

From the back, they might be high-school friends, both five feet four with shiny dark hair, and both dressed like teenagers. One's in a short black skirt, motorcycle boots, and a strategically ripped T-shirt; the other's in tight tan pants and a brown sweater by Ralph Lauren. "She dresses like a Jappy teenager," one says.

"Don't you dare say that," says the other.

You might hear their voices and wonder which is coming from which. It's like that optical illusion of the lady with the feathered hat, where you can't tell her age. But when they turn around, it's clear they're mother and daughter. Same faces, except for the years.

"We wear the same size, even the same shoe size," says Denise Wohl, the mom. "Lucky for her," she adds with a little smile.

"So? You borrow my skirts," Arden, her 16-year-old daughter, says. "And my tank tops, and my sweaters."

We're in the Wohls's Park Avenue apartment, where 19th-century French and Russian patterns collide like bargain hunters going after marked-down Manolo Blahnik boots. "This is my suit closet and my serious closet and my sweater

Chris of *The Lucy Show*, who favored miniskirts and go-go boots, wouldn't have been caught dead in mother Lucy's boxy suits for work at the bank with Mr. Mooney. But with the advent of Buffy-Britney-Brandy youth glamour, it's safe to say there's no such thing as mother or daughter fashion anymore. Goldie Hawn and her daughter, Kate Hudson, are regularly photographed wearing similarly torn jeans and tight tees, exposing pumped biceps, while Raquel Welch and her daughter, Tahnee, can be seen in matching sexy, slit skirts and hot pants, exposing even more. Whether it's day- or eveningwear, it's rare to hear, "You can't wear that till you get older"—or, for that matter, "Is this dress too young for me?"

But is this what Martha Stewart would call a good thing? Do the blurred lines of fashion complicate the already byzantine coming-of-age process for girls? Are there times when a girl *wants* her mother to look as if she shops at all the wrong stores?

"I think kids need boundaries," says Anita Waxman, a Broadway producer with five daughters. She's sitting in a SoHo café across from her youngest daughter, Alexis, 16,

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closet and my jeans closet." Denise slides back all the doors.

"You should be, like, embarrassed," Arden says.

"I didn't buy all this at once," Denise says. "It took years."

Arden surveys her mother's 50 stylish suit jackets—by Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Armani, Chanel, plus something wonderfully white and furry by Versace—and says, "I never go in there."

"No, Arden doesn't wear suits; she just steals my Prada shoes. Or if her friends are going out for the evening, they'll raid my gowns and Fendi bags. I love to dress them up," Denise says, smiling again.

"My friends love to come here," says Arden. She goes to Dalton, and likes to hang out at Spy Bar. "My mom's not selfish with clothes. It's very cool."

"Are these my Pradas?" asks Denise. We're in Arden's closet now, which is smaller and lacks the special lighting.

"I never *wore* them," Arden says.

"Well, may I take them back then?" says Denise.

"Fine."

Once upon a time, moms dressed like moms and daughters dressed like daughters. If there was one surefire way to distinguish between the generations, it was clothes. Think Pat Nixon in her Republican cloth coat, and Trisha in her cute little sleeveless sundresses and floppy do. Daughter

who's dressed all in Betsey Johnson black lace; Anita, meanwhile, is wearing leather pants and a studded Harley Davidson jacket. Both pretty blondes, they look like a Goth and her friend, the expensive biker chick. And from the back, you might think that's what they are.

"But you can't create boundaries with fashion anymore," Anita admits with a laugh. "We're all too mixed-up now."

"We confuse everything," says perky Andrea Stark. "She steals all my Bergdorf cashmere sweaters. We're basically the same size, you see...." Andrea watches her 17-year-old daughter, Ashley, a moment, then mouths, "She's so *cute!*"

We're rolling down Fifth Avenue in a Mercedes-Benz driven by a chauffeur named Greg. Mother and daughter, looking like rather highly maintained cheerleaders who avail themselves of lots of facials, are both wearing pink crewneck sweaters and jean jackets. "We share a lot of jean jackets," Andrea says. Actually, the two are identical in every way—long dark hair, small dark eyes—except that Andrea has on leather pants. "Ashley doesn't wear leather pants, do you, honey?"

But Ashley doesn't answer. She's on her Motorola cell phone, doing some last-minute organizing for her fashion benefit.

"Ashley devotes herself to community service," says Andrea. "Ever since she stopped skiing—she made the



MOTHER-DAUGHTER BONDING: Laura Aldridge and daughter Lily Aldridge, center, chat with Limp Bizkit lead singer Fred Durst.

