

# **MY MOTHER'S EYES**

**By Jerold London**

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**When we see the Earth from space, we see ourselves as a whole. We see the unity, and not the divisions. It is such a simple image with a compelling message: one planet, one human race.**

**– Stephen Hawking, *Brief Answers to the Big Question*, 2018.**

**Dream on.**

**– Aerosmith, 1973.**

# MY MOTHER'S EYES

## TIME AND PLACE

Present.

A snug cabin in a yacht, barely rocking in the waters of San Francisco Bay.

## CHARACTERS

MARK, early 30s.

BELLA, 20s, with her hair up.

ELLA, 20s. Ella and Bella are dressed identically.

... in the dialogue indicates a thoughtful break.

## SCENE

In the cabin are a bed, a wood stove, two chairs, and a table (on which rests a rotating dowel rod in a stand, to which are affixed a pair of theatre masks, back-to-back, like faces of Janus). If possible, a bear rug lies on the floor, in the mouth of which is concealed a roll of duct tape. Otherwise the duct tape is found on set in a place determined by the Director. Occasional moans of a buoy may be heard.

The door opens, and MARK and BELLA enter, wearing light coats.

### MARK

Christmas in July!

### BELLA

Unbelievable, isn't it, Mark? For summertime.

### MARK

Mark Twain weather in the Bay.... I'll get a fire going.

**MARK goes to the stove to start a fire while BELLA puts her handbag down on a chair and looks around the cabin.**

### MARK

Bella?

**BELLA**

Yes ...?

**MARK**

Do you often think of your mother?

**BELLA**

Every day. Several times a day usually.

**MARK**

Actually?

**BELLA**

Each time I go to the bathroom. Remembering how she potty trained me.

**MARK**

Hell! I wasn't thinking that.

**BELLA**

She used a potty with a blue plastic seat.... Why? What *were* you thinking?

**MARK**

About *my* mother. I always think about her like now....  
[correcting himself] Making a fire.

**BELLA**

Why?

**MARK**

Because of her eyes.

**BELLA**

Her eyes?

**MARK**

When she'd build a fire in the fireplace at home, I'd watch my mother's eyes. They were brown, with specks of gold which sparkled like tiger's eyes in the flames.

I've never seen a woman's eyes more beautiful than hers.

I think over and over about those eyes, and how they'd watch me.

**BELLA**

That's sweet.

**MARK**

Bella? Why did you come out here with me today? May I ask?

**BELLA**

To see the sun set over the bridge, from your parents' yacht, you told me.

**MARK**

Do you trust me?

**BELLA**

Yes.... Why not?

**MARK**

Enough to spend the night?

**BELLA**

I don't think so.

**MARK**

What if I insist?

**BELLA**

I've got protection.

**MARK**

[*surprised*] What? Mace?

**BELLA**

Not mace. My faith.  
In God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary.

**MARK**

A modern day Trinity.

**BELLA**

Trinity. Duality. Unity.

**MARK**

Unity? What do you know about unity?

**BELLA**

Unity is belief in one, monolithic world.  
Why? What do you know about unity?

**MARK**

To me, unity is two bodies uniting as one.  
I don't get the monolithic part of what you said.

**BELLA spins the wooden dowel.**

**BELLA**

What's your favorite time of year?

**MARK**

Summer, I suppose.  
Or the extra hour in bed when time shifts back in the fall.

**BELLA**

Mine's Halloween.

**MARK**

Come to think of it, mine is too.

**BELLA**

I love masquerade parties.  
I'm crazy about having two faces: Duality. Yin, Yang. Outside out; inside hidden.

**BELLA spins the wooden dowel again.**

**MARK**

Which face are you?

**BELLA**

Both.

**MARK**

Just like a woman.

**BELLA**

Men are the same. Every man, I believe, has some beastly face to hide.

**MARK**

That's hardly flattering.

**BELLA**

Which is why I say:  
Keep your mask on, and let your spirit run free.

**MARK**

What kind of spirit?

**BELLA**

The most exciting moment of my life, when I was sixteen, was at the Ensenada Carnival in Mexico. We were carefree, and dancing, and having a magical time when it came toward me. Swaying back and forth, the thing must have been seven feet tall. And when it stopped, I could see its mask was bone white with bloody red lips. It wore a purple cloak and a diamond tiara, and it smiled at me. I swear, the mask smiled at me, and tried to kiss me. After that my life has never been quite the same. It left my soul split in two.

**BELLA again spins the wooden dowel.**

**BELLA**

I couldn't believe how beautiful it was, or how scared I was.

**MARK**

Not my idea of what's beautiful.

**BELLA**

Which is?

**MARK**

E pluribus union. In the true, American spirit of oneness to greatness.

**BELLA**

Duality is cooperation to greatness.

**MARK**

I've almost got it.... There!

