

# Tamara's Time Out

## *The Characters:*

*Tamara Johnson* – a bright, but stubborn third grader.  
*TJ Johnson* – Tamara's junior high age stepbrother.  
*Kathy Johnson* – Tamara's older stepsister.  
*Angelina Johnson* – Tamara's mother.  
*Bill Johnson* – Father of Kathy and TJ, Angelina's husband.  
*Kitty Conn* – The Johnsons' friend, an older lady.  
*Claude Jaquith* – Another family friend, an older gentleman.

[*Note: All characters can be played by any person of any age*]

## *The Scene:*

*The living room of the Johnsons' house in Vista Falls. Kathy and Tamara are sitting on the floor downstage playing a game. Center stage, Angelina and Bill are seated on the couch (this can be two chairs pushed together) flanked by Mr. Jaquith and Kitty Conn each in their own chair on either side of the sofa. TJ is sitting on the floor to one side of Mrs. Conn, listening to the grown-ups talk.*

**MRS. CONN:** Of course I remember organ grinder monkeys. When I was a girl, there was an organ grinder on Canal Street. My mama and I used to walk past him on our way to meet daddy after he got off work and we'd always feed the monkey an orange slice.

**TJ:** The monkey didn't bite you?

**MRS CONN:** (*laughing*) No, TJ. It was fairly tame for a monkey. But, who worried about things like that, then. My mama and I figured that if the monkey was out on the street wearing a hat, it must have been tame enough to put your hand near its face. Who worried about getting mauled by monkeys back then?

**MR. JAQUITH:** I guess we were just more trusting in those days. Though, I'm fairly certain I'd have been careful around a monkey — hat or no hat.

**MRS. CONN:** I don't know if we were more trusting. I think I just trusted my mama. If she thought it was all right to give fruit to strange, exotic animals, then I had no reason to doubt her. I knew she'd always look out for my best interest. That's a mother's job.

**ANGELINA:** TJ, would you feed a monkey if I told you it was okay? (*She giggles*)

**TJ:** Yeah, sure. Why not? (*he shrugs*) I don't see that being an issue any time soon.

**BILL:** (*sarcastically*) How nice that you trust your stepmother so completely.

**TJ:** Hey, don't get me wrong. It's the monkeys I doubt. I trust Angelina. She knows that.

**ANGELINA:** (*smiling*) Don't worry, TJ. I don't doubt it.

**TAMARA:** Can all of you PLEASE quiet down.

**BILL:** Excuse me, Tammie?

**TAMARA:** I'm TRYING to concentrate here.

**KATHY:** (*laughing*) What she means is, she's trying not to lose so much. And, she wants quiet so she try to figure out how not to lose this round, too.

**TAMARA:** I am not losing!

**KATHY:** Please, Tammie. You've lost every game this afternoon.

**TAMARA:** If I have, it's because I can't hear myself think over all this talk of monkeys and coffee grinders.

**MRS. CONN:** Organ grinders....not coffee. Coffee grinders don't usually need monkeys.

**MR. JAQUITH:** (*unable to keep from smiling*) Luckily for those of us that need a cup or two in the morning.

**TAMARA:** Huh?

**KATHY:** Are you going to play?

**TAMARA:** (*moving a game piece*) There, I'll move here.

**KATHY:** Ha! You lose!

**TAMARA:** What? How?

**KATHY:** You're on my square. That means, I win!

**TAMARA:** (*angrily tossing the game board*) You cheat! You're stupid and you cheat!

**ANGELINA:** Tamara, don't talk to Kathy that way. You know how I feel about yelling.

**TAMARA:** You always take her side. And, she's not even your real daughter! I hate you!

**ANGELINA:** (*Standing up*) Tamara, don't you ever speak to me that way.

**TAMARA:** Why not?

**ANGELINA:** (*still mostly calm*) Because I'm your mother.

**TAMARA:** Maybe you'd like it if Kathy were your daughter instead of me since you like her so much better.

**ANGELINA:** I love you both equally.

**TAMARA:** You should love me MORE! I want you to!

**ANGELINA:** Tammie, that's enough. We'll discuss this later when you've calmed down.

**TAMARA:** Fine. You can drive me to Mario's now.

**ANGELINA:** I can? (*she's finally letting her anger show a little*) No, I don't think so. You should go to your room.

**TAMARA:** But, it's Mario's party! You said I could go.

**ANGELINA:** I said you could go when you were being a nice young lady. Now, I don't think you should go. I can't send you out to another family's house when you're acting like this. No, you'll stay here. I'll call Mario's mother and give your excuses. You're on time out.