Junior Olympics two years in a row.”

We’re on our way to the fitting for Ashley’s show, which will feature all of her friends. The proceeds will go toward buying pediatric equipment for the NYU Medical Center.

“I suggest you get in a cab *now*,” Ashley’s telling someone.

“She’s also a reporter for *Teen People*,” says Andrea. “I could see her being a fashion editor. She has impeccable, classic taste. When I go shopping, I have her try on all the clothes—she just looks so good in everything.”

Ashley cuts away from her conversation to tell her mother, “My sense of style is not nearly so conservative as you say.”

Andrea nods. “Last summer, she worked for Christian Dior in Paris. We did a lot of shopping in Paris”—thanks to Mr. Stark, the carpet king of Manhattan. “When we shop, it’s like a bonding experience.”

“That’s not *all* we do,” Ashley says. “We go to museums and the theater and do many projects together.”

“That’s right,” says Andrea. “We like fashion, but we know its place. We love Fendi, Gucci, Prada—and Ashley loves Manolo Blahnik.” Ashley is a senior at Columbia Prep.

Laura and Lily Aldridge live in Los Angeles. Their rambling house in Studio City is decorated with a collection of ceramic angels and psychedelic art by Alan Aldridge, Lily’s dad. (He did Elton John’s *Captain Fantastic* cover in the ’70s.) Mother and daughter, too, are looking funky in Abercrombie & Fitch cargo pants and matching hooded sweatshirts—Mom’s by DKNY, daughter’s “by nobody,” she says.

“It’s a Limp Bizkit look,” says Laura, Lily’s mother.

“No, it’s not; it’s just a red sweater,” Lily insists.

“It is too,” says Laura. She sticks out her tongue at her daughter. Fourteen-year-old Lily doubles over and laughs.

“Limp Bizkit, they’re rap-metal,” says Laura. She’s gotten to know the band lately because Lily, who’s a model, was in the video for their song “Break Stuff.”

“She was like, ‘Mom, you don’t have to come to the shoot with me,’ ” says Laura, raising her eyebrows. “And I’m like, ‘Oh, yeah? ... Not!’ ”

“Mom,” Lily says.

Laura sighs, handing over a picture of one of the Limp Bizkit guys nuzzling Lily, closely. Lily’s very beautiful, a baby Catherine Zeta-Jones. She was recently discovered by the head of the West Coast division of the Wilhelmina modeling agency, Catherine Bordeaux, who’s the mother of a girl at her school, St. Francis de Sales.

“She didn’t want to model at first, but I said, ‘Lily, girl, let’s talk: Life is hard,’ ” Laura says. “You have to take every opportunity you can.’ I was a *Playboy* Playmate.”

“Mom!” says Lily, laughing, covering her ears with a pillow.

Now Lily’s appearing in *Teen*, *Seventeen*, and the next Abercrombie & Fitch ad campaign, she adds.

“We love Abercrombie & Fitch,” Laura says.

Lily says the clothing company’s become very popular with kids in L.A., “unless they’re, like, the girls who wear all black. At parties we go to, you see moms trying to look exactly like their daughters, like, black skirts, black

said. "I was determined to bring you up the right way." She was also an important influence on Rebecca and Flora, my elder sisters. They were beautiful and sophisticated for their age and had no time for me, five to six years their junior. I, on the other hand, was either impressed and wanted to please them or was thoroughly mystified that such good-looking men could be attracted to these moody meanies who read every Barbara Cartland novel that ever was. Both were academic and intellectually energetic. And although they were lousy correspondents, their rare letters were funny and littered with witty cartoons. When their first biographies were published—Rebecca's *The Brontës: Charlotte Brontë and Her Family* and Flora's *Beloved Emma: A Life of Emma, Lady Hamilton*—I read them immediately. But, to be honest, my contemporaries were much more impressed by their achievement than I was. Surely, writing books was simply business as usual in a family such as ours.

Unfortunately, I ended up going to the same junior school as my sisters and, as a result, the teachers expected me to be like them. I'm afraid I was the contrary. Letters were even sent to my parents wondering why I wasn't as brilliant as either sister. Frankly, I don't think my mother could relate—she was reading *Winnie The Pooh* in Latin at the age of four—while my father was more philosophical about it. "Children peak at different times," he used to say. Well, I never did "peak," though my mother didn't think my lackluster school record ever ruled out becoming a writer.

