! GRACE!

GRACIE wakes up. She looks around confused. Pause. She vomits. LIZZY is so filled with fury she stands perfectly still.

JACQUELINE: Calm, it's fine Lizzy.

MUMSNET: We'll sort it.

LIZZY exits taking deep breaths.

ELAINE: I ain't cleaning up nothin'.

MUMSNET: Oh yes you are, relatively young lady. It was your responsibility to put a bucket under Gracie. Get your pants out the sink and start to Hoover all the floor. Jackie, wake up Gracie and sober her up and once she is awake get her in a cab home. And me, I will clean up the sick.

The women leave, JACQUELINE carrying GRACIE. MUMSNET exits and re enters, she starts to clean up the sick.

MUMSNET: Stupid drunk girls. It never changes. God this stinks. I can deal with poo and snot and all that. But my kryptonite is defiantly vomit. Oh god. *(she gags)* Can we just skip to the part where the kids are leaving home, these girls are starting to annoy me.

Enter LIZZY, she is jumping up and down with excitement. ELAINE comes in smoking a fag. JACQUELINE comes in scratching her head. GRACIE comes in pregnant. LIZZY is 45, ELAINE is 53, JACQUELINE is 61 and GRACIE is 36.

JACQUELINE: I don't think my son is ever going to leave home, seriously, I thought by 18 I would have him gone -

LIZZY: My first one is gone, thank goodness, just two more left.

ELAINE: I am nowhere near the finish line, still got 4 left to get rid of.

LIZZY: Charming.

ELAINE: Were you, or were you not just boasting about your first daughter leaving?

LIZZY: I know but just! Ah! She's gone. The bitch has gone.

MUMSNET: Woah!

LIZZY: What, she was!

GRACIE: I found it really hard to say goodbye to him, off he went to live with his dad in Australia for a year. I am seriously going to miss him.

MUMSNET: That won't matter though, you've got a little one on the -

GRACIE: Shush! No one knows yet.

LIZZY: You're pregnant?

GRACIE: Yes, 11 weeks!

All the women run to her and jump for joy.

GRACIE: I can't wait to see that milk drunk look on a baby's face again.

ELAINE: You won't be jumping for joy when you've got to go through all this again.

GRACIE: What are you talking about?

MUMSNET: Need I remind you of the first act of the play?

GRACIE: I guess you forget the horrible stuff don't you?

ELAINE: Nope, it is tattooed on my mind.

LIZZY: I better be off! I'm teaching a yoga class today.

MUMSNET: Are you happy, Lizzy?

LIZZY: What?

MUMSNET: Pardon. You heard me.

LIZZY: I do well.

MUMSNET: That's not what I asked.

ELAINE: How can she not be happy? She's got everything.

LIZZY: I don't. In fact, Willy and I are, well, I think we might separate.

JACQUELINE: Really?

LIZZY: Yes, it was my idea. After my first one left, there was relief for a fleeting moment but there is too much quiet in the house. And it is just me. The other two I hardly ever see. The house is dead. I don't think I am ready for that silence just yet.

MUMSNET: I would say that you're not ready for that silence because you are not content with your surroundings. What do you want to do when you grow up?

LIZZY: I'm 45, I am grown up.

MUMSNET: Psh! What do you want to do when you grow up?

LIZZY: What I really want to do, is have my own farm, two horses, go riding everyday, yoga in the fields.

MUMSNET: Maybe have someone in your life that loves you?

LIZZY: That's true. No one loves me. My kids certainly don't.

ELAINE: Horse crap. Your kids love you. They've got a fine example of a strong woman in front of them.

LIZZY: Is this cringing anyone else out?

MUMSNET: Who gives a shit? They've had their laughs, let's talk about something that matters shall we. By the time your last child has left you all, you must all be doing something that makes you happy. Start now, because you've only got a few years left. Elaine, what do you want to be when you grow up?

ELAINE: I want to be astronaut, but the probability of that happening is small, didn't really pay much attention in school. But if I want anything for my future it's, my kids. I want my kids to have the best life possible and to not follow in my footsteps.

LIZZY: At least you showed them what not to be.

ELAINE: You really just get me sometimes.

MUMSNET: Jacqueline?

JACQUELINE: I want to work. I also want my son to leave home, I really do.

ELAINE: Is that for a special man, then?

JACQUELINE: You know what, I really think that I'm not the kind of woman to find a husband or whatever. I am perfectly happy just being me. But that can't happen when I have a lump of a teenager around the house.

MUMSNET: Gracie? Where do you want to be?

GRACIE: I would like to have another baby after this. And I want to see them travel the world. See all the things that I haven't.

MUMSNET: Why not go with them?

GRACIE: I'll be too old, don't you think?

JACQUELINE: When has age ever stopped you from doing what you want?

MUMSNET: She has a point. It's never too late to ask yourself what you want to be when you grow up. Make sure that you're content. Because when your kids leave. You will be alone. But you need to be happy about that. Find what makes you happy.

The women stare at each other, they smile and disperse.

MUMSNET: No doubt in the future they would all face CFs and more hideous weddings, but they all ended up well in the end. Elaine's kids took nothing from her example and became successful nurses, doctors, teachers, one of her kids even became an astronaut. They all vowed to work hard and earn money, to make sure their mother was comfortable when she was older, they did hate her a little though. Gracie, was happy with her new man, he treated her right. Her baby was sweet, but it was her last. Both kids have left home now. Her two kids are travelling the world together, they are in Thailand at the moment. Gracie is going to join them in Australia in 6 weeks. Lizzy's kids all grew up to do some amazing things, well that is what she tells everyone. She re-married. Willy wasn't working out. The older he got, the cheekier he got. So she found a new fella called Eric, they live in Yorkshire now. Got a little cottage with some horses. And finally, Jacqueline, her only son didn't leave home until he was 30, he needed a massive kick up the arse to leave. He now writes for the Guardian, reporting mostly on his mother's cases. She still works. No sign of a man in her life yet but I think she only really needed her son to keep her truly happy and content.

"Alone Again (Naturally) by Gilbert O'Sullivan plays." Each of the mums sits down one by one. Waving goodbye to their children as they leave. They all sit down on a chair. Take a deep sigh. Finally contented by their surroundings. They feel as if something is missing.

MUMSNET: And that my dears, is where we come to a close. After all the children are gone. And all the partners are in bed. You are alone. Naturally. Alone. But forever loved, by the home and family that you alone have created. There is no one else like your mother on this planet, whether she biological or not. She can be a cow at times. I'm talking about you, Elaine, but they are still your mum, and there is no one else on the planet who can replace your mother. And here they are. All 4 mothers. Sitting by them selves. In their homes. All having the same collective thought.

LIZZY: After all the noise.

ELAINE: All the mayhem of my many children.

JACQUELINE: All the arguments, the spats, the laughter, spillages, and drama.

GRACIE: I can finally sit here. Quiet in my home.

MUMSNET: Knowing everyone is safe. And yet. Even with their, oh so desired peace and quiet, they could answer this one simple question with ease -

ELAINE: Would I do it all over again? Um?

LIZZY: *(sincerely)* Yes.

GRACIE: *(slight smirk)* Regrettably yes.

JACQUELINE: *(Without hesitation)* In a heartbeat.

ELAINE: Would I do it all over again? *(pondering genuinely)* Fuck no.

THE END.