

WHAT HORRIBLE DISNEY MOTHERS CAN MAKE YOU REALISE ABOUT YOUR OWN MOTHER

MATILDA

For once, I feel that Mother's Day should be celebrated by also imagining and recalling how horrible some mothers can be along with how amazing they almost always are. And there's no better way to do this than to use a childhood staple of millions: Disney.

Disney is known to have motherless protagonists, but not all characters grew up without both parents. While some like Tiana and Aurora were lucky to have a wonderful mother or at least caring mother figures, many had the misfortune of having mothers who scarred them in every possible way. It is these mothers we'll be looking at, just to help us realise that many of us have had it great when it comes to the people we call mother in our lives.

Some of these horrible Disney mothers are hard to imagine in our daily lives, such as the Evil Queen in Snow White. But there are ones who seem very real. Lady Tremaine, Cinderella's stepmother, is one of them. More shocking than the relationship with her stepdaughter is how she treats her own

daughter, Anastasia. The constant rebuking and controlling of Anastasia and Drizzella in the first movie might make Lady Tremaine seem like a mother who is only strict, but in the second and especially the third movie, we get to see the extent of Lady Tremaine's desire for power and prestige. In part two, she forbids Anastasia from talking to the baker she loves and in part three, enraged that Anastasia refused to marry the Prince because of a guilty conscience, she readily attempts to turn her own daughter and Cinderella into toads to appease her own anger.

However, a mother figure more damaging than the cold Lady Tremaine is Mother Gothel who seems warm and

loving on the surface.

We see Gothel steal baby Rapunzel from her crib to use her magical hair to keep herself young. She keeps Rapunzel away in a tower and seems to take care of her well. However, as the story progresses, we see that there is no chance of Gothel loving Rapunzel. After careful rewatching, one might see that Gothel loves only Rapunzel's hair and not Rapunzel in the slightest. This is made obvious very subtly from the very beginning, from the way Mother Gothel caresses her hair to the seemingly endearing nicknames she uses for Rapunzel such as "flower" and "sapling", a reference to the flower which helped cure Rapunzel's biological mother and which gave Rapunzel magical powers.

Mother Gothel's "Mother Knows Best" is a song that contains words many of us have often heard from our own mothers and other adults. Her slamming the window shut to keep out the light and usher in the darkness sets the mood for the dark song sung in a dramatic and

comedic way; in one song, Gothel scares, guilt-trips, and induces self-doubt in Rapunzel. The way Mother Gothel snuffs out every candle flame with her fingers as soon as Rapunzel lights them foreshadows how Gothel will try to take away all that Rapunzel holds

dear and how she has kept Rapunzel in the dark all her life. Despite Gothel being the one who is scaring Rapunzel in the song, it is her Rapunzel runs to in order to feel safe.

What makes Mother

Gothel's behaviour more chilling is that often, Mother Gothel behaves just like our own mothers – she is overprotective, jokes with Rapunzel, keeps her safe, combs her hair, sings to her – all the things mothers seem to do with and for their daughters. There is no magic involved, it is just Gothel's ability to manipulate Rapunzel, a person who has never known another person besides the woman she calls mother. Gothel's power over Rapunzel is so strong that even in her absence, Rapunzel is filled with guilt for disobeying her and is unable to fully enjoy her first time out of the tower. Unlike Anastasia who is scared of her mother's wrath, Rapunzel is upset because she feels that she is hurting Gothel.

What we often forget is that Mother Gothel and Lady Tremaine are characters realistic enough to exist in this world. Mothers like Gothel and Lady Tremaine make us look at our own mothers. This comparison helps us to see how we often forget the selflessness of our mothers, because sometimes we forget and lose perspective, and only after we lose someone near and dear to us do we realise what that person meant to us. It's a blessing we don't have the magical powers to transform our mothers into grizzly bears every time we get into an argument about little things such as what clothes to wear and what hobbies to pursue.

Yes we might often feel like we are Rapunzel with short hair in our daily lives, but mothers are mothers, whether they make us stay in our homes or order us to not talk to a particular person. They love us for

us, not our hair, and they put us before everything else. So this Mother's Day, and every other day, just remember that everything your mother has done for you so far, she's done because she loves you simply for being you.

