

## **“MOTHER'S DAY” – TREATMENT**

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**Log line: A suspicious opinionated grandmother is given the opportunity to temporarily reincarnate as her own granddaughter in order to make amends with her son; however, until learning otherwise, she believes that her son's fiancé is a golddigger and that she must protect him by destroying his impending marriage.**

**AJA (10) practices spelling words for the upcoming National Spelling Bee while her loving father JIM (35) prepares the barbecue to celebrate Mother's Day. Aja asks Jim for help and he gently reminds her that he is dyslexic and that she has to wait for his fiancé Adriana to help her. Jim, a clinical psychologist, is the ideal single parent and the rapport between Aja and him is warm and genuine. ADRIANA (30) arrives and we see that they make a very caring and affectionate family. Aja reminds Jim that it's time to pick up grandma who doesn't drive; Jim appears somewhat reluctant. Adriana tells Jim that he has to accept his mother for what she is because she won't be around forever.**

**Alone in the car Jim prepares himself emotionally and psychologically to avoid allowing his mother to get under his skin. At Sunnyside Retirement Village, Katherine (72) speaks jovially with her favorite orderly, SAM. When Jim arrives, Katherine pulls no punches: she insists on calling Adriana 'Adrienne' and baits Jim into a fight by telling him that 'Adrienne' doesn't really love him and is just after his money. Jim asks Katherine why she persists on thriving on confrontation and she replies that somebody must look out for Aja's well-being since he is too stupid to. Katherine says things such as “When I was a child, children had respect for their parents!”**

**After the Mother's Day meal, Katherine overhears Adriana on the telephone telling her supposed ex-boyfriend Gary that she'll get the money in a few days, that Jim doesn't notice anything, and that the plan is moving along perfectly. Katherine tries to tell Jim but he**

refuses to listen and finally throws Katherine out. But since she can't drive he must drive her home. In the car Katherine once again digs into Jim about Adriana being a golddigger who is going to rob him of every penny of his (father's) hard-earned money. Jim tells Katherine that Adriana is the true love of his life. Katherine prays aloud that her only wish in life is that Aja treats Jim with the same supposed disrespect that Jim treated Katherine. Jim points out a neurotic twitch that Katherine exhibits when she feels guilty. She is appalled by her son's insolence and appears to have a coronary. Jim berates her for being a hypochondriac and for feigning illness in order to get attention.

CUT TO the Atlantic City Boardwalk where Katherine suddenly appears next to her (dead) ex-husband Jack who explains that she is in her own personal purgatory and that her situation is grave: she has failed to 'complete' with Jim and her soul cannot be admitted to heaven until she does so. Jack has arranged with the Woman Upstairs for Katherine return to earth for one month - as a stray dog - in order to fix her relationship with Jim. Katherine recites with unbelievable precision every Mother's Day present that Jack ever gave her and shames Jack into allowing her to reincarnate for the month as their granddaughter Aja. Also, since Jack died before Aja was born he is ecstatic to be able to spend some time with her and help her continue her studies while she temporarily incarnates Katherine's body in purgatory.

We PULL OUT to reveal a strip of the Atlantic City Boardwalk floating high in the sky. CUT TO Katherine's funeral from where we watch a small white light gently glide down from the sky and become absorbed into Aja's body. After a moment of acclimation, Katherine looks around at the people attending her funeral. She lets go of Jim's hand and takes Sam's hand. In the car going home, Katherine/Aja subtly digs into Jim for not crying enough at the funeral. She inadvertently calls Adriana 'Adrienne', launches into a "When I was a child" rant, demands steak instead of hot dogs. Jim and Adriana notice that something is wrong but Jim persuades Adriana that it is common for a grandchild to adopt traits or sayings of the grandparent while grieving.

Seeing as she only has one month, Katherine needs to get to work on breaking up Jim and Adriana; however, Katherine has a difficult time adjusting to Aja's lifestyle. She tells Jim that she would prefer to stay home, knit, and watch an old Betty Davis movie than to

go to soccer practice. Jim is surprised that Katherine/Aja suddenly now knows all the answers to shows like “Jeopardy”, “Wheel of Fortune”, and “The Price is Right”... and even knows who's sleeping with who on all the soap operas. Jim refuses to comply with Katherine/Aja's wishes and takes her to soccer practice. Because Katherine has never played soccer before, Aja now does not know how to play. Suddenly Aja's rival, BINKY ROBBINS (8), checks Aja to the ground. Katherine/Aja gets up indignantly and attacks Binky disregarding all soccer rules and etiquette. Aja is thrown out of the game for unsportsmanlike conduct; Katherine is happy that she gets to go home, knit, and catch the end of the Betty Davis movie.

