

Children Are from Mars

CHARACTERS

Therapist, Female, 40's

Joseph, Male, mid-30's, Astronaut

Roberta, Female, mid-30's, Astronaut

Setting: A Comfortable Therapist's Office

Time: 2025

SCENE ONE: THERAPIST'S OFFICE

(On lights up we see the therapist sitting in a comfortable club chair. A man and a woman dressed in spacesuits, no helmet, are sitting into guest chairs opposite the therapist.)

THERAPIST

So how can I help you?

JOSEPH

You tell us. Our mission commander sent us here. What's this all about?

ROBERTA

Yes. I am very confused. I hope this won't take long. We have lots of work to do.

THERAPIST

I take it you are both members of the Mars mission, then.

JOSEPH AND ROBERTA

Yes

THERAPIST

Well, your commander asked me to meet with you because there seems to be some kind of problem.

JOSEPH

What kind of problem? Roberta and I are professionals. We were chosen for this mission because of our expertise and willingness to commit to a long period of time away from home.

THERAPIST

But I understand that you don't like each other.

ROBERTA

As a professional, I don't have to like the person I work with as long as they are competent.

JOSEPH

My views precisely.

THERAPIST

Joseph, can you describe for me the specific contents of this mission?

JOSEPH

Certainly. Upon launch we will travel to the space station where we will load up our ship with provisions and materials we will need. We will then take off for the long journey to Mars. Our objective is to set up a base there to prepare for future colonization.

THERAPIST

Roberta, do you have anything to add to that?

ROBERTA

Well, there is one little detail he left out.

THERAPIST

And what is that?

ROBERTA

We're supposed to raise some children to carry on after we're gone.

THERAPIST

Ahh. And is that our little problem?

ROBERTA

You bet it is!

JOSEPH

Damn right!

THERAPIST

And because you don't like each other, having children together could be a problem. Is that right?

JOSEPH

Well, there's always artificial insemination.

ROBERTA

Not in my Vagina! If I'm to have children with someone it'll be because I love him.

THERAPIST

Well we seem to have zeroed in on the key issue. I think the best course would be for me to meet individually with you. Joseph, would you mind waiting in the anteroom while I talk first with Roberta?

JOSEPH

No problem.

(He gets up and leaves the room.)

SCENE TWO: CONTINUING IN THERAPIST'S OFFICE

(Therapist and Roberta remain in their chairs.)

THERAPIST

Let's cut right to the chase. Why don't you like Joseph?

ROBERTA

He's a jerk!

THERAPIST

What do you mean by that?

ROBERTA

He's a pompous know-it-all who has no clue about relationships with women.

THERAPIST

Do you know if he has had relationships before?

ROBERTA

No, I really don't. I just know how he treats me.

THERAPIST

And how is that?

ROBERTA

He doesn't respect me for my capability and intelligence.

THERAPIST

Can you give me some examples?

ROBERTA

Sure. In our preparation for this mission, he doesn't listen to my ideas and just goes ahead with his own.

THERAPIST

And his ideas are wrong.

ROBERTA

Well... no. But I would just like to be treated like I have a head on my shoulders.

THERAPIST

So you feel he thinks you are unintelligent?

ROBERTA

It seems that way.

THERAPIST

For people to want to have sex together, there usually needs to be some physical attraction. Do you feel Joseph is unattractive to you?

ROBERTA

To be honest, I do find him physically attractive, which I really hate. I just don't connect with him emotionally.

THERAPIST

Thank you for being honest. And part of that inability to connect emotionally has to do with the way you perceive he treats you, yes?

ROBERTA

It's not just a perception! It is the way he treats me.

THERAPIST

I hear you. But if he treated you differently, you might be more interested in making babies with him, correct?

ROBERTA

... I suppose so.

THERAPIST

Good. That gives me something to work with. I would appreciate it if you would go out there and ask Joseph to come in. Please don't leave, however.

(Roberta gets up and goes out.)

SCENE THREE: CONTINUING IN THERAPIST'S OFFICE

(Joseph enters and therapist motions him into his seat.)

JOSEPH

So, I presume she gave me the Royal badmouth treatment.

THERAPIST

Why would you think that?

JOSEPH
Because she hates me.

THERAPIST
Do you know that for sure?

JOSEPH
No, but it's obvious isn't it?

THERAPIST
Well let's not focus on her yet. I'd like to hear what you think

JOSEPH
About what?

THERAPIST
About working with her.

JOSEPH
That's the least of my problems.

THERAPIST
What do you mean?

JOSEPH
Look, Doc. We're about to embark on a two-year journey to a place no one's ever been. We're supposed to stay there for who knows how long, and populate the planet with new children. It's not working with her, it's being with her.

