Acting Edition

You Got Older

by Clare Barron

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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YOU GOT OLDER was first produced by Page 73 Productions (Liz Jones and Asher Richelli, Executive Directors; Michael Walkup, Producing Director), at HERE Arts Center in New York City with an opening night on October 29, 2014. The production was directed by Anne Kauffman, with sets by Daniel Zimmerman, costumes by Ásta Bennie Hostetter, lights by Russell Champa, composition and sound by Daniel Kluger, props by Deb Gaouette, fight direction by Jeff Barry, and casting by Jack Doulin and Sharky. The Production Manager was Dennis O'Leary-Gullo and the Stage Manager was Sonja Thorson. The cast was as follows:

MAE . . . . . Brooke Bloom
DAD . . . . . Reed Birney
COWBOY . . . . . Michael Schantz
MAC . . . . . William Jackson Harper
HANNAH . . . . . Miriam Silverman
MATTHEW . . . . . Ted Schneider
JENNY . . . . . Keilly McQuail

YOU GOT OLDER was revived and produced by New York's Cherry Lane Theatre and Matt Ross on February 12, 2026. The production was directed by Anne Kauffman; with scenic design by Arnulfo Maldonado; costume design by Ásta Bennie Hostetter; lighting design by Isabella Byrd; original music and sound design by Daniel Kluger; casting by Taylor Williams, CSA; and voice coaching by Kate Wilson. The Production Stage Manager was Aura Michelle. The cast was as follows:

MAE . . . . . Alia Shawkat
DAD . . . . . Peter Friedman
COWBOY . . . . . Paul Cooper
MAC . . . . . Caleb Joshua Eberhardt
HANNAH . . . . . Nadine Malouf
MATTHEW . . . . . Misha Brooks
JENNY . . . . . Nina White

YOU GOT OLDER was originally developed in the Soho Rep. Writer/Director Lab (Sarah Benson, Artistic Director; Cynthia Flowers, Executive Director).

CHARACTERS

MAE – daughter of Dad, thirty-two

DAD – father of Mae, in his sixties

COWBOY – you don't know if he's gonna fuck you or kill you

MAC – a dude from Mae's hometown

HANNAH – big sister

MATTHEW – middle brother

JENNY – little sister

PLACE

A small agricultural city in eastern Washington State.
We should be able to feel the mountains.
Also, Minneapolis (the Big City).

NOTES ON THE PLAY

What I discovered – working alongside Anne Kauffman and Brooke Bloom – is that the structure of the play is largely built around something we termed "Mae's descent." The play starts in the moment after catastrophe. But it's helpful to assume that Mae is coping and finding humor in it all. Until she can't. It's a sort of nosedive that bottoms out during the champagne breakfast scene right before Mae returns to Minneapolis.

Thinking is really important in this play. Mae talks her thoughts out loud. She talks a lot because she has a lot to process. It's like she's chasing her thoughts in search of an answer or a feeling or an explanation or some kind or relief or something that she will never, ever find. Dad has just as much to process as Mae – he just keeps more of it to himself. This doesn't mean that it's not present, though. We should get to watch Dad (and Mae) think.

The play, in many ways, is about intimacy with a parent. And I think there's something scary in that – even when the conversation seems banal.

And finally: The scenes with Mae and the Cowboy should be dangerous. And sexy…until they aren't.

...ON SONGS

Dad's theme song is "Firewood" by Regina Spektor. The wedding song at the very end of the play is "Timber" by Pitbull (feat. Ke$ha). Both of those moments were born out of those specific songs, and so I think they're perfect.

"Why Was She Born so Beautiful" is an English Rugby song. You can find it online.

A license to produce *You Got Older* does not include a performance license for "Firewood" or "Timber." The publisher and author suggest that the licensee contact ASCAP or BMI to ascertain the music publisher and contact such music publisher to license or acquire permission for performance of the song. If a license or permission is unattainable for "Firewood" or "Timber." the licensee may not use the song in *You Got Older* but should create an original composition in a similar style or use a similar song in the public domain. For further information, please see the Music and Third-Party Materials Use Note on page iii.

...ON CASTING

This play is set in a small town in the Pacific Northwest, but please consider diversity when casting. A couple small tweaks can be made to the language to make anything possible. Reach out to your Licensing Rep, and we can discuss.

...ON NOTATION

A slash (/) indicates an interruption in speech. The following line of dialogue should interrupt the preceding line at the slash.

An asterisk (*) indicates an interruption in speech of the opposite column. The right-hand column of text should wait for the asterisk before starting to speak.

