

Playing By Heart

Mark

You should get some sleep.

Mildred

I'll sleep when you sleep.

Mark

You can never stop, can you?

Mildred

Stop what?

Mark

Organizing things.

Mildred

Well, I'll stop if it bothers you.

Mark

It doesn't bother me, it takes me back. Sit next to me. It's a helluva way for you to find out, huh?

Mildred

Find out what?

Mark

That I'm gay, for one. Come on, you never suspected?

Mildred

You were always so good at sports.

Mark

Mom. I'm really glad you're here.

Mildred

And what's the second thing?

Mark

What second thing?

Mildred

You said "It was a helluva way for me to find out that you were gay for one thing." so what's the second thing?

Mark

That I'm dying.

Mildred

Don't say that.

Mark

Now stop. I can't go back into our classic Mother-Son pattern, OK? I can't play the Everson family game of denying reality where reality's over there somewhere and we hide from it over here and pretend it doesn't exist, OK? It takes too much energy. Energy that I don't have.

Mildred

What, maybe I don't have the energy either.

Mark

God! Help me god.

Mildred

Allright, let's start fresh. Pattern free. Within these four walls, reality will prevail. And if I slip up, you will let me know.

Mark

You'll be the first. They say first steps are the hardest.

Mildred

The Doctor said you haven't had any visitors.

Mark

You know me Mom, I've never been one to have a lot of friends. Besides, I seem to be the last of my small crowd.

Mildred

What about your roommate, Jack?

Mark

He wasn't my roommate, Mother. And he died a year ago. I know you've spoken to my doctor. And I know he told you I've not got long so let's not pretend I do, OK?

Mildred

You want to watch another movie?

Mark

I tell you what I would like – I would like to play a game.

Mildred

Should I get a deck of cards?

Mark

No, not that kind of game. I want each of us to take some time and think of something that we've always wanted to tell the other. Something private, some secret, some feeling, or memory it could be anything just as long as it's truthful.

Mildred

Uh I don't know if I'd be good at that kind of game.

Mark

Will you try for me?

Mildred

Uh. . . .hm. . . .

Mark

I'm waiting.

Mildred

Well . . . I never loved your father. Not for a minute.

Mark

Wow. You're good at this. Why did you marry him.

Mildred

Oh. I was pushing thirty. Back then we called it that a "last chance for happiness". He had a good business. I remember my mother saying, "Marry him. He's an undertaker, he'll never be out of work. People will always . . ."

Mark

People will always die.

Mildred

People will always die.

Mark

Why did you stay with him?

Mildred

You! I guess I was the last generation of women who actually did that. It never occurred to me to get a divorce. I was so relieved when he died.

Mark

Don't hold anything back, Mom.

Mildred

I like this new spirit of frankness. It's oddly cleansing.

Mark

Mom? Mom?

Mildred

I'm here.

Mark

Where's Jack?

Mildred

He's not here.

Mark

He was just here a minute ago. No, it was you who were here.

Mildred

Yes, I'm here.

Mark

You are here, aren't you?

Mildred

Yes. I'm here.

Mark

Tell me about death.

Mildred

Remember a long time ago when you were still inside my belly? And the contractions began? Well they're beginning again.

Mark

Read me that story.

Mildred

What story?

Mark

The one with the rabbit and the rocking chair.

Mildred

Good Night Moon?

Mark

Yeah I like the ending, read me the end.

Mildred

Good night comb. Good night brush. Good night nobody. Good night mush. Good night to the old lady whispering "hush". Good night stars. Good night air. Good night noises everywhere.