

We Only Need Two Hearts

by
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Setting:

Elaine's memories of Valentine's Days in the '60s

Cast of Characters:

Elaine – A wonderful mother.

Leslie – A daughter, a novelist, a wife, and mother.

Junior – A son, a truck driver, a husband, and dad.

Jack – Big Daddy.

(Lights up on Elaine, sitting at a table sipping tea and looking at the paper, as strong and steady as the hills and at peace with the whole world)

Leslie: (Yells from offstage) Jackie!... Hello Jackie!... Callin' for Jackie! (Elaine calmly sips tea)

Junior: (Yells from offstage) What?! (Elaine opens the paper)

Leslie: (Offstage) Is Mom downstairs?

Junior: (Offstage) I don't know!

Leslie: (Offstage) Check!

Junior: (Offstage) You check!

Leslie: (Offstage) You're closer!

Elaine: (To herself while reading paper) Oh! That Dear Abby! What will she say next?!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie! Is Mom downstairs?!

Junior: (Opens door, but does not enter; Offstage) Hi Mom!

Elaine: Well hello, Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage; Closes door; Yells) Yeah!

Elaine: (Shakes her head and reads paper) Ten cents off all canned vegetables! Very nice!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage) What?!

Leslie: (Offstage) Does Mom know it's Valentine's Day?

Junior: (Offstage) I don't know!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage; Opens door; Whispers) Mom, do you know it's Valentine's

Day?

Elaine: Is it?! (Surprised) No! It can't be Valentine's Day! Not yet!

Junior: (Offstage; Yells) No! (Closes door)

Leslie: (Offstage) Good!

Elaine: (Laughing) That's right, Leslie! Your surprise is still safe!

Jack: (Enters) Ah! There you are, my sweet!

Elaine: (Stands; Out) This is my husband, Jack Khroe. How was your day, my dear?

Jack: (Out) And this is my lovely bride, Elaine. Everyday the good Lord sees fit to give us is a good one, my sweet!

Elaine: That's right, Jack! (Offers her cheek; Jack kisses it; Out) You may have noticed our children...

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Jack: That's Leslie. She's almost twelve...

Junior: (Offstage) I'm busy!

Elaine: And that's her little brother, Jack Junior...

Jack: Jackie's seven and a chip right off the old block!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage) I said I'm busy!

Elaine: Actually, both of our children are fully grown adults...

Jack: Happy, healthy, and well-adjusted.

Elaine: Thank the Lord!

Jack: Well, we must have done something right, too!

Elaine: They're both married and they each have three children of their own.

Jack: Leslie even adopts grown children!

Elaine: Yes! College students from out of town! Everyone needs family!

Jack: Leslie's a novelist!

Elaine: And Jackie's a long-distance truck driver.

Jack: A chip off the old block!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage) What?!

Elaine: But when we look back...

Leslie: (Offstage) Is Dad home?

Jack: In our fondest memories...

Junior: (Offstage) I don't know!

Leslie: (Offstage) Check!

Elaine: Leslie is twelve...

Jack: Jackie's still seven...

Elaine: And it's Valentine's Day.

Junior: (Enters; Yells) He's home!

Leslie: (Offstage) Good!

Junior: Hi Dad!

Jack: Well hello there, Jackie, my boy!

Junior: How was your day?

Jack: Fine son. Just fine.

Junior: Did you change a lot of tires today?

Jack: Is sixteen a lot?

Junior: Cars or tires?

Jack: Sixteen cars, twenty-five tires.

Junior: That's a lot!

Jack: It sure is! How about Jackie boy? What did you learn in school today?

Junior: George Washington!

Jack: You don't say?! (Jackie nods) What did you learn about our first president?

Junior: That he was the first president!

Jack: He sure was! But every donkey knows that! I must be getting more for my tax dollars! What else did you learn about old George Washington?

Junior: He made the Redcoats surrender at Yorktown!

Jack: Good, good! What else?

Junior: He crushed the Whiskey Revolution!

Elaine: Don't you mean the Whiskey Rebellion?

Junior: Yeah, yeah...

Elaine: And where did the Whiskey Rebellion take place?