Katherine/Aja rifles through Jim's closet, file cabinets, and bank statements in order to gain physical evidence that Adriana is stealing from Jim. Katherine/Aja even makes Jim give her a lesson on the computer so that she can later check out his electronic files; Jim tries to show her the educational video games that might interest an 10 year-old and she asks him about things such as “balance sheets” and “E-mail.” After attaining all the evidence she needs she sets out to sabotage Jim and Adriana's relationship. She figures that the best way is to prove to Jim that Adriana is still involved with Gary and they are in cahoots to steal all of Jim's money. She decides to set them up: first she sends a dozen roses with a provocative card to Adriana. When Adriana returns to Jim's that night she is livid over the anonymous note that she received with the flowers. Jealousy rears its ugly head and Jim insinuates that her ex-boyfriend Gary sent the flowers and note. Adriana leaves abruptly, opting for the first time in many months to spend the night at her place. Listening through the door, Katherine/Aja is content that phase 1 of her plan is working. At dinner Katherine implies her theory about Adriana and Gary being in league to steal his money. Jim reprimands her and threatens to spank her if she ever speaks like that again. Katherine forgets that she is in Aja's body and tells him that if he ever lays a hand on her she will break his head. Jim starts to try to figure out what could possibly be going on. He asks Katherine/Aja a series of questions and Katherine does her best to disguise her identity and her intentions. Meanwhile in heaven, Aja's soul is getting acclimated to continuing her schooling while trapped in Katherine's 70 year old body. Aja's single concern is that she is returned to earth in time for the National Spelling Bee because she has trained so hard to beat her classmate Binky Robbins.

The next afternoon Adriana comes as scheduled to pick up Katherine/Aja from school and Katherine/Aja has absolutely no desire to spend any time with her - particularly because Adriana is extremely doting and wants to be the mother figure in Katherine's life now that both Aja's mother and grandmother are gone. While at Adriana's house Katherine deletes from Adriana's answering machine a romantic and caring message from Jim and then snoops around the house for more evidence of a conspiracy against Jim. Katherine/Aja asks Adriana if she can play games on her computer and figures out how to break into Adriana's E-mail. She finds some E-mail messages from Gary and she interprets Gary's friendly and innocuous messages as tawdry and insinuating. Katherine/Aja figures out how to send a message back to Gary. Jack comes down from purgatory and reprimands Katherine who makes an excuse. Katherine/Aja sends an E-mail to Gary telling him that he must come over to Adriana's house at midnight because she has something very important to discuss with him.

When Adriana and Katherine/Aja arrive at Jim's house Adriana confronts Jim and demands to know why he hasn't called her all day. He tells her about the message and she calls him a liar. She tries to be understanding seeing as he just lost his mother but she is becoming more and more appalled by his apparent insolence and lack of respect for her. For her plan to work Katherine/Aja needs Adriana to stay at her own home that evening so she concocts a wild story that provokes Adriana to leave. Then she tells Jim that Adriana would have left anyway, that she overheard and Gary on the phone arranging to meet later - "because things aren't working out with Jim." Jim can't believe his ears and allows Katherine/Aja to draw him into the seedy possibility that Adriana is not really in love with him. Katherine/Aja finally goads Jim into believing that Adriana is having an affair and that Gary will arrive at Adriana's house at midnight.

They wait outside Adriana's house that night. Katherine/Aja is so happy that she won't shut up and almost ruins her whole plan by speaking loudly as Gary approaches. When Adriana kisses Gary 'hello', Jim bursts in and accuses her of being a lying scoundrel. Adriana accuses Jim of being a paranoid asshole. Gary tries to calmly explain and Jim punches him out. Adriana screams and threatens to call the police; she rips off the engagement ring and throws it in Jim's face. Jim exits and grabs Katherine/Aja who was watching from the doorway. Katherine/Aja is appalled that Jim resorted to violence. Jim

looks over to Aja and notices that she now has the same guilty twitch that Katherine exhibited in the car. Jim now understands what has been going on and confronts Aja, furiously shaking her and saying, "Mom, I know you're in there!" Adriana has come around behind Jim and she can't believe her eyes or ears: she screams at Jim and instructs him to seek professional counseling - he has obviously lost his mind. Adriana runs back into the house and Jim races after her, but she refuses to let him in. Jim even tries to apologize to Gary through the door. Katherine looks up into the sky and demands that Jack reexchange her and Aja's souls. Jack comes down and tells her that "a deal's a deal" and that she still has two weeks left trapped in Aja's body.

CUT TO Jim and Aja sitting in the living room staring tensely at each other. Jim understands what has been going on and Katherine doesn't deny anything. She explains that she has proof that Adriana was just after his money and that she never really loved him. Katherine admits that they're trapped together in this bizarre mother/son & father/daughter relationship for two weeks and implores Jim "to make the most of a bad situation" and then they can both proceed with their very different and separate futures. Since Jim cannot publicly address his physical daughter as his mother, he is obliged to treat her like a child - which is extremely difficult seeing as Katherine would like to spend her final two weeks drinking scotch, eating rich food, smoking, etc. Since Adriana is gone, Jim is forced to take Aja to his psychology office where she makes precocious comments about his patients. Her advice for patients amounts to such pearls of wisdom as "Someone should take him out back and kick his ass, that's what he needs..."