It was only when I left for the United States that it began to happen. I worked for a literary agent at Triad Artists in Los Angeles. Part of my job was doing "script coverage": writing up plot summaries of screenplays. Then I moved to New York to be an interviewer for Andy Warhol's *15 Minutes* on MTV. The artist thought my English accent was "greaaat." Unfortunately, he died two days after I was hired. While I helped get Warhol's belongings together for the celebrated Sotheby's auction, something possessed me to start taking writing classes at NYU (and since I was paying, I never missed one).

Perhaps I had stopped rebelling and was ready to start a career in writing. I certainly found the classes more comforting than anything else in my life at the time. And when Shelley Wanger became the editor in chief of *Interview* magazine, I pushed myself onto her and suggested myself for employment. Alas, although I enjoyed writing my social column, *Anglofile*, it was a total disaster and was put on the shortlist to get axed when the magazine's ownership changed hands.

Naturally, I did not reveal this to Fairchild Publications when I became part of their Paris office as the arts and people editor. My mother and sisters enjoyed my articles on smart parties, beautiful houses, and people who endured the chore of being rich for a living. And when I suddenly decided to write a book on the movie mogul Sam Spiegel, all the members of my family were very supportive. At Christmas, Flora gave me an *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. Under the "S" section, she penned in Sam Spiegel's name and the quote "I want Natasha to

make me famous." Curiously enough, it was outsiders who felt that I was violating the family tradition. "How can you write about a film producer when your family writes about kings, queens, and political leaders?" they demanded. It was quite easy, I replied. First of all, Spiegel ruled the movie industry in his day. Secondly, think of the legacy he left as a producer: *The African Queen*, *On The Waterfront*, *The Bridge on The River Kwai*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Besides, I stand outside of my family's sphere. While they are writers, I view myself as someone who simply writes. There is a difference, and it suggests a lack of literary expectation. Much else, however, is the same. Just as my childhood was spent listening to people say, "So when are you going to write your first book?" or, "It must be in your genes to write," I am now getting used to, "Is your book finished yet?" It's a phrase that none of my family would ever be foolish enough to utter. After all, they know the process. ■

GENERATION BENDER (continued from page 159)

sandals, black cardigans. It's not usually the daughters trying to look like the moms, it's the moms trying to look like the daughters—they don't want their daughters to get all the attention, like, 'I'm not her mom,' and it's really weird. It makes the daughters feel uncomfortable. When you're a teenager, you want to separate from your mom. They should have their different generations and different styles, you know?"

Laura's quiet for a moment. The subject changes. She used to be a model, too. She goes and gets a photo of herself when she was not much older than Lily.

"I was just so amazed," she says, staring at it, "at how much it looked like Lily."

Ashley Stark has already jumped out of the Mercedes and is halfway up the stairs to the Theory showroom before her mother has made it out of the car.

"Ashley also got Jill Stuart to donate clothes, and Banana Republic, and Shoshanna Lonstein. Ashley is just so persuasive," Andrea is saying.

Now she's walking up the stairs on her own. "Ashley has won more awards than you can imagine." Her mother's climbing the stairs. "She won a New York State award for volunteerism. Ever since she stopped skiing, all she wants to do is help people. She already got into Brown! But that's not our first choice," she adds.

The showroom—a clean, well-lit place with lots of clean, bright Theory styles—is already full of teenagers parading around in new clothes. Beleaguered-looking salespeople follow them around with pins in their mouths.

Andrea puts down her bag. "Robby! Very nice, Robby!" she calls, watching one of Ashley's friends voguing.

Ashley is far away from her mother.

There's Nicky Hilton, of the Hilton hotels clan—a razor-thin blonde with dark roots and dark circles under her eyes. She holds up a gray miniskirt, asking languidly, "Do you have this in a zero?" ►

There are about 10 other girls—pretty girls with perfect skin, perfect figures, and perfect hair—grabbing excitedly at the racks of clothing; they're darting in and out of dressing rooms, chatting and giggling. It's a fantasy come true: They're models today.

Some of their mothers are here, too, looking on, bemused. They are not models today. One of them is trying on a turquoise jacket and regarding herself in a mirror.

"How do I look?" she asks.

A girl whips around. "Terrible," her daughter says flatly.

The mothers are wearing jeans and Juicy tees; they're wearing short black skirts and knee-high, high-heeled boots. They're wearing expensive-looking leather jackets and Gucci sunglasses. The daughters are pretending that their mothers aren't there and the mothers—rather than looking hurt—are trying to look bored.