Junior: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania!

Elaine: Correct!

Jack: Right down the road from us!

Junior: Washington crushed the Whiskey Rebellion, which was ironic, because Washington made more moonshine than anybody!

Jack: Washington was a bootlegger?! (Elaine and Jackie nod) I did not know that!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie! Are you done yet?

Junior: I have to go! (Exits)

Jack: A chip off the old block, Elaine! A chip off the old block!

Elaine: Our children! So full of wonder and imagination!

Jack: I'm sorry, my sweet, did you say something?

Elaine: I certainly did!

Jack: Why, of course, we certainly do have another kid!

Elaine: Jack! Jack! (Jack looks at Elaine; Elaine taps her ear)

Jack: Yes, my sweet?

Elaine: (Taps her ear faster) Jack, perhaps you should change the battery?!

Jack: Elaine, I change tires, not batteries! You know that!

Elaine: Jack! (In a hushed voice) Your hearing aid!

Jack: Huh?

Elaine: Your hearing aid!

Jack: Oh! I don't need it! My hearing's fine!

Elaine: Is it now?!

Jack: Yes!

Leslie: (Offstage) Jackie!

Junior: I'm busy!

Jack: There! You see! I heard that just fine!

Elaine: Reverend Eastbrook heard that just fine!

Jack: (Laughing) Elaine! Reverend Eastbrook passed away three years ago!

Elaine: Exactly! (Jack looks confused) But as Jack was saying, we do indeed have another child – Leslie and Jackie's baby sister, Amy. She's twenty-one now, but Amy doesn't show up 'til a little later in this...

Jack: A little?!

Elaine: Yes! Amy was a bit of a surprise! But a pleasant one...

Jack: Surprise?! Jackie was a surprise! Amy was a miracle!

Elaine: Oh, Jack! All our children were little miracles!

Jack: Yes, but Amy was a miracle of biblical proportions! Like the loaves and the fishes! Or the parting... or the parting of the Red Sea! A miracle in which the Hand of God is clearly visible! I mean you were in your late...

Elaine: Jack!

Jack: Mid...

Elaine: (Pulls a chair out from the table; Jack sits like a scolded dog; Elaine sits) Valentine's Day was very important to us because it was so important to our children. Every year they insisted on making us a romantic dinner...

Jack: Dinner! That's right! What's for dinner?!

Elaine: (Grumpily) Spaghetti and green beans! Like last year and the year before!

Jack: Spaghetti and green beans?!

Elaine: It's Valentine's Day, Jack!

Jack: Oh yes! Yes, of course! (Out) She was only in her mid...

Elaine: Jack!

Leslie: (Enters) Happy Valentine's Day, everyone! (Leslie holds a plate of pasta)

Elaine: Happy Valentine's Day, dear!

Jack: Ah! Leslie! There you are!

Leslie: (With a French accent) Who is this Les-lie?

Jack: I beg your pardon! I thought you were my daughter, Leslie!

Leslie: (With a French accent) Oui! But tonight I am Li-zette! Your French chef!

Elaine: Do you hear that Jack?

Jack: Yes! A French chef! We're steppin' up in the world, Elaine!

Elaine: And how!

Leslie: (With a French accent) Where is your French waiter, Jack-ee?!

Elaine: In his room?

Leslie: (Yells) Jackie!

Junior: (Offstage) I'm busy!

Leslie: (With a French accent) Would monsieur care to approve the pasta?

Jack: With pleasure, my dear! (Tries the pasta) Light! Delicate! Delicious!
But perhaps a tad al dente!

Leslie: A few more minutes?

Jack: I think so, Lizette!

Leslie: (To Jack) OK, but while we're waiting, maybe you should... (Whispers in Jack's ear)

Jack: Huh?!

Elaine: Try the other ear Leslie!

Leslie: (Whispers loudly into Jack's other ear) Get the candy!

Jack: Right! (Exits)

Elaine: Is my stove all splashed up Leslie?

Leslie: No... Not really...

Elaine: No? Or not really?

Leslie: (Hesitates) Not really...