The next morning as Jim prepares Katherine/Aja's lunch bag Katherine throws a fit about eating so much peanut butter and jelly. "Do you have any idea what peanut butter does to your colon?" she asks. She insists on stopping by the deli on the way to school and buying some chopped liver. At school the other kids are disgusted by the smell of Katherine/Aja's lunch. Soon after she becomes violently ill. The school nurse can't reach Jim so the nurse calls Adriana whose name is listed as Aja's mother. Katherine/Aja protests but to no avail. Adriana comes and Katherine/Aja refuses to go with her. Adriana takes Aja home and discusses Jim's relationship with Katherine appearing to take Katherine's side. Adriana then mentions some of Jim's faults - the same faults that Katherine thinks he has -

and then she admits that she still loves Jim anyway. On the other hand, there's no way that she could stand his recent psychotic behavior.

Jim comes home and he and Adriana face off. In front of Katherine/Aja, Jim confronts Adriana about some funds that seem to have been misappropriated. He shows her the bank statements that Katherine/Aja gave him. Adriana admits that she took a bridge loan from their account in order to secretly fund her "Program to Fight Dyslexia" which she has just established in order to help people like Jim learn how to read more proficiently and thus be able to help their children learn how to read... and win spelling contests. It was a surprise that she planned to give Jim for his upcoming birthday. Adriana informs Jim that she paid all the money back a few days ago. Adriana tells him that Gary is the one who helped her institute the program since he - and his new girlfriend Julie - are both city planners. Their relation is strictly business.

Katherine realizes that she made a grave mistake, that Adriana and Jim were really in love and that Adriana only wanted the best for him and for Aja. Katherine/Aja consults with Jack and decides to take matters into her own hands in order to make amends and do the job that Jack sent her back to do. As Aja, she runs away from home and goes to Adriana's house where she comes clean and explains the entire situation to Adriana. She even consciously launches into a "When I was a child" speech, hoping to prove to Adriana that she is really Katherine. Instead of understanding, Adriana is aghast that Jim convinced his 10 year-old daughter to dissemble, lie and say she was really his 68 year-old mother. Adriana returns Aja to Jim and threatens to call the National Board of Psychologists to have Jim's license revoked. The next day at school Katherine/Aja feigns the same illness as she had the previous week. This time Katherine/Aja insists that the nurse call Adriana - she tells the nurse that Jim is out of town. Adriana comes and Katherine/Aja goes into a long speech about how Jim is miserable without Adriana and how he was just acting bizarre because he was distraught over Katherine's passing. Katherine's plan backfires because Adriane thinks Jim is irresponsible for letting Aja eat the same thing that made her ill last week.

The next day Aja goes to Adriana's "Program to Fight Dyslexia" and presents her with a scarf that she knit for her. She tells her that her grandma taught her how to knit - that grandma actually liked

**Adriana, but sometimes had trouble expressing herself. Katherine/Aja asks permission to bring in a new student because the Spelling Bee is just a week away. During the class Jim and Aja practice spelling words - however, Katherine is an excellent speller and must make intentional mistakes in order to make Jim look good. Adriana still can't forgive Jim - she says that she pities him. "Maybe we'll meet in another lifetime," she says.**

**Katherine/Aja goes to Adriana and insists that she come to the Spelling Bee to lend moral support. After much reluctance, Katherine/Aja convinces Adriana to attend. Back at home Katherine/Aja finalizes her plans with Jim to get Aja to forgive him. She also calls up to Jack and begs for his forgiveness. When Adriana arrives at the Spelling Bee, Katherine/Aja breaks away from the others and tells her that she's going to "kick Binky's ass". While competing Aja has to spell words such as "repentance" and "reincarnation." In the back of the auditorium, Jack proudly watches her. Jack looks at his watch and we PULL BACK to watch the small white light gently descend from the heavens and penetrate Aja's body. Now the real Aja is forced to use Jack's spelling lessons to compete honestly against Binky Robbins. Aja wins the contest and dedicates her trophy to her loving grandfather and grandmother. She is sure that they are watching her at this very moment. Back on the boardwalk Jack commends Katherine for learning her lesson and changing her attitude. They will now be admitted to Heaven together. Afterwards Jim tries to thank his 'mom' in Aja's body and say goodbye to her but only Aja responds. Jim realizes that Aja's soul has been returned and he gives Aja the warmest, most loving hug as he insures that she has been returned to earth 100% intact. As Adriana enters and joins their hug, Jim looks up to the sky, gives a little wave, and mouths, "Thanks, mom." From up above, Katherine and Jack hug and smile back at him.**