THERAPIST
And you don't like being with her?

JOSEPH
Not the way she's treated me. If I'm going to have a long term companion, I want someone who epitomizes the S-word.

THERAPIST
You mean scientist?

JOSEPH
No, Sexy!

THERAPIST
Ah, I see. So the problem is her lack of sexuality. Is that right?

JOSEPH
Not exactly. I just can't get through the icy scientific exterior to find out.

THERAPIST

Do you appreciate her as a scientist?

JOSEPH

Well, I know her background and why she was selected for the mission. She must be a good scientist.

THERAPIST

She doesn't feel you appreciate her.

JOSEPH

That's ridiculous!

THERAPIST

Do you listen to her ideas?

JOSEPH

When they're right.

THERAPIST

And what do you do when they are?

JOSEPH

I accept them, I guess.

THERAPIST

You guess?

JOSEPH

Okay, maybe I'm a little too single-minded.

THERAPIST

So let me see if I can sum this up. You want a companion on this journey who is sexually free, who listens to you and accepts your ideas, and who is otherwise a good scientist. Is that correct?

JOSEPH

Well, the way you put it, I guess that's what I want, though I don't like how it sounds.

THERAPIST

I consider that progress. Okay. Why don't you go outside and ask Roberta to come in with you.

(Joseph gets up and goes out the door.)

SCENE FOUR: CONTINUING IN THERAPIST'S OFFICE

(Joseph and Roberta enter and take their seats on either end of the couch.)

THERAPIST

All right. I've talked to both of you and I think I understand what is going on. The question is, what process will work best to improve your communication. Joseph, what do you do in planning the details of your mission?

JOSEPH

We have extensive simulation equipment that enables us to explore alternative solutions to technical problems.

THERAPIST

What about non-technical problems?

ROBERTA

We haven't had any.

THERAPIST

Based on our discussions, it seems like you have.

ROBERTA

Okay. You're right, but are they solvable?

THERAPIST

How would you solve them if they were technical?

ROBERTA

That's where our simulation equipment comes in.

THERAPIST

This is an uneducated question, but can you simulate the simulation equipment?

JOSEPH

Wow! That's an exciting idea.

ROBERTA

That would be fun to try.

JOSEPH

An interesting project! We could work on it together.

ROBERTA

Wow! That's a new attitude.

JOSEPH

This therapy thing is creeping up on me. What do you say?

ROBERTA

I'm game if you are.

JOSEPH

Okay. First, we need to set the mission parameters.

ROBERTA

That's easy. We're going to Mars and then we're going to make babies.

JOSEPH

Right. Now, what are our command roles?

ROBERTA

I accept that you are the captain of the ship, but I get to tell you what I like.

JOSEPH

I like the sound of that. I will definitely cater to your preferences.

THERAPIST

Is that just in the cabin? Or perhaps in the sleeping quarters.

JOSEPH

I see what you mean. I would say both.

ROBERTA

I agree. And I definitely have preferences when we sleep together.

JOSEPH

My, my. That's a revelation.

ROBERTA

I am a woman, after all.

JOSEPH

I'm beginning to see that. Okay, how do we continue the simulation?

ROBERTA

We've established the mission and set the roles. Now we should begin the processing.

JOSEPH

Let's skip the launch phase and get right to the interplanetary travel.

ROBERTA

Aye, aye, Captain.

JOSEPH

I like the sound of that, too.

ROBERTA

So what are my orders?

JOSEPH

Our spaceship is on a steady trajectory with very little attention required to the control panel. I suggest we retire to the sleeping quarters, which, by the way is totally pressurized.

ROBERTA

That is good. These spacesuits definitely have to go.

JOSEPH

What might you be wearing underneath yours?

ROBERTA

That is for me to know and for you to find out.

JOSEPH

You know, you are turning out to be one very provocative scientist.

ROBERTA

You don't know the half of it!

JOSEPH

Look, I've never said this to you before. Our therapist made me realize I am actually attracted to you, but you put up such a hard wall in the past, I could never get through.

ROBERTA

I was just protecting myself. Deep down I am attracted to you too. There, I've said it.

THERAPIST

My job here is done! You have so turned me on I'm going to have to go and meet with my own lover. Feel free to use the room for whatever you'd like.

(Therapist leaves. They move closer together on the couch.)

JOSEPH

Would you like to continue with our simulation?

ROBERTA

I cannot suppress my scientific curiosity.

(ROBERTA moves aggressively onto his lap, puts her arms around his neck and kisses him fervently.)

BLACKOUT. END OF PLAY