

RED HEAD BY GARY YOUNG - EXCERPT

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Penny, age 42, alone in living room, sitting on sofa stage left-center, reading a book, "Kissing Frogs." A KNOCK on the door. She puts down the book and goes to the door, upstage. She opens the door. BEN, age 43, is revealed, wearing a sport coat, a golf hat, with his hands behind his back.

PENNY

You're late. What do you have behind your back.

BEN

I have an excuse for being late, and I'm only a few minutes. Ya gonna let me in, or what?

PENNY

Since when did you need an invitation? What's that behind your back that you're carrying there? What do you have there?

BEN

(Holding out flowers) It's for you. You like them?

PENNY

They're...what are they. I'm allergic to certain fragrances. You know that.

BEN

Are they pretty or what?

PENNY

Yes, of course. They are lovely. Nice reds, green and all. Nice. I don't think they are stuffing me up. What's the occasion? My birthday, you should excuse the expression, isn't until February, if I even have one this year.

BEN

I know. It's not for your birthday. *(Pause, a look into her eyes)* It's for you. Just for you. For you because you are you.

PENNY

Why the poetry. Have you been drinking? No, probably not. You don't get nice when you drink. You get like Stalin or something.

BEN

That's right. And flowers is not a Stalin thing. Wanna put them in water or anything?

PENNY

Yeh. Sure. Lemme get the water.

BEN

Penny.

PENNY

What.

BEN

Stop for a second. Stop and sit on the couch.

PENNY

Are you all right? Need a glass of water? Not for the flowers, for you?

BEN

No. I'm great. I'm real great, Penny. Now sit on the couch for a second. *(HE guides her over)* Here. Sit.

PENNY

Did you smash the car?

BEN

No. I just have to say something.

PENNY

Oh my God. You are...

BEN

Don't guess.

PENNY

Wait. I need to comb my hair.

BEN

You look beautiful.

PENNY

Oh my God. Okay. Okay. I think my heart is like racing. Okay. I'm ready. Am I ready. I think I'm ready. I'm ready. Okay. Okay.

BEN kneels onto one leg.

PENNY

Oh my God.

BEN notices that his hat is still on. He takes off the hat and holds it in his hand. PENNY suddenly sees his head. He has been bald for years, so that's no surprise, but his head is bright red. And that is very strange.

Ben. PENNY

Penny... BEN

Ben... PENNY

Penny... BEN

Ben! PENNY

Penny! BEN

Ben! What is on your head? What is that? PENNY

What? BEN

The redness. There's a very terrific redness on there. Like fire. Does it hurt? PENNY

Redness. Really? I do feel quite warm up there, but I attributed that to...well...the moment. BEN

But we didn't have "the moment" yet. PENNY

BEN gets up and goes over to the mirror. Tries to look. SHE follows him. He can't see in back, where the redness is.

Come back here and turn around so I can see this. Can I touch it? Tell me if it hurts when I touch it. I wonder if I should touch it. Maybe it's contagious or disgusting. PENNY

I want to see it. BEN