**TAMARA:** I really hate you now! You're the worst mother ever!

*(Tamara runs off)*

**ANGELINA:** *(sitting down again)* Well, that was fun.

**BILL:** *(rising and going behind his wife, putting his hands on her shoulders)* I think you handled it quite well.

**TJ:** I do, too, Angelina. Man, if I'd ever acted like that...

**BILL:** *(shaking his head)* Let's not hypothesize about how you'd act.. I could remind you of some things you did that were more than theory.

**TJ:** Okay. *(he looks embarrassed)*

**KATHY:** I'm sorry I made her mad.

**ANGELINA:** Well, you could have been a more gracious winner. But, ultimately, Tamara chose to let you bother her. And, she acted unkindly.

**KATHY:** I'll try not to goat next time. I'm sorry.

**ANGELINA:** Thanks, Kathy. And, allow me to offer my apologies to you, Claude and Kitty. I certainly didn't invite you over here to witness our little afternoon drama.

**MRS. CONN:** Oh, please, I've run a bakery for over fifty years, I've seen my share of youthful temper tantrums.

**MR. JAQUITH:** That was nothing compared to what I've experienced at Cascades Park. *(he chuckles)* Come to think of it, that was nothing compared to some of the fits I threw at my own mother many years ago.

**MRS. CONN:** Oh, me, too. Believe me, my childhood was far from just walks in the city and organ grinders' monkeys. I was awful

sometimes — just plain, rotten awful!

**TJ:** You?

**MRS. CONN:** Oh, yes. I'm not proud of it, mind you. But, I'm sure I said some terrible, hateful things to my mother.

**MR. JAQUITH:** I did, too. It's a child's nature to act out when he or she doesn't get their way.

**BILL:** I recall a few choice scenes I caused myself.

**ANGELINA:** Me, too. I remember once when I was about your age, TJ, I wanted desperately to go to a dance with an older boy. My mother told me in no uncertain terms that I would not be leaving the house that night. Well, I was all fists and elbows after that — crying and carrying on like an infant. I told her I hated her.

**BILL:** Did you mean it?

**ANGELINA:** *(smiling)* No, of course not. I was angry. That's all. And, I had not learned how to cope with my anger yet.

**TJ:** I can't imagine what that would be like.

**KATHY:** *(rolling her eyes)* No, not you. You're the picture of adolescent calm.

**MRS. CONN:** All kids go through this.

**ANGELINA:** *(emotionally)* But, I still wish I didn't have to hear my baby say she hates me. Just because it's some kind of human nature, doesn't make it hurt less.

**MRS. CONN:** Oh, Angelina. It'll be all right. I'm sure that Tamara knows in her heart that you're only punishing her so she'll learn how to act properly. She trusts you just as I trusted my mama.

**BILL:** Of course.

**TJ:** (*quietly to Kathy*) You think so?

**KATHY:** (*trying not to smile*) No.

**BILL:** Ahem...

**KATHY:** Sorry.

**MR. JAQUITH:** Kitty's right. Tamara knows you only want what's best for her.

**ANGELINA:** Thank you both, but it would be nice to know that for sure.

**TAMARA:** (*entering again*) Mom?

**ANGELINA:** Yes, Tammie.

**TAMARA:** (*handing her mother a hand made card*) Here.

**ANGELINA:** (*reading the card aloud*) 'Mom, I'm sorry. You're the best mom ever. I love you. Tamara.' Oh, sweetie!

**TAMARA:** I am very sorry, mom.

**TJ:** She's just giving you a card so you'll forget you punished her!

**KATHY:** She's just trying to get you to take her to the party!

**TAMARA:** I am not! (*she makes herself calm down*) I meant it.

**ANGELINA:** I know you did, sweetie. Do you know why I won't let you go to the party?

**TAMARA:** Because I was being a brat?

**ANGELINA:** Well, yes...and...

**TAMARA:** And, so I'll know not to do it again?

**ANGELINA:** That's right.

**TAMARA:** Do I have to go back to my room?

**ANGELINA:** No, you can stay here with us. Maybe we'll all play that game.

**KATHY:** I promise I'll be nice.

**MRS. CONN:** I'd play, if you'll teach me.

**MR. JAQUITH:** Me, too. But, I think we need some music.

**BILL:** I have just the thing!

**ANGELINA:** What's that, Bill?

**BILL:** A CD of organ grinder songs I picked up a few years ago at a flea market.

**MRS. CONN:** Oh, dear, wouldn't my mama be so happy?

**ANGELINA:** (*hugging Tamara*) Your mama certainly is, sweetie. She certainly is!

*END SCENE.*