**A fire is burning in the wood stove.**

**MARK**

It'll be more comfy now.

**MARK helps BELLA off with her coat and puts his and her coats on the chair with Bella's handbag.**

**MARK**

I'm attracted to you, Bella. You must know that.



**BELLA**

It's my innocence. That's all.

**MARK**

That's not true. It's your eyes. They're so like my mother's eyes.

**BELLA doesn't show MARK, or say a word, but there's a sign the audience can see that she's heard that line before.**

**BELLA**

And how long do you imagine your interest will last?

**MARK**

Maybe forever. The body knows things a long time before the mind does.  
And making love's the best way designed by Nature to get to know one another.

**BELLA**

Making love is the best way designed by Nature to get pregnant.

**MARK**

There are means of taking care of that today, haven't you heard?  
And I'll pay for it, if it happens.

**BELLA**

For how long?

**MARK**

What do you mean?

**BELLA**

How many years does it take to take care of the memories?  
And what if I keep the child despite the rape? and she asks to meet her father?

**MARK**

Rape? Who says rape? You're alone with me on this boat, and no one knows  
you're here. So I wouldn't start using words like rape if I were you.

**MARK takes BELLA into his arms and starts kissing her. She pushes him away.**

**MARK**

What do you want me to do?

**BELLA**

Treat me like your sister, and show me the same respect.

**MARK**

I don't have a sister....

Let me get us something to drink.

**MARK exits.**

**BELLA resumes looking around the cabin, and finds the roll of duct tape, which she sets on the table.**

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Bella ...?

**BELLA**

*[calling out]* Yes?

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Are you a virgin?

**BELLA**

*[calling out]* Half of me is.

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Which half?

**The sound of a cork popping.**

**BELLA**

*[calling out]* My left brain.

**MARK enters with two filled glasses and hands one to BELLA. They drink.**

**MARK**

Your left brain, did you say?

**BELLA**

My right brain's less manageable. Less sane.

**MARK**

What do you mean?

**BELLA**

I hardly talk to her. She's wild. Unpredictable. She may have killed a man once.

**MARK**

What makes you think that?

**BELLA**

Dreams.

**MARK**

That's scary. How do you dream something like that?

**BELLA**

Haven't you ever had a dream about something you're afraid people will find out?

**MARK**

No.

**BELLA**

I guess unity's your way of forgetting. Duality is my way of remembering.

**MARK**

Forgetting what?

**BELLA**

Something that happened once that hurt you ... or her.  
Because you're in pain. I can see it.

**MARK**

[*beat*] I think it's time to go.... We're going back to the party.

**BELLA**

Why? For you to find someone else to bring out here?

**MARK grabs Bella's champagne glass from her and exits.**

**ELLA enters (dressed exactly as BELLA). As BELLA exits ELLA lets down her hair. Then she takes a handgun out of Bella's handbag and holds it behind her.**

**MARK reenters and notices Ella's hair down.**

**MARK**

What's this, Bella, a change of heart?

**ELLA**

The name's Ella.

**MARK**

Ella?! I thought your name was Bella. I've been calling you Bella.

**ELLA**

It's Ella. E. L. L. A. Ella.

**MARK**

Did something happened to Bella?

**ELLA**

She doesn't like being a part of bloody things.

**MARK**

What the Hell?! I didn't sign up for this.

**ELLA**

Sure you did. When you brought us out here.

**MARK**

Are you the one who killed someone?

**ELLA picks up the roll of duct tape and shows it to MARK.**

**ELLA**

Do you remember this?...

Our hair was a different color then.... When we were seventeen.

**MARK takes a step toward ELLA, and she pulls the gun from behind her back and points it at him.**

**ELLA**

You best not take another step. Prince here won't like it.

**MARK**

**Stops.**

What are you going to do?

**ELLA**

Tattoo your balls.

**MARK**

O my God! No. Please. Please don't shoot me. I'll do anything you say.

**ELLA**

Dream on. Except ... what you didn't try to do to me today has changed my plans.

**Throws the tape at him.**

But if I ever hear of your using this stuff again, or anything like it, God help me, your next confrontation with Prince will be your last. Does that communicate?

**MARK**

Yes.

**ELLA**

Now toss me the keys to your car.

**MARK reaches into his pocket, fetches the keys, and tosses them to ELLA.**

**ELLA**

We may have told you something extra, Man. More than just a stay of execution.

**Exits with Bella's coat and handbag.**

**MARK picks up the roll of duct tape and throws it across the cabin. Then the wooden dowel, but only looks at it and puts it back down. Then he sits, holding his head in his hands.**

**MARK**

Jesus! Why didn't she kill me?...

Because I didn't touch her? This time?

O! Lord! What I've done....

Help me, please. I know I'm not worth it, God, but please help me.

[beat] Forgive me.

**END**