

Growing Concerns

by

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Cast of Characters

HEATHER: 40's
GARTH: 49
KIMBERLY: 18-21

Place
Bedroom

Time
5:35 PM

2.

Setting: The play takes place in a bedroom inside a mansion somewhere in the suburbs.

At Rise: Heather sits at her make-up bureau when Garth enters the bedroom from the bathroom. Heather is dressed in a gown, Garth in a suit.

GARTH: Heather, have you seen my glasses?

HEATHER: They're on top of your head.

GARTH feels the top of his head.

GARTH: Oh! How silly of me. Ha!

HEATHER: It's almost six o'clock.

GARTH: ...I know.

HEATHER: ...They say to make small talk. How much small talk is small talk?

GARTH: Didn't you read all the contents in the binder?

HEATHER: Twice.

GARTH: Good.

HEATHER: It explains everything in great detail, but they are simply words on paper.

GARTH: I took a lot from it.

HEATHER: Did you?

GARTH: Of course. Everything is laid out quite effectively I should think.

HEATHER: But still...

GARTH: What?

HEATHER: It feels odd to me.

GARTH: Don't start having growing concerns.

HEATHER: Why shouldn't I?

GARTH: We've gone back to the facility more times than I care to count. Haven't we gone through every step with great detail and care?

HEATHER: We have.

GARTH: So there should be no worries at this point. You're just being nervous, as any good mother would be, meeting him for the first time.

HEATHER: Yes.

GARTH: He's a nice young man. All the qualities we wished for, our daughter will be very pleased.

HEATHER: Do you believe so?

GARTH: I know so.

HEATHER: ...

GARTH: ...Heather...sweetheart, we've done everything right...it's, this is something we both felt best...

HEATHER: I'm trying...

GARTH: So am I. We have to consider ourselves fortunate to have this opportunity for our daughter. Imagine if this was centuries ago? What would we have done then? ...We should have done this sooner...I swore on my hands and knees that I would not make the same mistake twice...

HEATHER: This isn't only *your* decision, Garth. You aren't the only one living with the pain of regret. There isn't a single day that goes by without finding myself trying to wake up from some delusional stare, imagining Rene being alive and well, happy and experiencing all the things life had to offer her...it should of never happened. (accusatory) I still look at you with blame. If you would have listened to me sooner, if you would have heard my voice...no, I blame myself for not being strong enough to go ahead with it on my own. But how could I? I couldn't. We are the parents and such a decision must be made from both of us in agreement. But not even a discussion from you! How many times I tried to talk with you about it...always a distraction of some kind. Perhaps that's where I was most weak, never having the strength to break through your blind stare...the commotion in your mind...I could do handstands and yet nothing but empty responses at best. Yes, we have this chance for our Kimberly and I have every right to be worried because I am worried. Yes, we've been to that damn facility multiple times but how are they to know how a mother who lost a child should feel?! They are science! There is no amount of science that will bring back our Rene, is there Garth? All this fury I hold deep inside my chest, choking me until I can't speak, I can't breathe...withering away until I can't feel anything anymore because I'll be dead. That is the only way left. (optimistic) We have our Kimberly. She is my living lifeline. We can't mess this up, please tell me we won't mess this up.

GARTH grabs hold of HEATHER, kissing her forehead.

GARTH: Heather, I love you so much, there is nothing I wouldn't do to bring back our Rene. The most we could do now is protect and give Kimberly everything she deserves.

HEATHER: How do we know?

GARTH: This technology is the most advanced technology of its kind. There is nothing that could harm Kimberly.

HEATHER: What if she doesn't like him?

GARTH: That's impossible.

HEATHER: But how can we be so sure?

GARTH: Joseph is designed to be the most accurate suitor for her. He is 99.98% suitable. We've already spoken to him at length. Don't you deem him worthy?

HEATHER: I do. I've tried to find something in his eyes, even the slightest inclination that he is playing tricks, but nothing. He is too perfect. (she shrieks) Maybe that's it! Maybe he's too perfect! What if we---

GARTH: How can he be too perfect? Do you hear yourself? That's the whole point, to make him as perfect a match for our daughter as possible. It's virtually impossible for this not to work out in our favor.

HEATHER: And they'll live happily ever after?

GARTH: We should expect it.

HEATHER: Have you ever wondered if this is all unnatural?

GARTH: How so?

HEATHER: If for instance, they have an argument and Kimberly blames us for Joseph being in her life.

GARTH: Each argument is designed. Each laugh, each romance, each tear. It's all there, in proportion, never enough to break their bond, just enough to improve them forward.

HEATHER: Remember the first year after we were married? How horrible we were to each other?

GARTH (smiling) Yes.

