

# **MY MOTHER'S EYES**

**By Jerold London**

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**I knew that my life needed a change, but I must admit there's nothing like a good brush with death.**

**– John Popper**

## MY MOTHER'S EYES

### TIME AND PLACE

Present.

A snug cabin in a small yacht docked in Marina Bay Yacht Harbor, San Francisco.

### CHARACTERS

MARK, 27.

BELLA, 24, with her hair up.

ELLA, 24. Bella with her hair down.

... 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 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.

### BELLA

Christmas in July!

### MARK

Mark Twain weather for sure.... 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.**

### BELLA

*It was* Mark Twain, wasn't it? who said the coldest winter he ever spent was summer in San Francisco.

### MARK

Yep....

I thought so.

**BELLA**

[*beat*] Bella ...?

**MARK**

Yes, Mark.

**BELLA**

Do you often think of your mother?

**MARK**

Why yes, I do. Every day. Several times a day actually.

**BELLA**

Really?

**MARK**

Each time I go to the toilet.  
Remembering how she potty trained me.  
Memories like that stick with me. I'm surprised you brought it up.

**BELLA**

O my God! I wasn't thinking anything like that.

**MARK**

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

**BELLA**

About *my* mother.  
I always think about her, like now. Making a fire.

**MARK**

Why?

**BELLA**

Because of her eyes.

**MARK**

Her eyes?

**BELLA**

**MARK**

When she'd build a fire in the fireplace, I'd watch her eyes.  
They were brown, with specks of gold that sparkled in the flames.  
I've never seen a woman's eyes more beautiful than hers.

**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.  
Like you told me, at the open house. I've been waiting for a chance like this.

**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**

No, not mace. Our Catholic faith. You know: In God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary.

**MARK**

The modern day Trinity.

**BELLA**

Trinity. Duality. Unity. The three musketeers.

**MARK**

Unity? What do you know about unity?

**BELLA**

Unity is the number one.

**MARK**

To me, unity is two bodies *uniting* into one.

**BELLA spins the masks.**

**BELLA**

What's your favorite time of year?

**MARK**

Summertime, I suppose.

**BELLA**

Mine's Halloween.

**MARK**

Come to think of it, mine is too.

**BELLA**

I love masquerade parties. All the different faces.  
Yin, Yang. Outside out. Inside in, and hidden like confession.

**BELLA spins the masks again.**

**MARK**

Which face are you?

**BELLA**

Both, I guess....

**MARK**

Just like a woman. Can't make up your mind.

**BELLA**

Men are the same. Every man, I think, must have some beastly face to hide.

**MARK**

That's hardly flattering.

**BELLA**

Which is why I say:  
Keep your mask on.... Until the time is right.

**MARK**

I'd rather take your mask off....

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 would 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 pay for memories of an abortion?  
And what if she keeps the baby despite the rape?

**MARK**

Rape? Who said 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**

Yes?

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Are you still a virgin?

**BELLA**

Half of me is.

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Which half?

**The sound of a cork popping.**

**BELLA**

My left brain.

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* Your left brain, did you say?

**BELLA**

My right brain's less sane.

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* What do you mean?

**BELLA**

She's wild. Likes to play around.... She may have killed a man once.

**MARK**

*[from offstage]* What makes you think so?

**BELLA**

Dreams.

**MARK enters with two filled champagne glasses.**

**MARK**

How do you dream something like that?

**BELLA**

Haven't you ever had a dream about something you've done, and are afraid people will find out?

**MARK**

No.

**BELLA**

I doubt that.

**MARK**

Why?

**BELLA lets down her hair, takes a gun from her handbag, and points it at MARK.**

**MARK**

What the Hell, Bella? What's this?

**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**

Are you the one who killed somebody?

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

**ELLA**

Do you remember this?

**MARK takes a step toward ELLA.**

**ELLA**

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

**MARK stops.**

**ELLA**

The most memorable moment of my life, when I was seventeen, was at the Ensenada Carnival in Mexico.

We were carefree, and dancing, and having a magical time.

And then it came toward us. Swaying back and forth. Carrying a live snake.

Bella doesn't remember the snake part, but I do.

The reveler must have been seven feet tall. And when they stopped, I could see their mask was bone white with blood red lips.

They 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.

**ELLA spins the masks.**

**ELLA**

I couldn't believe how scared I was.  
Like how scared I was to be drugged by you that night, and duct taped, and raped  
on this boat when I was nineteen, and didn't suspect a thing....  
You're a monster....  
Like that thing in Ensenada.  
It was all I could think about, when you did what you did to me.  
It split my soul in two.

**MARK**

**Drops the champagne glasses.**

Me?

**ELLA**

Oh, you remember.  
Our hair was a different color then, but the same face.... And eyes.

**MARK**

[*pause*] What are you going to do?

**ELLA**

Tattoo your balls off.  
Ella's Law.

**MARK**

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

**ELLA**

[*long pause*] Maybe we've changed our mind.

**Throws the tape at him.**

Bella thinks you're not worth the trouble of killing. Not now, at least....  
Tell you what. We'll let the masks decide.

**Takes a few steps back.**

Here. Spin them. If the wrong one winds up facing you, say a quick prayer.  
If not, get to a priest and confess. Then go see a doctor.

**MARK slowly steps toward the masks.**

**ELLA**

And when you spin them, think of a fatherless three-year-old girl. Lucy.  
Who has your mother's eyes.  
Asking about her Daddy.  
But first, toss me the keys to your car.

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

**ELLA**

Now spin.

**As MARK spins the masks ELLA picks up her coat and handbag from the chair, and exits.**

**END**



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