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How to Talk to Your Child About Satan

Written by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUCILLE: 50s. Any ethnicity. Female. Higher in the hierarchy.

DENISE: 40s. Any ethnicity. Female. Lower in the hierarchy.

ARLENE: 30s. Any ethnicity. Female. Joanna's Mother.

JOANNA: 6. Any ethnicity. Female. Arlene's Daughter.

SETTING:

A clearing in the woods.

TIME:

Probably closer to today than the 1980s. Around 3am.

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Darkness.

Female voices.

Black, visceral chanting.

It perhaps sounds like gibberish, that's what Enochian sounds like. Or perhaps it's just a few good old-fashioned "Hail, Satans!"

Whatever it sounds like, it is deathly serious and joyfully malevolent.

After a good amount of auditory stimulation, moonlight and flame then reveals LUCILLE, DENISE, and ARLENE in a forest clearing, completely naked, in the middle of some kind of Satanic ritual.

LUCILLE leads.

DENISE and ARLENE follow.

There is dancing.

Twisting.

Chanting.

Hail, Satan.

This may last as long as desired, but should be long enough to let us really feel their fervor.

Then, just as the ritual is about to reach its head...

JOANNA enters in pajamas or a nightgown, perhaps carrying a teddy bear or other stuffed animal.

JOANNA

Mommy?

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The naked women stop and look at her, utterly taken aback by the sudden interruption of their Satanic ritual by a six-year-old.

Beat.

JOANNA

Mommy, what are you doing?

ARLENE

Uhhhhh...

What are you doing, sweetheart?

LUCILLE

Arlene. What is your child doing here?

DENISE

Is she joining us?! You're never too young to write your name in his book!

LUCILLE

Quiet, Denise.

(To JOANNA)

Child, what are you doing here?

ARLENE

She's my daughter, I can talk to her.

LUCILLE

Then do.

ARLENE

Joanna, sweetie. What are you doing out of bed?

JOANNA

I couldn't sleep.

ARLENE

Okay, well--

DENISE

I had trouble sleeping as a girl. My mom would always give me a little kick of whiskey.

ARLENE

Why didn't you get your dad, honey?

JOANNA

I wanted you.

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DENISE

Little kick of whiskey, I'd be right off.

JOANNA

And I saw you going into the woods, so...

DENISE

I think I have some in my purse!

ARLENE

Quiet, Denise.

JOANNA

Am I in trouble?

ARLENE

No, honey, no, you're not in trouble.

LUCILLE

Although, we were kind of in the middle of something.

ARLENE

Can we--put a pause on it for, like, a second?

LUCILLE

Satan waits for no woman, Arlene.

ARLENE

Just two seconds.

LUCILLE

The ritual was almost complete!

ARLENE

I am sure Satan will be a-okay giving me a little moment's reprieve to put my daughter back to bed.

JOANNA

Satan?

Beat.

DENISE

Are you sure you don't want to join us? Because you're never too young, really.

ARLENE/LUCILLE

Shut up, Denise!

DENISE

What did I say?

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ARLENE

Yes, honey. Um, Satan.

LUCILLE

Hail, Satan!

DENISE

Hail, Satan!

JOANNA

You're...worshipping Satan?

ARLENE

(After a fair moment,
trying to say really
anything other than
what she finally
goes with)

Yes.

LUCILLE

So if you could give us just a moment, girl, we were actually almost done before you rudely interrupted. Satan's impatience grows with every syllable that you let out of that tiny mouth.

JOANNA

But I thought you said Satan was just a symbol.

LUCILLE

What?

ARLENE starts doing that "stop talking, cut off" gesture with her hand across her throat at JOANNA.

JOANNA

Mommy says Satan's just a symbol that we should embrace. A positive archetype of defiance and a representation of personal independence and freedom. We're not supposed to actually pray to him.

LUCILLE

WHAT?

DENISE

I'm lost.

LUCILLE

Arlene!

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ARLENE
Look, she's 6, she doesn't know what she's talking about.