"Mom!"

And then there's one girl who wants her mother's help. She just doesn't seem to look good in anything—she's tried on item after item, but nothing can hide her shape. She turns on her mother and says, "Why are you making me wear all this shit? I look huge!"

"I ... I just want to find something that looks flattering on you, honey," her mother stammers.

"Well, find something then!" the girl wails.

"Mom.... Mom? Andrea?"

It's Ashley Stark, trying to get her mother's attention.

Andrea perks up. "Yes, honey?"

"I want to buy that," says Ashley, tossing her mother a fuchsia tank dress.

Andrea catches it fast against her chest. "Fine! Oh, I like this dress a lot! Great!"

Andrea holds up the dress like a trophy and looks it over approvingly. "See what I told you? Ashley has such an eye.... I could wear that." ■

HEIR JORDAN (continued from page 163)

have no rights, especially female children. "There are few laws, if any, to protect girls," she says. "And if a girl is sexually abused and she tells, she is penalized. Once the family's name is dishonored, they usually kill her, I was told by the foundation. Under such circumstances, why would a child come forward and report abuse?"

Honor killings—the custom by which women and girls are murdered by their male relatives because they have been raped, are accused of not being a virgin, or have challenged male authority—is another cause that Rania has bravely and energetically campaigned against. In Jordan, where one in four homicides is an honor killing, men serve only three to 12 months for the crime. And in recent months, Jordan's Lower House of Parliament has twice rejected a law proposing to treat honor killings like other murders and punish them accordingly. A spokesman for the opponents declared that to change the status quo would be "a violation of the values and dignity of the Jordanian family."

As if these struggles were not enough, Rania is also seen by many as the best hope to soothe the long-simmering

friction between Jordanians and Palestinians. Though they are the majority, Palestinians have rarely held positions of power in Jordan, and to this day remain grossly under-represented in the military, the civil service, and Parliament. Much of their hope lies on the shoulders of the Palestinian queen. "She will play a good role in building unity between the two sides," says her uncle, Khaled Yassin.

The king and queen's limestone house, covered in vivid pink and purple bougainvillea, in the Hummar district of Amman, is not far from the burial shrine of Queen Alia. Perched on a hill overlooking the capital, the house was a wedding gift from King Hussein. On a clear day, you can see the glittering gold cupola of the Dome of the Rock Mosque and the white limestone roofs of the Old City of Jerusalem. The residence is not large, and it is considerably less ostentatious than many houses in the city. Even security is subtle, with military guards seemingly confined to the gatehouse at the foot of the long drive. Only the royal standard, flying out front, sets it apart.

When their regal duties are over for the day, Rania and Abdullah often opt for a quiet dinner here at home, their sanctuary. The airy house is furnished in the queen's preferred neutrals: white, beige, and pastel blue, shades that offer the eye a respite from the searing desert sun. Sharing space with the more formal Eastern wooden chairs and tables, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, are cozy, plump-cushioned Western sofas. That it is foremost a family home with children is evidenced by the toys strewn around the small, lush garden and beside the pool. There is a swing set, popular with towheaded Princess Iman, and a trampoline, a birthday gift to Prince Hussein, who was named for his late grandfather—still keenly missed. And everywhere are silver-framed family photographs—of the kids being tossed in the air or nuzzled by their parents; of the king and his son, both in football jerseys, excitedly cheering on their favorite team at the Pan Arab Games last summer.

Here, it might be easy to mistake the royal couple for your average well-to-do working parents. Like many an executive mom, Rania tries very hard to be there for her children at bedtime. "I make it a point, and find comfort in tucking them into bed at night, reading their favorite bedtime stories and reciting verses from the Koran to them as they sleep," she has said.

Abdullah, on the other hand, likes to unwind, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, by cooking. "You name it, he can cook it. Steak, fish, Chinese, Japanese.... He's a very good cook," says Prince Zeid. "He had to learn when living alone during various military training courses abroad. And he loves to whip up something for his friends."

On Fridays, the one-day Jordanian weekend, the family escapes to the royal seaside residence on the Red Sea in tiny Aqaba, an ancient city once preferred by Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Here, they water-ski, ride motorbikes into the desert, or the queen jogs on the beach. "It's part of my job," Rania has said, "to make sure His Majesty gets some peace and time off."

And what about Rania's peace and time off? A queen's work, apparently, is never done. ■