

MOTHER, HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

Book and lyrics by Jessie Monika
Music by Christy Uktolseya



Petra Little Theatre's
New Play Development Program Series

Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 19 Tahun 2002 tentang Hak Cipta Lingkup Hak Cipta

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MOTHER,
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by Jessie Monika

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Originally produced by Petra Little Theatre, Surabaya.

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I thank Petra Little Theatre for having its New Play Development program which made *Mother, How Are You Today?* find the light on the stage and reach the audiences in such a wonderful collaboration of the actors and the production team. It has also been an awesome journey with Stefanny Irawan, Meilinda, and Christy Uktolseya in bearing this piece of writing, so I am forever grateful for that. Thanks to Erwin, my lifetime partner and our little kiddos, Vinn and Luc who had been very supportive when I dedicated my hours in months to finish the play. And to my beloved mom in Heaven, I present this play to her as my apology for not being a good-enough daughter and my gratitude for making me who I am right now. I also thank English for Creative Industry program for giving a newbie playwright like me the opportunity to write *Mother, How Are You Today?*.

Last but not least, I am thanking the cool Big Guy up there who has blessed me with the crazy muses and stayed with me during those ups-and-downs voyages called life.

MOTHER, HOW ARE YOU TODAY? is the 3rd production of Petra Little Theatre's New Play Development Program. It was first produced in April 2016 at Petra Little Theatre, Petra Christian University (Meilinda, Artistic Director; Stefanny Irawan, Managing Director) in Surabaya, Indonesia. It was directed by Stefanny Irawan; the set design was by Titien Wahono; the costume design was by Samuelita Dayu, the sound design was by Putra Yuniur Poela, the lighting design was by Meilinda.

The cast was as follows:

MS. MEIFANG SANTOSO	Meilinda
IMEL SANTOSO.....	Francisca Vinybelinda
ELLA SANTOSO	Jeklien Koraag
DANIEL OJONG	Daniel Budiana
ASTI.....	Christine Yunita
THE LAWYER.....	Putra Yuniur Poela
CAMEO 1	Krisandi Henry
CAMEO 2	Regina Natalia

The rest of production team was as follows:

PRODUCTION MANAGER	Jessie Monika
ASS. DIRECTOR	Candy Trisnarningsih
STAGE MANAGER	Yonas Jiwandana Putra
ASS. STAGE MANAGER.....	Jessica Azalea Hendrike
SET & PROPERTY CREW	Hapsari Lily Dewanti
SET & PROPERTY CREW.....	Michella Fellicia
SET & PROPERTY CREW.....	Krisandi Henry
SOUND OPERATOR	Daniel Yesaya Gozali
LIGHTING OPERATOR	Lucky Aditya
LIGHTING OPERATOR	Samuel A. Suryonugroho
MAKE UP & HAIRDO	Regina Natalia
MAKE UP & HAIRDO.....	Magdalena Patricia
MAKE UP & HAIRDO.....	Marina Anastasia

COSTUME	Samuelita Dayu
COSTUME	Gracia Purnomo
COSTUME	Regina Siddharta
TREASURER	Nomeliance D. Nabubois
GRAPHIC DESIGNER	Jeklien Koraag
MARKETING & SPONSORSHIP.....	Kathleen Liuray
MARKETING & SPONSORSHIP.....	Janice G. Nugroho
MARKETING & SPONSORSHIP.....	Jossy Vania
MARKETING & SPONSORSHIP.....	Jocelyn C. Liando
FRONT OF HOUSE.....	Maria K. Salelatu
FRONT OF HOUSE.....	Jessica Godwin
FRONT OF HOUSE.....	Melita Kosasih
FRONT OF HOUSE.....	Janice G. Nugroho

Editors' Preface

When we at Petra Little Theatre (PLT) evaluated our mission in 2013, we decided to create a new initiative which will support young student-playwrights and playwrights who are serious in creating new, original works pertaining to issues relevant to our society. So the New Play Development (NPD) was born.