HEATHER: But we rode the course, didn't we? Despite ourselves. No matter how hard things got between us, we came out of the darkness closer than we ever were. There is something that goes beyond, something in the spiritual sense that can't be explained by mathematics...who knows, perhaps one day everything will be explained by such, but I do feel that the not knowing, the innocent discovery of life, deepens one's values and humanity...could we expect that of Joseph and Kimberly?

GARTH: There's been a series of case studies. Thousands of happy, breathing creations that live in harmony all across the world. How much proof do we need? We tried the natural way for Rene and we promised ourselves we would never make the same mistake.

HEATHER: Kimberly said that she was willing to try, but she does have second thoughts about going natural instead.

GARTH: Nonsense.

HEATHER: She told me that she loves the way we are with one another. She said she witnessed first hand our strength together when we lost Rene and she questions if she'll ever have such a soulful bond with a design like Joseph.

GARTH (quietly): There are things we may never know.

HEATHER: What's that?

GARTH: You are making me have doubts about this, Heather.

HEATHER: You are?

GARTH: Don't think I haven't tossed this whole concept back and forth in my mind ad infinitum. This is my daughter.

HEATHER: Yes.

GARTH: I only want what's best for her.

HEATHER: ...

GARTH: I mean, it's a harmless little date, isn't it? Yes, it's meant to spark passions and develop into a lifetime of bliss but if Kimberly has the seed of a doubt in her mind, who's to say that won't prevent such bliss?

HEATHER: She is willing to try, but---

GARTH: But there is doubt.

HEATHER: How can there not be?

GARTH: I'm not blaming her for having doubt, but it could lead to-- didn't the facility tell us that she has to have an open mind and not think about---

HEATHER: About how it's all set up perfectly, if she wanted--

GARTH: She could take that pill, to help her--

HEATHER: Ease into things.

GARTH: Almost forget.

HEATHER: To give herself over to a dream that slowly becomes reality.

KIMBERLY appears at the doorway.

KIMBERLY: Mom, why are you wearing a gown?

HEATHER: What Oh! Uh, I'd like to give a good impression.

KIMBERLY: Haven't you already met Joseph a bunch of times?

HEATHER: Yes, but he won't remember any of that. His memory of your father and me has been erased entirely and begins with tonight for the first time.

KIMBERLY: Weird.

HEATHER: You look nice.

KIMBERLY: Thanks.

GARTH (to Kimberly): You look beautiful, dear.

KIMBERLY: Thanks, Dad.

GARTH: How do you feel?

KIMBERLY: I'm chill. I have a question.

GARTH: Yes?

KIMBERLY: If this Joseph guy and I have a bad argument, like if I punched him in the face or something let's just say for argument sake, would I be able to erase his mind anytime I want?

GARTH: Well...um, I'm not---not, I don't think so. Once he's been turned on, he's turned on as a living being. What your mother was saying before was that when we first met him, he was a prototype, not yet complete, you know, in case we wanted to make any adjustments beforehand.

KIMBERLY: Right.

HEATHER: You are happy with him, aren't you dear?

KIMBERLY: I think he's good looking and everything but I have to see him in person of course and see if he's an idiot.

HEATHER: You shouldn't talk that way.

KIMBERLY: How do I know if he's smart or not? You say he is but how do we know for sure?

GARTH: Your mother and I chose all the most advanced features. He is extremely bright, athletic, compassionate...we made sure he checks all the boxes.

KIMBERLY: We'll see.

HEATHER: Just give it a try, if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out.

KIMBERLY: But you both said it was going to be my destiny, like I'm going to be some character in a romantic novel, where I'm going to be flying through a rainbow on a horse and have infinite bliss or something.

GARTH: (laughing)

KIMBERLY: Isn't that what you said, Dad?

GARTH: Well, something of the sort.

KIMBERLY: That's the image I get.

HEATHER: Your father and I spent an enormous sum of money to make this happen for you, the least you can do is show some class.

GARTH: She was only teasing honey.

HEATHER: Teasing and mocking are two different things.

KIMBERLY: Lighten up Mom.

HEATHER: ...

GARTH (to KIMBERLY): Why don't you and I make our way downstairs. (checks his watch) It's almost six. (to HEATHER) Darling, will you be much longer?

HEATHER: Momentarily.

GARTH winks and nods to his daughter to leave with him.

GARTH leaves the bedroom.

KIMBERLY leaves too, but then comes back in the bedroom and hugs her mother.

HEATHER responds and they both hold each other.

HEATHER stares up at her daughter and wipes a tear from her eye.

KIMBERLY wipes a tear from her mother's eye.

THEY both laugh. THEY kiss on the cheek and hug again.

KIMBERLY leaves the bedroom.

HEATHER looks on.

END OF PLAY