

NORMAN, Marsha (*1947), USA

night, Mother (1983)

Dt Nacht, Mutter (1985), Üb Gitta Honegger

Zweipersonenstück: die nicht sehr lebensstüchtige Mutter und die versierte, geschiedene, epileptische Tochter. Diese hat viele Beispiele von Stigmatisierung und Diskriminierung erlebt und ist nun zum Selbstmord entschlossen als der einzigen unabhängigen Handlung, die ihr offensteht. Zum Schluss führt sie ihn auch aus.

Zur Autorin (Wiki 3.4.25):

„**Marsha Norman** (born September 21, 1947) is an American playwright, screenwriter, and novelist. She received the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play *'night, Mother*. She wrote the book and lyrics for such Broadway musicals as *The Secret Garden*, for which she won a Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical, and *The Red Shoes*, as well as the libretto for the musical *The Color Purple* and the book for the musical *The Bridges of Madison County*. She was co-chair of the playwriting department at The Juilliard School until stepping down in 2020.



Norman was born in Louisville, Kentucky, the oldest of four children of Billie and Bertha Williams. As a child, she read and played the piano. She later began attending productions by the newly founded Actors Theatre of Louisville. She received a bachelor's degree from Agnes Scott College and a master's degree from the University of Louisville. She worked as a journalist for *The Louisville Times* newspaper, and also wrote for Kentucky Educational Television. She taught young children and adolescents in mental institutions and hospitals. These were perhaps her biggest influence on her writing, especially a 13-year-old girl who influenced her play *Getting Out*. She also taught English at the J. Graham Brown School and Prestonia Elementary School in Louisville.

Norman's first play *Getting Out* was produced at the Actors Theatre of Louisville and then Off-Broadway in 1979. The play concerns a young woman just paroled after an eight-year prison sentence for robbery, kidnapping and manslaughter. It reflects Norman's experience working with disturbed adolescents at Kentucky's Central State Hospital.

Norman's success with *Getting Out* led her to move to New York City where she continued to write for the Actors Theatre of Louisville. Her full-length play, *Circus*

Valentine was produced at the Humana Festival in 1978. The play concerns a traveling circus and its star attraction, Siamese twins. Her next play, '**night, Mother**', became her best-known work, given its Broadway success and its star-powered film version. The play brought Norman a great deal of recognition, dealing frankly with the subject of suicide, and won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Hull-Warriner, the Drama Desk Award, and the 1986 Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement. However, her follow-up play, *Traveler in the Dark* received scathing reviews from the New York critics, some of whom were as blunt to say she could not have written it. According to an interview in *The New York Times*, "Ms. Norman stayed away from the theater and turned to screenplays, including a 1986 movie adaptation of '**night, Mother**' that starred Sissy Spacek and Anne Bancroft and failed to impress critics. She was in high demand in Hollywood, though not always for films that she liked, or that studios would approve."

Norman wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *The Secret Garden*, an adaptation of the Frances Hodgson Burnett novel *The Secret Garden*, and won the Tony Award for Best Book in 1991. Her work in musical theatre continued with the book and lyrics for the musical *The Red Shoes*, which failed on Broadway in 1993. Her one-act play, *Trudy Blue*, was produced off-Broadway in 1999. That play revolved around a woman who is mistakenly told that she has two months to live. She also wrote the libretto for the musical version of *The Color Purple* which opened on Broadway in 2005, receiving a Tony Award nomination for Best Book of a Musical.

Norman and composer Jason Robert Brown made a symphonic adaptation of the children's novel *The Trumpet of the Swan*, which premiered at the Kennedy Center in 2008. Norman has since written the libretto for the musical adaptation of the film *The Bridges of Madison County*, with a score by Brown. The musical premiered at the Williamstown Theatre Festival on August 1, 2013, and ran briefly on Broadway from February 20, 2014.

Television and film

Norman's scripts for television and film include the film version of '**night, Mother**'. She has written the television films *Face of a Stranger* (1991), *A Cooler Climate* (1999), *Custody of the Heart* (2000), and *The Audrey Hepburn Story* (2000). She has written screenplays for episodes of the HBO series *In Treatment*.

Other

Norman has served on the faculty of the Juilliard School in New York City as Co-Director of Juilliard's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program, and was Vice-President of the Dramatists Guild of America. She was honored at the 2011 William Inge Festival for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theatre. She will leave Juilliard at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year."

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