JOANNA
Mommy!

ARLENE
Lucille.

LUCILLE
Arlene!

DENISE
I'm so lost.

LUCILLE
Does your child speak the truth?

JOANNA
Mommy says we should always tell the truth.

LUCILLE
YOU'RE RATIONALISTS?!

ARLENE
(Laughing it off,
then clearly lying)
No.

DENISE
I'm sorry, can somebody--

LUCILLE
They're rationalists, Denise! We have been betrayed.

DENISE
Sorry, I'm still not--

LUCILLE
THEY DON'T BELIEVE IN SATAN.

DENISE
What?

ARLENE
Of course we do! Of course we believe in Satan.

JOANNA
As a concept.

LUCILLE
Oh my GOD!

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ARLENE

Joanna, honey, we should get you back to bed.

LUCILLE

You heathens!

DENISE

Wait, so you don't believe Satan exists?

JOANNA

No. We do not.

LUCILLE

False worshippers!

DENISE

But you were doing the ritual with us?

LUCILLE

You will be smote!

ARLENE

Yes. Yes! Look, okay, fine, cat's out of the bag. We're atheistic Satanists, I didn't want to bring it up.

DENISE

Why not?

LUCILLE

Satan, bring fire on these non-believers!

ARLENE

(Making a "well, look
at LUCILLE" gesture)

Can you blame me?

DENISE

I'm confused. You wrote your name in his book.

ARLENE

Denise, it was a paperback copy of *Atlas Shrugged*. From your house.

DENISE

That's what he said to use!

LUCILLE

Let the ground crack and suck them into your kingdom!

JOANNA

Why didn't you say anything, Mommy?

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ARLENE

I don't know, I guess--I had my own life. When I met you both, and you believed so closely to me, minus the one part...I just felt less alone. You know?

Being with others felt nice. I didn't want to lose that.

DENISE

That makes sense.

LUCILLE

Burn them for their insolence, Lucifer! Burn them eternally!

JOANNA

Mommy, is she okay?

ARLENE

Um...

Look, Lucille?

LUCILLE

Hellfire will spark in your souls!

ARLENE

Lucille?

LUCILLE

DAMNATION!!

DENISE

Lucille! Calm down. Do you want some whiskey?

LUCILLE

How can you stand here and listen to such blasphemy?

DENISE

I mean, what she said did make sense. You're really reacting, like, heavily, right now.

LUCILLE

I'm reacting heavily? You should be joining me! Curse these heathens with all the air in your bodily vessel!

DENISE

Right.

Well, it is getting pretty early now. Maybe we should just-- stop for the night? This seems like a good stopping point.

LUCILLE

SACRILEGE!

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ARLENE

Joanna, how do you feel about getting back to bed?

JOANNA

Okay, Mommy!

DENISE

Do you want some company?

LUCILLE

Denise?!

ARLENE

You know, I actually could use a drink.

JOANNA

Me too?

ARLENE

Sure, honey.

*ARLENE and DENISE laugh and
begin to exit with JOANNA.*

LUCILLE

This is desecration!!

DENISE

So, tell me more about this Satan as a symbol stuff.

ARLENE

Really?

DENISE

Yeah.

JOANNA

Oh, it's really cool. So, essentially, while we don't believe he exists, he represents--

*They are gone, their voices
fading into the distance.*

And LUCILLE remains.

LUCILLE

(Overlapping with
above)

Don't walk away from me! You will not turn your back upon the Devil! He will bring fire and torment upon your houses!! Get back here and hail Satan! Where are you going?! Come back!! I will finish this ritual by myself! You will rue this day, Denise!! Arlene? Do you hear me?! Satan will

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LUCILLE (cont'd)

pillage your hopes and dreams! You will burn eternally in
his bedchamber as your child watches! Answer me! Arlene! You
slut! You bitch, Denise!

Hail, Satan!

HAIL, SATAN!!!

HAIL!

...

...

Where the fuck are my clothes?

END OF PLAY.