Elaine: I better check! (Exits)

Leslie: (Sits and speaks as an adult; Out) Oh wow! Oh my gosh! Here I am at the dining room table! I almost forgot what the world looked like from here! Wow! For the first twenty-one years of my life this was my dining room table! It sat nine feet from my TV in my living room in my house. All this was mine! It stopped being mine the day Roger Clapp asked me to marry him right here at my living room table. Well, buddy, I turned him down so fast his head spun! Actually, I told him I needed to think about it. I went outside and furiously kicked the brand new tires on my car. I didn't want to be married – not yet! I didn't want to move to Tunkhannock! I wanted

to be a writer! I wanted to be the next Edgar Allan Poe! I would have been the next J.K. Rowling, 'cuz I was writing stories about young wizards when that... that... that English lady was still living in her car! I was the assistant editor at the paper. I still wrote obituaries, but I had sent manuscripts all over the country!

Elaine: (Offstage) Leslie! This stove is a mess!

Leslie: (Yells) Sorry Mom! (Out) I went back in the house. I sat at my mother's dining room table. I realized my dining room table would be in Tunkhannock in the home Roger Clapp and I would build together. But I digress!

In 1966, I was 9-years-old. Divorce was a dirty word. No one got divorced, except for Martha Davis, and she lived right across the street. She was a pretty woman. I never knew what was wrong with her. One day I was at the beauty parlor with my mother when I overheard Martha say 'Once the romance is gone it's all over.' I wasn't sure what romance was, but I had to make sure my parents had some, from then on Valentine's Day started very early at my house. (Crosses to door and knocks) Jackie?! Jack?! Get up!

Junior: (Offstage) It's too early!

Leslie: Jackie! C'mon! I don't want to wake up Mom and Dad!

Junior: (Offstage) I don't want you to wake me up!

Leslie: Very funny, smarty-pants! Now you get out here this instant!

Junior: (Enters) What?!

Leslie: Did you do what I told you to do?

Junior: What?

Elaine: Did you cut out one hundred Valentine's Day hearts?

Junior: I hate Valentine's Day!

Leslie: Don't you say that! Don't you say that again!

Junior: I hate Valentine's Day!

Leslie: Didn't you hear me?! Hating Valentine's Day is like hating Christmas! And if you hate Christmas, then you hate the baby Jesus, and if you hate the baby Jesus, then that's just too bad for you, buddy-boy?!

Junior: I don't hate the baby Jesus!

Leslie: Good! Then cut out one hundred hearts!

Junior: I don't want to! It's too early!

Leslie: If you don't, then Mom and Dad won't have romance! They'll get divorced, move away, and you'll be a bum on the streets! Do you wanna be a bum, Jackie?! Do ya?!

Junior: Nope!

Leslie: Then cut out one hundred hearts! You hear me?!

Junior: Yes! (Leslie exits; Junior finds paper and begins to cut) Stupid hearts! Stupid Leslie! Stupid hearts!

Jack: (Enters singing) *Hey there... You with the stars in your eyes...* (Sees Junior) Hey there, pal! Up so early?!

Junior: Yeah!

Jack: What are you up to?

Junior: Makin' hearts!

Jack: Is that so?

Junior: Leslie's making me. She's making me make one hundred!

Jack: One hundred?!

Junior: Yeah! So you don't get divorced!

Jack: (Laughs) Well, to tell you the truth, Jackie, your mom and me, we only need two hearts! Can you do that, son? Can you make two hearts for your mom and me? Two big ones?

Junior: Yeah!

Jack: 'Atta boy, Jackie! Chip off the old block! (Exits)

Junior: (Speaks as an adult) Last week I drove into Pittsburgh to pick up a load of aluminum doors and headed for Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. At the Ohio state line I blew a tire on the trailer. I could have kept going for a long time, but I am my father's son – a chip off the old block – his ghost reminded me there was a lot more than my life running on that tire. I pulled over at a non-descript silver diner called Toby's. It looked like the kind of place my dad would go to. The kind of place Dad would drive ten miles out of his way to go to, just because he heard Toby's

kid got a base hit that day. After I changed the tire, I went inside, washed my hands, ordered a cup of joe, and figured I'd try something called 'special chicken.' Just a chicken patty, breaded, deep-fried, on a bed of white rice and smothered in mushroom gravy, which I'm pretty sure was Campbell's Cream of Mushroom soup. The dish reminded me of something my dad would make. It seemed thrown together, but at the same time, exactly what you wanted.

