

# MINE

BY LAURA MARKS



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MINE was presented at the Gift Theatre (Michael Patrick Thornton, Artistic Director) in Chicago, Illinois, opening on June 21, 2013. It was directed by Marti Lyons; the set design was by Stephen H. Carmody; the costume design was by Emma Weber; the lighting design was by Mac Vaughey; the sound design was by Christopher Kriz; the properties design was by Rita Thornton; and the stage manager was Helen Lattyak. The cast was as follows:

MARI ..... Hillary Clemens  
JOAN ..... Alexandra Main  
RINA ..... Deborah Ann Smith  
PETER ..... Gabriel Franken  
AMY ..... Cyd Blakewell

## **CHARACTERS**

MARI — a first-time mother

JOAN — a midwife

RINA — Mari's mother

PETER — Mari's husband

AMY — something else entirely

# MINE

## Scene 1

*Night. A bedroom in a small apartment. Mari crouches inside a blue inflatable birthing tub with high sides. She's in the final stages of labor. Her husband, Peter, is kneeling beside the tub, and she leans on him, clutching his hands, grunting and moaning. Two other women sit nearby on an ottoman and a Pilates ball: a midwife, Joan, in street clothes except for a stethoscope and latex gloves; and Rina, Mari's mother. They lean forward encouragingly, but they don't intervene.*

MARI. I can do this —

JOAN. That's right.

RINA. Of course you can, honey.

MARI. — Oh my God! —

JOAN. It's okay.

PETER. You're doing great.

MARI. I think — oh, something's tearing, oh God —

JOAN. It's all right. Just "breathe the baby out."

MARI. *(Starts pushing.)* Aaaugh! ... I. Want. My. Baby! *(Blackout.)*

## Scene 2

*The bedroom, two hours later. Mari and Peter are alone. Mari lies on the bed, dazed and spent. Peter holds a swaddled baby and slow-dances around the room, singing a whispered lullaby. Mari watches them. She reaches out and gropes around on the nightstand, finally grabbing a wide-mouthed sports bottle with a straw propped inside. She tries to lift her head far enough to drink, but can't.*

MARI. Mom?

PETER. *(Whispering.)* Shhh ... She went home.

MARI. Oh.

PETER. I just wanted some time alone. With my family. *(Pause.)* We're a family ... *(Mari lifts her head a few more inches and tries to drink. Liquid dumps all over her.)*

MARI. Oh fuck. *(Pause.)* Honey? *(No response.)* I'm in a puddle here.

PETER. *(Lovingly, eyes on the baby.)* I know. Me too.

MARI. No, really. *(She brushes weakly at the spill, dislodging a molecule or two.)*

PETER. I think she's sleeping. *(He walks over to Mari with exaggerated slowness and starts to put the baby in her arms.)* Jesus! You're all wet.

MARI. I tried to drink lying down. *(He backs up.)* It's okay, I can still hold her.

PETER. Not if you're all wet.

MARI. It's mostly on the bed.

PETER. I'd better change the sheets.

MARI. *(Burrowing in the pillow.)* No, please, don't make me get up again. I'll sleep in the wet spot, I don't mind. It's soothing.

PETER. How are the stitches? *(She flashes a weak thumbs-up.)* Here. Look: *(He drags over a bassinet.)* I'll put her right here. Can you see her?

MARI. Kind of. *(He climbs into bed behind Mari.)* I feel like I've hardly seen her at all.

PETER. She's only been alive for two hours.

MARI. I know, but it all happened so fast.

PETER. Eighteen hours of labor?

MARI. That too. I kind of miss having her inside me. I couldn't really look at her then, or hold her, but at least I always knew where she was.

PETER. She's right here. You've got at least a year before she learns how to run away.

MARI. *(Softly.)* Don't run away. *(Pause.)* Can I have that?

PETER. What?

MARI. That blanket. *(There's a stained flannel receiving blanket on the floor. He picks it up.)*

PETER. It's dirty.

MARI. I know. *(She presses it to her face and inhales.)* There was this *smell* when she was born ... *(She inhales again.)* And I wonder if it's *her* smell...? Is she always going to smell like that? Or at least until puberty?

PETER. You're getting way ahead of yourself. *(Mari hauls herself upright and leans over, plunging her face into the bassinet.)*

MARI. It's her. It's amazing.

PETER. You were amazing. *(He kisses her. A long kiss.)* So ... uh ... did Joan say what the deal was on your stitches?

MARI. Six weeks.

PETER. For...?

MARI. For penetration, or whatever.