...ON DAD'S CANCER

Dad's cancer in the play is based on head and neck cancer. The scar from surgery is indicated in the text, but we've also explored radiation burns on the neck and face, and we played around with Dad periodically wiping his mouth with a hanky because of reduced and sticky saliva. I share this just as a jumping off point for your own character/makeup research.

SPECIAL THANKS

To Anne Kauffman (exquisite, herculean genius). To our stellar and incredibly generous team of actors, designers, and crew. To super producers Liz, Asher, Michael, and Rachel. And the incomparable Rachel Viola. To Ken Rus Schmoll, Jenny Schwartz, and the 2013-2014 Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab (where I wrote this play), and especially to my partner director Louisa Proske. To all the actors who helped develop this play. And also (as always) thank you to Maria Striar, Mac Wellman, Anne Washburn, David Herskovits, Tom Lehman, Eyad Houssami, Graeme Gillis, RJ Tolan, and Youngblood. And to 303 Douglass (Borinsky, Hardy, Hill, and Gus). I owe you guys a pound of flesh. And to my mom and dad and family. You guys are the best thing that's ever happened to me.

A vegetable garden. Little mounds of dirt. And vegetables propped up with sticks. It's late summer. Everything feels very far away from us. Or very – uncomfortably – close.

Mae and Dad stand over the vegetables. Dad has a scar that goes across his neck from one ear to the other ear. It looks like someone tried to cut his head off.

DAD. So these are our peppers

MAE. They're green

DAD. Yup

MAE. I thought they were going to be red

DAD. No. They're green peppers

MAE. Are they spicy?

DAD. No they're sweet.
Try one

Mae tries a pepper.

MAE. What are you going to do with them?

DAD. Oh I don't know. Salads. I haven't really thought about it

MAE. That's exciting that you're growing vegetables

DAD. Yes

MAE. What other things are you going to grow?

DAD. Just peppers for now. And these leafy green things. I don't know what they are.

MAE. Mustard Greens?

DAD. No

MAE. Collards?

DAD. No. It's more unusual than that

MAE. Swiss Chard?

DAD. It starts with an "A"

Mae thinks.

MAE. I don't know any greens that start with the letter "A"

DAD. I'm pretty sure it starts with the letter "A." Like Amethyst.

MAE. I don't know it.

DAD. I take about six leaves with me sometimes when I pack a lunch and I just eat them raw.

Mae and Dad stand in the yard.

MAE. Is that a fire pit?

DAD. Yes.

MAE. Where did it come from?

DAD. I made it.

MAE. Why did you make a fire pit?

He shrugs.

DAD. I was feeling industrious

MAE. Do you have fires?

DAD. I've had one fire. To test it out

MAE. How did it work?

DAD. It worked good

MAE. Can we have a fire?

DAD. We can if you want. We just have to get some firewood

Mae picks up a stick in the yard.

MAE. What about this?

He feels the stick.

DAD. I think it's too wet to burn.
We've been having a lot of wet days, recently.
I think tomorrow is supposed to be wet, too.

MAE. Is it?

DAD. That's what I heard

Dad looks at the sky. Mae looks at Dad's scar.

DAD. Do you still need to go to the pharmacy?

MAE. Yeah, if you don't mind

DAD. What do you need? Maybe we have it

MAE. No I checked. You don't have it

DAD. Are you sure? There's a whole stockpile of things down in the laundry room

MAE. I need a toothbrush

DAD. We have toothbrushes

MAE. I like a certain kind of toothbrush

DAD. We have all kinds of toothbrushes. Your mother was like a squirrel. I'm still finding things she ferreted away

MAE. I like soft bristles

DAD. We have soft bristles

MAE. Yeah everyone has soft bristles. I don't know who buys hard bristles. Or medium bristles

DAD. I sometimes buy medium bristles

MAE. Dad! Don't do that! You should always buy soft bristles. They're better for your gums

DAD. We have bad gums in our family

MAE. I know

DAD. Receding gums

MAE. I know. My dentist told me

DAD. I'm sorry about that

MAE. It's okay

DAD. And gingivitis

MAE. I know

DAD. I think in general we have very acidic mouths

MAE. I think so too

Little pause.

DAD. So soft bristles

MAE. Uh-huh. And also my dentist recommended that I get a child-sized toothbrush

DAD. Really

MAE. Because I have a small mouth

DAD. That's a clever idea

MAE. He said that a child-sized toothbrush would fit better in my mouth and it would be easier for me to clean all the crevices of my teeth, especially in the back of my mouth

DAD. I bet that's true

MAE. I don't know. That's what he told me.

