

PLAYING BY HEART 1 - 1

HE

Hi Mom. Welcome to Chicago. You look awful. You should get some sleep.

SHE

I'll sleep when you sleep.

HE

You can never stop, can you?

SHE

Stop what?

HE

Organizing things.

SHE

I'll stop if it bothers you.

HE

No, it doesn't bother me. It takes me back. Sit next to me. (Pause) Helluva way for you to find out, huh?

SHE

Find out what?

HE

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

SHE

You were always so good at sports.

HE

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

SHE

And what's the second thing?

HE

What second thing?

PLAYING BY HEART 1 - 2

SHE

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

HE

That I'm dying.

SHE

Don't say that!

HE

Oh stop. I can't go back into our classic mother/son pattern, okay. I can't play the Emerson family game of denying reality, where reality is over there somewhere and we hide from it over here and pretend it doesn't exist, okay? It takes too much energy, energy that I don't have.

SHE

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

HE

Oh God, that would be good.

SHE

All right. We'll start fresh. Pattern free. Within these four walls a holiday will prevail. If I slip up, you let me know.

HE

You'll be the first to know. They say fresh starts are the hardest.

SHE

The doctor said you haven't had any visitors.

HE

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.

SHE

What about your roommate Jack?

## PLAYING BY HEART 1 - 3

HE

He wasn't my roommate, mother. He died a year ago. [Pause] I know you've spoken to my doctor and he told you I don't have long, so don't let's pretend that I do.

SHE

Do you want to watch another movie?

HE

No, God no. I'll tell you what I would like, I'd like to play a game.

SHE

Should I get a deck of cards?

HE

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

SHE

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

HE

Well, try for me. [Pause] I'm waiting.

SHE

I never loved your father. Not for a minute.

HE

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

SHE

I was pushing thirty. Back then we called 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....."

**PLAYING BY HEART 1 - 4**

HE

People will always die.

SHE

People will always die.

HE

Why did you stay with him?

SHE

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.

HE

Don't hold anything back, Mom.

SHE

No, I like this new spirit of frankness. It's oddly cleansing.