PETER. Of course. Yeah. That makes sense. I mean, I don't want you to think that's what I'm ... *(He pats her chastely and gets up.)* Wow. Six weeks. *(Pause.)*

MARI. Can I have her back now? *(He carefully hands her the baby.)*

PETER. Listen ... I hate to bring this up now, but — If it's okay with you, I think I should still try to go to that meeting tomorrow. I mean, Jeff said he'd understand if I didn't, obviously; but these guys — these guys are huge, and they're only in town for one day. They're flying in all the way from California. *(Mari just stares fixedly at the baby.)* Mari? Is that okay?

MARI. Sure.

PETER. Great. I'm gonna put the light out now, okay? You need to get some sleep. *(Pause.)* Do you want to keep her in the bed tonight, or what?

MARI. Okay. *(They lean back tentatively, with the baby between them. Lights out. A pause.)* I don't think this is a good idea. *(Lights back on.)*



PETER. What?

MARI. I'm afraid you'll roll over on her.

PETER. Why don't you put her on the other side?

MARI. Then she could fall out of bed. Or her head could get stuck under the pillow.

PETER. You could sleep without a pillow.

MARI. Or I could roll over on her. It happened all the time in the Middle Ages.

PETER. Mari, please, just pick something. That meeting is in like, five hours —

MARI. I want to hold her, but I'm afraid to; but we're supposed to be skin-to-skin, for bonding; what should I do? I don't know what to do.

PETER. Here: *(He takes the baby and gently puts her in the bassinet.)*

MARI. You're right.

PETER. Just for tonight. We can have another Sleep Summit tomorrow. *(Mari still has her glasses on. Tenderly, he takes them off and puts them on the nightstand.)* Don't worry, honey. You'll have plenty of time to hold her tomorrow. You'll have the whole rest of your life. *(He puts out the light. Blackout.)*

### Scene 3

*The bedroom, the next morning. Morning light seeps in. Peter wakes up in a panic and starts grabbing his clothes.*

PETER. Oh shit. Shit, shit, shit. Oh no.

MARI. What?

PETER. I didn't set the alarm. Goddammit!

MARI. What can I do?

PETER. I don't know; aaaaah! Do I have a tie somewhere? *(Mari tries to swing her leg out of bed.)*

MARI. Ow! —

PETER. What is it?

MARI. My stitches ... can you help me? I need to get to the bathroom — *(Peter helps her hobble into the next room, then runs back at top speed to continue dressing. Off.)* Ow ...

PETER. Mari?

MARI. *(Off.)* I'm fine. *(Flushing sounds.)*

PETER. I hate to leave you guys.

MARI. *(Off.)* It's only for ... what, a couple of hours? ... Do you see my glasses? They're not in the bathroom. I think I'm losing my mind.

PETER. Right here — *(He grabs her glasses off the dresser, runs to the bathroom with them, and then runs back to finish dressing.)*

MARI. *(Off.)* Thank God. Okay. I'm good now. Good to go. *(Pause.)*

PETER. You know what? I should call your mom.

MARI. *(Off.)* What for?

PETER. I just don't like leaving you alone.

MARI. *(Off.)* Peter, it's okay, seriously. I'm just gonna sit here. Maybe try a little nursing.

PETER. She probably needs a new diaper.

MARI. *(Off.)* Right.

PETER. God — I don't want to miss her first diaper ... It's weird how fast their faces change. Remember last night how smushed she was? Now she looks more like a baby. I mean — not that she wasn't before, but — you know ... *(He gazes down into the bassinet while hurriedly tying his tie. Mari shuffles back in with her glasses on.)* So I shouldn't call your mom.

MARI. I'm fine. I can do this. People have been doing this ever since there have been people.

PETER. *(Checking his phone.)* Shit — Are you sure you're gonna be okay?

MARI. For Christ's sake, will you stop infantilizing me?

PETER. I'll leave my phone on.

MARI. Just go.

PETER. I didn't shower or shave, but that's okay, right? 'Cause tech companies are edgy ...

MARI. Go! *(He kisses her, drops a fingertip-kiss on the baby, and dashes out. Silence settles over the room. Mari is still for a moment, registering the strangeness of her first time alone with the baby. She shuffles over to the bassinet and looks down. Something's not right. She looks closer and makes a horrible discovery.)* Peter! — *(In a panic, she starts to run toward the door, wincing in pain — then back to the dresser, then the bed, searching frantically for her phone. She finds it and dials. To phone.)* You need to come back right now. *(A few moments pass in silence. Peter charges back into the room.)*

PETER. What? What's wrong? *(She points at the bassinet.)*

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