DAD. So we'll buy you a toothbrush

MAE. *(cagey)* Also I need to pick up a prescription

DAD. A prescription?

MAE. Yeah, they called it in from Minneapolis

DAD. That was nice of them

MAE. Yeah but it was supposed to be there this morning and I called them and they didn't have it in yet

DAD. How come they didn't have it?

MAE. I don't know. I thought it was a normal thing but I guess it wasn't

DAD. What kind of drug is it?

MAE. *(embarrassed)* It's not a drug. It's an ointment. It's a prescription ointment

DAD. Did they have to overnight it?

MAE. I guess

DAD. That's what they do. They overnight it. Whenever they don't have it in stock they just overnight it from Seattle.

MAE. And what if Seattle doesn't have it?

DAD. I think Seattle always has it

MAE. Yeah well I hope Seattle has it. I'm supposed to get a text message telling me it's ready to be picked up

DAD. You get a text message from the pharmacy?

MAE. Yeah they text me

DAD. The pharmacist texts you?

MAE. Not personally. It's an automated thing.

DAD. Do you have to pay for that?

MAE. I get free texts

DAD. That's good

MAE. Well, not *free* texts. But I don't pay per text

DAD. Well, that's still pretty cool

MAE. Except they haven't texted me yet. So I don't know whether to go or whether we should wait for the text

DAD. Maybe you should call them to see if they got it–

MAE. Ugh. I don't want to call them–

DAD. So you don't go all the way down there, if they don't have it yet

MAE. Why wouldn't they have it in?

DAD. I don't know

MAE. That would really suck

DAD. Is it urgent?

MAE. I mean, it's urgent. But it's not that urgent.

DAD. If it's urgent, I can drive you to Seattle

MAE. It's not urgent. I just wish they would text me

DAD. Why don't you call them?

Mae and Dad stand in the yard. They look at the peppers. They look at the fire pit. They look at the sky.

DAD. I put you in Hannah's room. I hope that's okay

MAE. Oh.

DAD. It felt strange to have you sleeping in the basement with only two of us in the house

MAE. I like the basement

DAD. I can put you in the basement

MAE. No Hannah's room is fine. It's cheerful

DAD. Good

Mae smiles.

MAE. We'll be right next to each other.

Mae wakes up in bed. It's snowing outside. There's a strange man in the corner. He kind of looks like a Canadian cowboy.

MAE. Where am I?

COWBOY. Nova Scotia

MAE. Is it snowing?

COWBOY. There's a blizzard

MAE. A blizzard?!

COWBOY. Yup. It's blizzarding.

Mae looks out the window of the cabin. It's blizzarding outside.

COWBOY. I found you tied to a tree.

MAE. What?

COWBOY. You were buried halfway in the snow. Unconscious. Your mouth was open. There were snowflakes on your tongue.

MAE. Who would have tied me to a tree?

COWBOY. You tell me

Mae tries to think of who would want to tie her to the tree in the middle of a blizzard but she can't think of anyone.

Suddenly she realizes…

MAE. Hey. Am I naked?

COWBOY. I had to take your clothes off so you wouldn't freeze to death. I'm sorry. I didn't look

MAE. Um. Can I have them back?

COWBOY. They're still wet. I'm drying them by the fire

MAE. I have to go to the bathroom

The Cowboy strides across the room. He sets a pot next to the bed and retreats.

COWBOY. There's no toilet

MAE. Oh.

Maybe I'll wait.

COWBOY. It's going to be awhile

Mae hesitates. Then she climbs out of the bed using the sheet as a bathrobe. She squats over the pot.

She pees. It's so cold that her piss produces steam. She pushes the pot under the bed out of view. She climbs back into bed, still wearing the sheet, and gets under the covers. She lies very still.

MAE. Hey. What's your name?

COWBOY. Daryl. No. Luke. My name is Luke

MAE. Hey Luke. If there's a blizzard does that mean we're trapped?

Luke is standing over the bed.

COWBOY. I have to rub you down now

MAE. …

COWBOY. You're hypothermic

MAE. …

COWBOY. The friction will warm you up

MAE. Please don't

COWBOY. Rub you down?

MAE. Yes. Don't do that. Please

COWBOY. I'm sorry. I don't have a choice. It's for your own good

MAE. Can't I just do it myself?

COWBOY. Mae?

MAE. How do you know my name?

COWBOY. I'm going to rub you down now.
Even if I have to tie you to that bed
I am going to rub
Every part
Of your body
Vigorously
Until heat
And feeling
return
to every
part
of
yer
body

MAE. …

COWBOY. Don't look at the door.
There's a blizzard outside, remember?
You're not going anywhere

The door opens. Dad enters.

