

ALL THE DAYS

A FAMILY PLAY IN
TWO WEEKS

BY SHARYN
ROTHSTEIN



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

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ALL THE DAYS was originally produced by McCarter Theatre Center (Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director) in Princeton, New Jersey, in May 2016. It was directed by Emily Mann, the set design was by Daniel Ostling, the costume design was by Jess Goldstein, the lighting design was by Jeff Croiter, the original music and sound design was by Mark Bennett, and the production stage manager was Cheryl Mintz. The cast was as follows:

RUTH ZWEIGMAN Caroline Aaron
MIRANDA ZWEIGMAN Stephanie Janssen
MONICA TOBIN Leslie Ayvazian
DELMORE ZWEIGMAN Ron Orbach
JARED BLASER Matthew Kuenne
STEWBERT MULLEN Justin Hagan
BAPTISTE Raphael Nash Thompson

CHARACTERS

RUTH ZWEIGMAN, early 60s, very overweight, a retired bank teller.

MIRANDA ZWEIGMAN, 38, her daughter, a social worker.

MONICA TOBIN, late 50s–early 60s, Ruth’s sister, a real estate agent.

DELMORE ZWEIGMAN, mid–late 60s, Ruth’s ex-husband,
Miranda’s dad.

JARED BLASER, 13, Miranda’s son.

STEWBERT MULLEN, 40s, Miranda’s boyfriend.

BAPTISTE, late 50s–early 70s, an herbalist.

PLACE

Long Island, New York.
And outside Philadelphia.

A NOTE ON SETS

The play should move quickly from location to location. A sense of place is more important than the places themselves.

THINGS

Slashes indicate overlapping speech.

In general, Miranda and her family talk quickly and cut each other off constantly. It’s not easy to get out a full sentence.

ALL THE DAYS

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A modest Long Island kitchen, unkempt. Never kempt.

Ruth Zweigman, early sixties, severely overweight, sits alone at the table, on the phone. Three soda cans in front of her.

RUTH. Yes, I understand. This is different from the last one... right, a needle... In the center of the eye... You know what, Sue? Why don't you not tell me about it. I'd rather be surprised.

Someone to pick me up. No, it won't be my son this time. It'll be... I'll call someone else. No, I don't need a hospital volunteer. My daughter can probably...

You know what? Let me take the volunteer number, just in case.

She writes it down.

Looking forward to seeing you too. It sounds like a blast.

She hangs up. She stares at the phone, the number she's written down, deciding who to call...

She speaks to someone who isn't there.

I'll call her.

I'm calling her.

But she doesn't.

Stop laughing.

Scene 2

Ruth's kitchen. Miranda, Ruth's daughter, is looking for a pot, cooking utensils in the kitchen. She can't find anything useful.

She stops at the fridge, covered in pictures of her son and brother.

MIRANDA. Twenty gorgeous pictures of you. One of me and I've got a unibrow.

Then:

Stop laughing.

Ruth enters, a bit groggy, an eye patch over one eye.

RUTH. I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamt I was severely diabetic, someone put a needle in my eye, and there was nothing to eat for dinner.

MIRANDA. Well, you are severely diabetic and someone did put a needle in your eye. But I promise there will be dinner.

RUTH. Thank God. That was the scariest part.

She raises the eye patch.

How does it look?

MIRANDA. Better than it did when you came out.

RUTH. Great. Call up *Vogue* magazine. Maybe they want me for the cover.

Miranda grins. She's trying.

MIRANDA. I thought you were very brave. I couldn't have done it.

RUTH. Everyone thinks they couldn't have done it till someone with a medical degree tells them to do it. Then they do it. The doctor was a charmer, huh?

MIRANDA. He seemed nice enough.

RUTH. That's because he wasn't breathing on you. You'd think an eye doctor would invest in some Listerine.

MIRANDA. Mom, where did all the pots and pans go?

RUTH. I threw them out.

MIRANDA. Why?

RUTH. I felt like they were judging me. And anyway...not a lot of visitors.

A bad beat. Miranda's smile fades. Ruth regrets it immediately. Silence as Miranda returns to making dinner. Ruth tries again—

So Jared's good?

MIRANDA. Uh huh.

RUTH. Good. Ready for the bar mitzvah?

MIRANDA. I hope so.

More silence.

RUTH. It was nice of you to come.

MIRANDA. I was surprised you called.

RUTH. They were going to send me home with a volunteer, like some kind of homeless person. So...

Beat.