It seems like most people will tell you they didn't have much growing up. Leslie, Amy, and me, we'll tell you we didn't need much, 'cuz even as kids we knew we had it all...

Jack: (Enters with Elaine; They take their seats at the table; To Junior) Hungry, son? (Junior looks up and nods)

Leslie: (Enters with cups) Soup's on! (Junior takes cups and gives them to Jack and Elaine)

Elaine: Soup?

Leslie: Yes!

Jack: I thought we were having spaghetti and green beans?!

Leslie: Yeah, but I accidentally spilled tomato sauce in the green beans, so instead of spilling it out, I added some special secret ingredients and soup! Try it! (Jack and Elaine try the soup and make faces) Well?

Elaine: Interesting... Very interesting...

Jack: Piquant!

Leslie: Dig in!

Jack: (Hesitates) It's too good to rush!

Elaine: Yes... It's very rich!

Jack: I'd like to wait and eat it with the spaghetti!

Elaine: You're right, Jack, we'll savor them together!

Leslie: OK – back in a flash! (Exits with Junior)

Jack: (Elaine points to a potted plant; Jack nods; Both rise, pour their cups into the pot, and return to their seats and wipe their mouths with napkins) Good to the last drop!

Leslie: (Enters with Junior, carrying pasta) The main course!

Elaine: Excellent! (Pasta is set before Jack and Elaine)

Leslie: You finished your soup?

Jack: We couldn't wait!

Elaine: (Tastes pasta) The spaghetti is lovely, Leslie! Delicious!

Jack: (Tastes pasta) Perfect!

Leslie: Jackie, go get your special surprise! (Junior exits and returns with a large card with two hearts; The card reads "Mom, Dad, Happy V.D.;" 'Happy' is printed small; Junior sticks the card to the wall)

Elaine: What is it, Jackie?

Junior: A special card!

Elaine: What does it say?

Jack: I'll read it! (Reads card aloud) "Mom and Dad have V.D.?! " Jackie!
(Leslie and Elaine laugh)

Elaine: Jack?

Jack: That's not funny, Jackie! Do you know what 'V.D.' stands for?

Junior: Yeah!

Elaine: Jack! Use your glasses!

Jack: One moment, dear... Jackie, where did you hear of...

Elaine: Jack! Your glasses! Now!

Jack: (Puts on his glasses) Oh! "Happy V.D."

Leslie: Now, the hearts, Jackie! (Junior throws out six cut-out hearts like confetti)
Is that it?! Where are the hearts?! You said you were making one hundred hearts!

Jack: Leslie, I told Jackie your mother and I only needed two hearts...

Leslie: Yes, Leslie, we only need two and we got so much more and we love

them!

Leslie: You do?

Elaine: (With Jack) Yes!

Leslie: Well, OK, I guess...

Jack: Come on everyone, let's sing our favorite Valentine's Day song! Let's find the note... (Jack hums a note; One at a time, Elaine, Leslie, and Junior find the note and they sing) *Flintstones... Meet the Flintstones... They're a modern stone-age family... From the town of Bedrock... They're a page right out of history...*

Elaine: (As Leslie and Junior continue to sing *Let's ride with the family down the street... Through the courtesy of Fred's two feet...*) When we remember our children, Leslie is still twelve...

Jack: Jackie's seven and Amy's a beautiful little twinkle in her mother's eye.

Elaine: (As Leslie and Junior continue to lip sync) And it's Valentine's Day!

Jack: It was always Valentine's Day, my sweet! (Kids continue to lip sync)

Elaine: It still is, my love! It still is! (All sing) *When you're with the Flintstones... Have a yabba dabba doo time... A dabba doo time... We'll have a gay old time!* (Lights down)

FINIS

We Only Need Two Hearts