From the beginning, we knew this program would take a lot of energy and time, but we also understand the significance it plays in building our local (and in turn, national) theatre scene, and we are committed to it. Since its inception, NPD has produced 6 exciting, fresh, original works ranging from play to play-with-music: “Evita”, “Congratulations, You Get the Job!”, “Mother, How Are You Today?”, “Listen to Me”, “Customer is King”, and “Going Home.”

Theatre should be able to sound real existing issues in the society on the stage, or, in Kenneth Tynan’s words, “an umbilical connection between what was happening on the stage and what was happening in the world”. Only by then can theatre be accepted by the society and, in the same time, be beneficial for it. *Mother, How Are You Today?* (MHAYT?), written by one of our passionate resident playwrights: Jessie Monika, pictures the classic and prevalent struggle—which, at times, can take a nasty turn—of daughters to understand their position in their mother’s heart in a Chinese-Indonesian family. Wrapped in a thick philosophy of *jamu*, our herbal medicine, this work drives home the issues of identity, self-worth, and belonging, which I believe are important for everyone, especially youth who are trying to find the meaning in their life.

MHAYT? is special for us in some ways. It was our first play with music created with a strong collaborative spirit between the playwright, the composer, and the director. The first production was also special because PLT was working together with Petra

Players, a theatre troupe established in 2014 to accommodate and foster the artistic soul among Petra Christian University's alumni. This is a collaborative project between alumni and students. And we could not deny how vibrant and exciting the process was.

Does MHAYT? have an umbilical connection with real life? We are positive about it. What about you?

Meilinda & Stefanny Irawan

CHARACTERS

MS. MEIFANG SANTOSO, the late mother, Chinese, 72 yo, a widower, owner of “Toko Jamu Santoso”.

IMEL SANTOSO, Ms. Santoso’s eldest daughter, late 30s, a career and modern-looking woman, a mother, sharp, quick.

ELLA SANTOSO, Ms. Santoso’s second daughter, mid 30s, a freelance artist and traveler, a little messy look.

DANIEL OJONG, Imel’s husband, early 40s, an entrepreneur working at home.

ASTI, Ms. Santoso’s maid’s youngest daughter, early 30s, passionate about brewing herbs.

THE LAWYER, male, 50-55 yo, formal.

CAMEO 1 AND 2, customers of “Toko Jamu Santoso”.

PLACE

A *jamu* stall in a part of old Surabaya area. Homey and vintage style.

TIME

The present. Around April – July. Dry Season.

SONGS

Dear My Beloved Daughter	<i>The Lawyer</i>
Mother Asked Me Every Morning	<i>Imel Santoso</i>
Marry A Nice Man, Ella	<i>Ms. Meifang Santoso</i>
A Stranger at Home	<i>Ella Santoso</i>
On You I've Wasted My Life/Another Day	<i>Ella Santoso & Ms. Meifang Santoso</i>
The Feud	<i>Ella Santoso, Imel Santoso & Ms. Mei- fang Santoso</i>
Ginger and Things	<i>Ella Santoso</i>
Another Day (Reprise)	<i>Ella Santoso</i>
Mother Asked Me Every Morning (Reprise)	<i>Imel Santoso</i>

PROLOGUE

Setting: The jamu stall stands at the back center of the stage. Two or three small round table are put in front of the stall. Each table has two or three chairs/stools. The sign at the stall says “Toko Jamu Santoso”. Inside the stall is a row jars of colorful powder and some herbs like cinnamon, lemongrass, turmeric, ginger, and tamarin. Behind the row are pairs of pestle and mortar to crush and grind the herbs and other ingredients. Hanging on the wall of the stall are sachets of instant herbs – homemade and branded. The ambience color of this jamu stall is the touch of green toska, yellow, and red here and there. Next to the stall is a rocking chair by the coffee table. On the coffee table is some kind of altar where a cup of wedang jahe is usually placed.

At rise: THE LAWYER appears, the light spots only to him. It is mysterious in some way, and the whole setting won't be seen yet.

Dear My Beloved Daughters

THE LAWYER.

“Dear my beloved daughters, how are you today?

I sincerely hope the two of you are healthy always.

I know my time shall come soon and thus I write my last say.

Hereby I declare for one of you to manage

our *jamu* café,
and to protect our recipes, share it with customers each day.

