born bad
by debbie tucker green

DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.
BORN BAD
Copyright © 2013, Debbie Tucker Green

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of
BORN BAD is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the
copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the
International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest
of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American
Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne
Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal
copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur
stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio
broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical,
electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD,
DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and
retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages
are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings,
permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United
States, its territories, possessions and Canada for BORN BAD are controlled
exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South,
New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the
Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to The Agency (London)
Ltd., 24 Pottery Lane, London W11 4LZ, England, info@theagency.co.uk. Attn:
Leah Schmidt.

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce BORN BAD is required to give credit to
the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all
programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all
instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising,
publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The
name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name
appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size
of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm
or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the
Author. The following acknowledgment must appear on the title page in all
programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play:

BORN BAD was first performed on April 29, 2003
at the Hampstead Theatre, London.
BORN BAD received its world premiere at the Hampstead Theatre, London, opening on April 29, 2003. It was directed by Kathy Burke; the set and costume design were by Jonathan Fensom; the lighting design was by Paul Keogan; the sound design was by John Leonard for Aura; and the production manager was John Titcombe. The cast was as follows:

SISTER #1 .......................... Sharlene Whyte
SISTER #2 ............................. Nadine Marshall
MUM ................................. Alibe Parsons
BROTHER ............................ Nicholas Pinnock
DAD ................................. Ewart James Walters
DAWTA .............................. Jenny Jules

BORN BAD received its U.S. premiere at SoHo Rep in New York City, opening on April 7, 2011. It was directed by Leah C. Gardiner; the set design was by Mimi Lien; the costume design was by Paul Tazewell; the lighting design was by Michael Chybowski; the sound design and original music were by Matt Sherwin; the dramaturg was Raphael Martin; and the production stage manager was Beth Stegman. The cast was as follows:

SISTER #1 .......................... Quincy Tyler Bernstine
SISTER #2 ............................. Crystal A. Dickinson
MUM ................................. Elain Graham
BROTHER ............................ LeRoy James McClain
DAD ................................. Michael Rogers
DAWTA .............................. Heather Alicia Simms
CHARACTERS

DAD
MUM
DAWTA
SISTER 1
SISTER 2
BROTHER

A blood-related Black family.

TIME

The action takes place within a day.

NOTES

Dawta is also sister to the Sisters and Brother who are also son and dawtas of Mum and Dad.

Once onstage, the characters never leave.

Names appearing without dialogue indicate active silences between characters listed.

“/” denotes where dialogue starts to overlap.
born bad

Preset

A solitary chair is onstage.

A female solo gospel rendition of “What A Friend We Have In Jesus” starts through one verse . . .

The hymn becomes part hummed and less formed.

Fade to black.

The hymn blends, half-sung, half-hummed familiarly by Mum (unseen) who quietly takes over the tune.
Scene 1

One chair onstage.

The hymn continues by Mum (unseen).

Dad is sitting in the chair, confidently.

Dawta is not.

Silently she demands eye contact.

He finds it difficult.

DAWTA. Say it.
    Say it.
    Daddy …
    Say it.

They make eye contact.
She gains his lost confidence.
The hymn draws to an end.
Blackout.
Scene 2

Three chairs onstage.

Dawta and Mum.

DAWTA. If yu actin like a bitch
   I’m a call yu it
   if yu lookin like a bitch
   I’m a call yu it.
If yu lookin like a bitch as you lookin on me – I see yu and yu bitch ways – mi a go call yu it again mi noh business.
   Watchin yu watchin me like the bitch bitch yu is.
   I’ll letcha
   and I’ll say it two times.
   Then two times that.
   Then two times that again – for yu – yu mudda, and yu mudda’s mudda – those bitches that bred yu off before and before that – and from before that again.
   From whenever your bitch bloodline started.
   From whatever bitch beginnings y’had.
   Bitch.
   MUM. Don’t say that.
   DAWTA. And I’ll call it like iss nuthin, and I’ll say it like iss nuthin like the nuthin it is like the nuthin you are like the nuthin you took a try at tomek me.
   Bitch.
   Cap fit.
   Bitch.
"... the bits don't make the bulk and the bulk don't mek the whole and the all a your hits together don't make your versions true."

Dawta wants the family to talk. But they have never talked like this before. Once this conversation starts, nobody leaves. BORN BAD dives headlong into the powerful heart of this family, unleashing wit and verbal dexterity along the way.

"Remarkable ... This intense, stylized drama about poisonous family secrets hits you like a triple shot of espresso. You leave feeling slightly shaken: excited by the play's formal invention, moved by its coiled emotional power."

—The New York Times

"Tucker Green's verbally stylized, physically concentrated, psychologically stripped-to-the bone approach results in a thoroughly disquieting, relentlessly penetrating work of art. It's essential and stunning theater."

—BackStage

"[Tucker Green's] fast and furious storytelling and blazing verbal free-for-all hits like blunt-force trauma. The work is exhilarating and disturbing all at once."

—New York Daily News

"A barreling dramatic poem in six-part dissonance, Debbie Tucker Green’s BORN BAD is a deeply unsettling, upsettingly funny family portrait, slashed with box cutters and stuck back together with guilt, hurt, and blood ... For a play that is, in essence, a long and punishing argument, with the leverage sloshing from one character to the next, BORN BAD is a remarkably smooth sixty-minute ride ... a series of short scenes, webs of alliance, jealousy, and betrayal that suggest a tragedy of almost Grecian size without once having to declare it."

—New York Magazine

Also by debbie tucker green

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION