



First staged at the National Theatre (Dorfman) in 2023, Deborah Bruce's *Dixon and Daughters* is a powerful and emotionally charged drama about trauma, survival, and the complexities of family. The play unfolds as Mary, a mother and matriarch, returns home after serving a prison sentence. She is determined to rebuild her life, but as she steps back into the house, she is met with resistance from her daughters and stepdaughter, who carry deep wounds from the past. Mary was sentenced to six months for colluding with her deceased husband's sexual abuse of his oldest daughter Briana, now 46 years old. She has testified against her step-mother Mary in court, so her arrival is unwelcome, as is her mission to expose all of the family's secrets.

As tensions rise, long-buried secrets come to the surface, revealing the extent of the abuse and violence that has shaped their lives. The women grapple with the impact of their shared history, questioning loyalty, responsibility, and the ways in which silence has perpetuated their suffering. Through moments of confrontation, heartbreak, and unexpected humour, *Dixon and Daughters* explores the struggle to break cycles of abuse and the possibility of healing – if they can find a way to truly listen to one another. It is a gripping and compassionate play which shines a light on the resilience of women and the difficult path toward justice and reconciliation.

Deborah Bruce has written a 90-minute piece about family trauma and the deep scars emerging from the lives of these women, all of whom experience different degrees of societal pressure to conceal and downplay their interactions with men. The Dixon of the title never appears, but becomes a significant shadow over this household as the story unfolds, a symbol of a broader problem that the writer carefully layers through the show and cuts through every relationship.



**Social Reading:** Tuesday 23rd September at 7.30pm

**Auditions:** Tuesday 7 October at 7pm and Sunday 12 October at 5pm

**Rehearsals:** On Monday and Wednesday evenings at 7.45pm, commencing on 1 December. (No rehearsals on 15, 17, 22, 24 or 31 December.) Due to Sleeping Beauty, the four rehearsals on 5, 7, 12 and 14 January will be held at Anne's home drama studio in Carshalton on the Hill.

**Production:** 23 to 28 February.

**Director:** Anne Gregory     [annegregory86@gmail.com](mailto:annegregory86@gmail.com)

**PA:** Tara Baker   [tara.ebaker@outlook.com](mailto:tara.ebaker@outlook.com)

## **Audition pieces**

**All ages are ‘stage ages’. The play is set in Bradford.**

**MARY** (64) Widow of Ray Dixon. The Matrich. Hardened, angry, cold and embittered from her stay in prison. Outwardly strong, fierce and controlling, but inwardly damaged and disintergrating from the guilt of protecting her husband, Ray. The relationship with her daughters is challenging, layered and very complex.

Page 19 (with Julie & Bernie) ‘I’m not having people thinking I’m ashamed’ to page 22 ‘Oh very nice!’

Pages 29 & 30 Scene 2

Page 50 (with Leigh) ‘I can’t sleep in there Mary’ to page 51 ‘I swear to God’.

Page 53 (with Bernie) ‘Anyone can scream’ to page 55 ‘Do you remember that Mum?’

Page 83 ‘He’d call me ... to ... I couldn’t please him!’

**BERNIE** (41) Daughter of Ray and Mary, and mother to Ella. She appears to have escaped the abuse thanks to Tina/Briana’s adoption. Has a big moment towards the end of the play.

Page 19 (with Mary and Julie) ‘I’m not having people thinking I’m ashamed’ to page 22 ‘Oh very nice!’

Page 53 (with Mary) ‘Anyone can scream’ to page 55 ‘Do you remember that Mum?’

**JULIE** (43) Daughter of Ray and Mary, who was abused by her father and is now by her husband. A nervous wreck who has taken refuge in Mary’s home and has turned to drink. She needs a sensitive and multi-layered characterisation.

Page 19 (with Mary and Bernie) ‘I’m not having people thinking I’m ashamed’ to page 22 ‘Oh very nice!’

Page 33 (with Briana) ‘Have you got email back from Pierce Brosnan?’ to page 35 ‘Feeling incomplete is normal and healthy.’

**ELLA** (21) Daughter of Bernie. Ella is safe, from a good home with a comfortable life. Quiet, assured and mature. Educated and ambitious. Fond of her Grandma and accepting of the dysfunctional family. Her moment comes late in the play.

Page 88 (with Briana and Leigh) ‘You crying?’ to page 91 ‘Ugh I can’t be bothered.’

**BRIANA/TINA** (46) Ray’s daughter and Mary’s step daughter. A dominating force for good. After years of abuse from Ray, she immersed herself in self-help books and now confidently offers life coaching to all around her. She has returned to pressure Mary to openly recognise and confront the past abuse.

Page 33 (with Julie) ‘Have you got email back from Pierce Brosnan?’ to page 35 ‘Feeling incomplete is normal and healthy.’

Page 88 (with Ella and Leigh) ‘You crying?’ to page 91 ‘Ugh I can’t be bothered.’

**LEIGH** (mid 20s) A Londoner from the underclass, who met Mary in prison. She has suffered a lifetime of abuse and neglect, turning to alcohol and drugs. Hard, sharp and violent, with no filter and no social skills.

Page 50 (with Mary) ‘I can’t sleep in there Mary’ to page 51 ‘I swear to God’.

Page 88 (with Briana and Ella) ‘You crying?’ to page 91 ‘Ugh I can’t be bothered.’