DAD. *(full of exuberance)* Hey Mae! We've got another pepper!

He sees Mae naked in bed, masturbating.

DAD. Oh sorry!

MAE. No it's fine. I'm just sleeping. Thinking. Sleeping. I'm just about to get up

DAD. Well when you're ready come out and I'll show you the new pepper.

Dad exits, leaving Mae alone with Cowboy Luke.

Dad and Mae sit in the yard around the empty fire pit. They are next to the peppers. There is a baby new one.

MAE. This is almost like we're camping

DAD. Yeah

MAE. We don't even have to go hiking anymore we can just come out here

DAD. No views though

MAE. I don't really care about the views

They sit in silence.

MAE. Are you going into the office this afternoon?

DAD. Nah, I think I'll just send some emails from home.

They sit.

MAE. It didn't rain

DAD. No

MAE. I don't think it's going to rain today either

DAD. I don't think so either

MAE. Maybe we can make a fire

They sit in silence.

DAD. The thing that always gets me is this. You're outside. You're looking at the sky. And it's a beautiful sky. You're happy to be alive. You're aware that you're having a nice moment. That it's a good moment in your life. But then how long should you let it go on, you know? Shouldn't you just look at the sky forever? Or at very least until you get very hungry and you have to go do something else? But I'm always itching to go do something else even when I'm in the middle of having a nice moment. It makes me feel guilty.

They sit.

Mae thinks about Damian who she fucked without a condom even though she didn't really want to fuck him without a condom and how she put her legs over his shoulders. Or his legs over her…? No. His *shoulders.* Her *legs over* his *shoulders.*

MAE. Should we go in?

Mae out at Hank's Saloon. A dingy local bar. She drinks a beer. A small-ish guy sits one stool over. He keeps checking Mae out.

MAC. Hey

MAE. Hey

MAC. Do I know you?

MAE. No

MAC. I think I know you

MAE. I don't think so

MAC. Washington Elementary School?

MAE. Yes

MAC. Mrs. Armstrong's 4th grade class

MAE. Yes

MAC. Mac. I mean, I was Malcolm then. But now I'm Mac

MAE. Oh. Oh! Oh I think I remember you! Sorry. I totally remember you. Mrs. Armstrong! Yes!

MAC. It's okay. How are you doing?

MAE. Fine. How are you?

MAC. I'm good, I'm good
Are you living / here?

MAE. Visiting. I'm visiting

MAC. Cool

MAE. Yeah

MAC. …

MAE. …

MAC. …

MAE. Actually I'm not fine. Actually I'm awful.

MAC. Oh?

MAE. Yeah. I'm actually having like the worst moment of my life right now. Well almost the worst. *(She thinks.)* Like the second worst moment of my life so far.

MAC. I'm sorry

MAE. Yeah. My dad has cancer

MAC. Oh no

MAE. Like really bad cancer

MAC. What kind of cancer?

MAE. *(on a roll)* Like weird, mysterious cancer that had spread all over his body –

MAC. Uh-huh

MAE. But they couldn't find the primary source and it turns out that the primary source was only three millimeters big and in his larynx even though he doesn't smoke and doesn't drink and doesn't have HPV (I'm pretty sure) and he had to go to Seattle and have this surgery with robots –

MAC. Whoa!

MAE. And now he looks like someone tried to chop his head off.

MAC. Oh my god

MAE. Yeah and they made him get chemo and radiation and stuff but they didn't want to surgically remove his

larynx, obviously, so now he has to go *back* to Seattle to get his larynx zapped directly with this high-powered radiation laser proton –

MAC. *Jesus*

MAE. Knife thing-y and then he's done

MAC. Well that's good

MAE. And also this dude who was like the love of my life dumped me
And he was my boss
So he fired me

MAC. He fired you?

MAE. So I don't have a job anymore
Or health insurance

MAC. Is that legal?

MAE. Or an *apartment*
And my little sister has a pericardial cyst

MAC. What?

MAE. *(to herself)* He didn't really "fire me." I shouldn't have said that.

MAC. Wait. Your sister has a what?

MAE. Like a cyst in her heart that's been growing since she was born

MAC. Oh my god is she going to be okay?

MAE. I mean, she had to have heart surgery but it was like non-invasive heart surgery. / They just stuck a needle in her

MAC. Oh my god

MAE. She's totally fine. Apparently it's like a totally normal–

MAC. Heart cysts?

MAE. Yeah, but of course she's *freaking out* about it because of my dad.
And because of my mom

MAC. What's wrong with your mom?

MAE. Uh. My mom is deceased

MAC. Oh shit

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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