Remember this,
I shall not allow you to hand it over nor sell this.

It must always belong to the Santoso's, no exception.

This last will express my wishes without duress or intimidation.”

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF PROLOGUE)

SCENE 1

Setting: Toko Jamu Santoso

At rise: Inside the stall, ASTI is standing, busy grinding some herbs. DANIEL OJONG is busy with his laptop at one of the table. IMEL SANTOSO is standing at the center of the stage – right in front of the stall. Meanwhile, MS. MEIFANG SANTOSO, is sitting on the rocking chair sipping a cup of wedang jahe. She is, however, invisible to others until the end of the show because she only exists as the memory or imagination of the daughters. At one customer table, a group of customers are chatting with each other and about to leave in a moment.

IMEL. You know that life can be so boring?

(pause) Like...my life.

(The sound of ASTI grinding herbs, DANIEL tapping his laptop, the customers' spoon as they stir/tap their glass fade in. The combination of these particular sounds provides the intro for IMEL's song.)

Mother Asked Me Every Morning

Mother always told me to be a good girl

A good girl makes a good woman

A good woman makes a good wife

A good wife makes a good mother

MS. SANTOSO. You need to drink this every day, Imel. We call this magical liquid: *beras kencur*. It's good for your body. It's good for your health. A hardworking woman like you needs this, every day.

ASTI. (*Hands a small glass of beras kencur to IMEL.*)

IMEL. (*Drinks it.*)

Mother asked me every morning
“My girl, how are you today?”
and always my heart was crying
“I do not want my hair turn grey,
not to be a good woman, neither
to be a good wife;
Spare me from being a good mother,
nor being my mother all my life.”

ASTI. (*Hands a glass of uyup-uyup to IMEL.*)

MS. SANTOSO. Uyup-uyup. Drink that. It's a traditional-yet-smart start before feeding nonik.

IMEL. No, Mother, No. *Nonik* will be fine. My baby will be alright.

MS. SANTOSO. You have to! It is to make sure you have enough breastmilk supply for nonik! Nothing's better than a happy healthy baby!

IMEL. (*Drinks the uyup-uyup.*)

If I could, I would want to run away
away from my mom
and I hope one day,
to be away from home,
to a place where being me is okay
I long for everyone's life but mine,
everyone's mother if you don't mind
Now she's gone, I'm miserable,
as time is unstoppable
for me to say to my mother
I wish no life like hers

(Music stops. The customers are leaving. During DANIEL and IMEL's conversation, ASTI is busy inside the stall—mixing & grinding some herbs.)

DANIEL. Really? I didn't know you hate your mother that much. Wait. Actually I did. You've told me...yesterday? No, not yesterday. Last week? No. Not last week. A year ago? No, not a year ago. I think since the moment I knew you, honey.

IMEL. Touché. (*Sits in front of DANIEL.*) So you understand why I don't want her goddamned business, don't you? Can you imagine me running this... (*Looks around the store.*) place? Or my little sis?

DANIEL. A freelancer who travels a lot like her, running this

And what have you been working on your laptop? Playing some game?

DANIEL. No! What is wrong with you? I am *not* being a nice guy. I was just saying that whichever decision you make, I'll be right behind you.

IMEL. No, no, no. We have talked about this. Sometimes I need you to help me decide on something important like what we have now!

DANIEL. Well, let's say I am just not the right person to help you decide on this particular situation, Imel.

IMEL. But you are my husband!

DANIEL. YOU are your mother's daughter!

IMEL. JUST ANSWER THAT FUCKING QUESTION, DAM MIT!

DANIEL. Alright, alright. Geez. (*Beat.*) I think... (*Clears his throat.*) you should take over this business. I don't think Ella can do it. But you? You are good. There. I said it. Please don't be mad at me.

IMEL. (*Freaks out.*) See? See? You just did what Mother had always done! She spared Ella and let her do anything she wanna do. What about me? I have my own decisions too for my life. Anyone cares to know? Hell, no!

DANIEL. Imel, what the—

IMEL. And where on earth is Ella now, Daniel? I cancelled my important meeting to see my little sis and discuss what to do after that fucking lawyer gave us such a shock. She