



Mother Nature

Photography by **Amber Grace Dixon** Illustration by **Katy Edling**

STYLING: SARINA VERMA; HAIR MAKE-UP: LUCY FRANKSON; JOY WEARS: TOP CHAUSSÉ; THE LABEL; JEANS: TOPSHOP; JEWELLERY: JOY'S OWN; JASMIN WEARS: DRESS: TOPSHOP; NECKLACE: LUV ALPHAS; BOTH INSIDE DESIGNS

Rising soul star Joy Crookes talks to her role model mum about the essential ingredients for success. By **Jennifer Hahn**

At the moment Joy Crookes was being conceived, Hot Chocolate were singing “I believe in miracles” in the background. At least, that’s how her mother remembers it. A fitting start for the South London singer who signed her first record contract at 15, was named “one to watch” by everyone from *i-D* to *The Guardian*, and is garnering millions of Spotify listens thanks to a voice made for crooning and an assuredness far beyond her 20 years.

The rawness that pours out of her songs was passed straight down to her: “My mum is very unfiltered and my music is the same.”

The hustle mentality, too, is hereditary. This year will see the release of Joy’s long awaited first album, hot on the heels of her *Reminiscence* EP in January. At the same age, her mother Jasmin was making her name after coming to London from Bangladesh as a teen. “I was running a chain of coffee shops I started from my mum’s kitchen,” Jasmin recalls. “I did that for three years and then went back to university to study business and finance, but I got bored –”

Joy interrupts: “You dropped out and yet you still give me flak for doing the same!”

“My reasons were different to yours,” replies Jasmin, a phrase uttered by mothers since the beginning of time.

“We both ventured to start our own businesses,” her daughter counters. “Mine just happened to be in entertainment.”

This is how most of their exchanges go. They disagree enthusiastically on everything – even on how similar they are (“In some ways,” says Joy. “Very,” says her mum). They are as identical poles of a magnet, too alike to co-exist without resistance. They’re even wearing the same green bakerboy hat.

Joy’s thick skin was nurtured by her mother. “I was more easily messed around when I was younger,” Joy explains. “The music industry is very much still a boys’ club. But I’ve learnt to walk into places and just act like I’m meant to be there. It’s something my mum taught me, she just has this fire.”

So how do they stay sane amid the heat? To

Jasmin, it’s all about taking time out to care for yourself. “My mother worked abroad a lot when I was growing up,” she says. “And I lost my dad when, I was ten so I learnt to take care of myself from a young age.”

Joy adds: “There is a Lauryn Hill lyric that goes ‘How’re you going to win if you ain’t right within?’ and self-care is a big part of that. It’s part of becoming independent. If your mum isn’t always around to nurture you, you have to do it for yourself. You have to hold yourself up, pat yourself on the back.”

That includes everything from exercise – Jasmin recently did a 375 mile bike ride for charity, Joy practises Irish dancing – to diet. “I’m conscious of what I eat,” says Jasmin, “I cook fresh and organic.” Joy adds: “I prefer natural stuff for my skin, too. If I wouldn’t eat it, why would I put it on my face?”

This stems from Jasmin’s Bangladeshi roots, where wonder ingredients were picked from the plant and their merits passed on for generations. “From day one I put coconut oil in Joy’s hair for shine,” Jasmin remembers. Of course, Joy has her own take: “I prefer argan because it penetrates better. I also use garlic oil, it’s good for hair loss. My hair has started falling out because of stress – I’m doing a Britney but not out of choice.”

Jasmin is the original hipster of skincare ingredients, using everything from neem oil to teeth-whitening charcoal long before it populated the Goop online shop. “Back home we’ve been using moringa for ages” Jasmin says, “and now people call it a superfood. Joy used to make fun of me for being in love with trees but since she went to Bangladesh with me I think she understands.”

Finally in agreement, Joy says: “When we’re back home, it’s like my mum is in her rawest form. It’s where she comes from, where her ancestors come from. It was so important for me to see where my roots are, where I lie. My parents taught me a lot, but that is something I had to learn for myself, I think everyone does. And I’m still very much in the process.”

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