Your brother and I had a routine. Doctor, then lunch. For the foot doctor, Chinese. For the heart guy, Mexican. Guacamole's very good for the heart. For the eye doctor, the diner, but we switched it around and had lunch first. That way, I could still see what I was eating. We made a joke of it. He'd say, "This might be the last tuna melt you ever see." "This might be the last pickle..." Then once there was a bug in my rice pudding and David goes, "Bet you wish you were blind for that. You woulda thought it was just a raisin."

Ruth laughs. Miranda, horrified by her mother's diet, her brother's enabling, the whole laundry list of doctors, does not. More silence.

God, I'm thirsty. This disease, you're thirsty all the time.

MIRANDA. I'll get you some water.

RUTH. (*Waving her off.*) Water.

MIRANDA. You know you shouldn't drink soda.

RUTH. I know. The nutritionist told me. Bulimic Betsy.

She said I shouldn't really even be drinking diet soda, 'cause it's a trick—it makes you want more of something sweet. So I stopped drinking soda.

You ever had a pastrami on rye without a soda? You haven't. You

know why you haven't? Because it's not possible. You simply cannot have a pastrami on rye without a soda.

What a sneaky little bitch.

What's for dinner?

MIRANDA. I'm making chicken.

RUTH. Chicken and what else?

MIRANDA. Spinach.

RUTH. I don't own spinach.

MIRANDA. I brought some.

RUTH. From Pennsylvania, you brought your own spinach?

MIRANDA. You're supposed to eat healthy.

RUTH. We have spinach in New York.

MIRANDA. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how long you'd need me. I panicked. So I grabbed the spinach.

RUTH. It's a good thing you don't work for the fire department.

So chicken and spinach? That's dinner.

MIRANDA. That's dinner.

Miranda puts the plates on the table.

RUTH. I guess it's not worth asking what's for dessert. "Naturally thin" chicken from my "naturally thin" daughter.

MIRANDA. I *am* naturally thin. Dad still calls me The Stringbean.

RUTH. So he calls you, huh?

MIRANDA. Don't start on Dad.

RUTH. Don't start? Please. I wish I'd never even met the man.

MIRANDA. I'm not talking about Dad.

RUTH. Neither am I. So you've heard from him?

MIRANDA. Mom.

RUTH. I just want to know if he's dead or alive.

MIRANDA. Alive.

RUTH. Too bad.

MIRANDA. That's a shitty thing to say.

RUTH. Life is shitty.

MIRANDA. Life is not shitty. Life is beautiful.

RUTH. You must be eating someone else's chicken.

MIRANDA. I mean it.

Beat, a decision.

Mom.

RUTH. Mom?

MIRANDA. I want you to know... I found faith.

RUTH. Where'd you find it?

MIRANDA. Inside myself.

RUTH. It's always the last place you look.

MIRANDA. You should try it sometime. Prayer.

RUTH. I pray every day. Please God, make me an anorexic.

MIRANDA. I mean it. Maybe we should... maybe we should go together sometime. To church.

A big beat.

RUTH. Church?

MIRANDA. Church.

RUTH. Not synagogue?

MIRANDA. Not anymore, no.

RUTH. Your son's about to get bar mitzvahed.

MIRANDA. That was his choice.

RUTH. Your son's getting bar mitzvahed, but you go to church.

MIRANDA. One of my coworkers invited me and I found it just very—

RUTH. Christian?

MIRANDA. Soothing.

RUTH. They've been killing our people for two thousand years and you found it soothing?

MIRANDA. Mom.

RUTH. Have they not been killing our people for two thousand years?

MIRANDA. I just... Since David died I've felt... I haven't been able to... I needed something. And for whatever reason, I couldn't find it in

ALL THE DAYS

by Sharyn Rothstein

4 men, 3 women

Miranda has done everything in her power to create a family completely different than the one she came from. But after a painful loss, Miranda suffers a lapse in judgment and invites her hilarious, complicated, and self-destructive mother, Ruth, to stay with her before her son's bar mitzvah. As other needy family members show up in search of connection and second chances, Miranda's already-strained relationship with her family is pulled to its breaking point. With all the kin in one place, will they all stay in one piece? A warm, heart-filled comedy about the scars of childhood and finding love, all grown up.

"...a poignant tale of loss and love, of faith and forgiveness... [Rothstein] knows her craft. Her seven characters are finely drawn, thoroughly realistic. As their stories, wants and needs emerge, these complex, brave, funny characters take on a rich three-dimensionality and universality in their detailed individuality. ...ALL THE DAYS assures us that love and humor will prevail."
—**Town Topics (Princeton, NJ)**

"...gripping... The show brings to the fore the intricacies of tangled and dysfunctional family relationships with both drama and comedy."
—**BroadwayWorld.com**

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—**PrincetonFound.com**

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