

Of Butterflies and Roses
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Cast: 2f

Clara (female) mid 30's - Clara dresses a bit monotone, comfortably. No accessories. She's not a mess by any means – just simply dressed

Laurel (female) early 30's - LAUREL is well put together. Where Clara never thinks to add an accessory, LAUREL likes to be put together with a scarf and some jewelry – a little flair.

TIME: Summer afternoon

PLACE: CLARA's backyard. There could be a bench. You could hint of a rosebush or just assume it is beyond – in the audience. It's a beautiful day.

SYNOPSIS: CLARA and LAUREL have just returned to CLARA's home with their mother's ashes. Fully orphaned now, they are learning to cope.

Of Butterflies and Roses

AT RISE CLARA and LAUREL are seated on CLARA's patio. It's a beautiful, summer day. They are brightly dressed – red would be nice. They may have a

platter of leftovers from their mother's memorial service. They may even have an urn.

CLARA

A lot of people stared at us.

LAUREL

So what? We kept our promise to Mom. No black.

CLARA

Maybe we went too far – maybe we should have worn dark blue.

LAUREL

Mom lived out loud and we will continue the tradition!

(Pause.)

Dad's here.

CLARA

I thought he was with Mom. Helping her get settled – you said he came for her when she passed. What's he doing here?

LAUREL

He must think we need him.

CLARA

He's been gone four years. It's Mom who needs him. She's only been gone a few days.

LAUREL

Mom's doing fine.

CLARA

How do you know these things?

LAUREL

How do you not know them? Look at all the butterflies.

CLARA

I planted those rose bushes to attract them. Glad the butterflies were paying attention.

LAUREL

What made you plant rose bushes?

CLARA

Got tired of looking at vegetables.

LAUREL

Good instincts.

CLARA

Are you sure Dad's here?

LAUREL

Look.

CLARA

I don't see him.

LAUREL

All those butterflies.

CLARA

Yes.

LAUREL

Dad's a butterfly.

CLARA

Which one?

LAUREL

All of them. It's his sign. You knew that, right?

CLARA

Yes.

LAUREL

When he died –

CLARA.

Yeah. I remember.

(Pause.)

CLARA (cont'd)

I lied. What do you mean Dad's a butterfly?

LAUREL

The transformation. I was holding his hand when he let go. I saw the transformation.

CLARA

Then – everyone’s a butterfly. Because everyone ... goes.

LAUREL

No. Mom’s not a butterfly. Just Dad.

CLARA

Did you see him transform into a butterfly?

LAUREL

Kind of. I felt it.

CLARA

Like getting butterflies in your stomach?

LAUREL

No! You can be dense sometimes!

CLARA

I don’t know this stuff. I know how to cook, how to garden, how to teach – tangible stuff!
I don’t know about people turning into butterflies! Where do you learn that stuff?

LAUREL

You don’t. You just feel it.

CLARA

Maybe I know too much real stuff. So there isn’t room for the unreal.

LAUREL

I know real stuff! I paint! I design jewelry!

CLARA

That’s not tangible! That’s esoteric!

LAUREL

I dress better than you!

CLARA

I know, Laurel! Don’t bring it up!

LAUREL

Sorry, Clara. That was a low-blow. I sometimes feel like you don’t take me seriously.
You dress just fine.

CLARA

I don’t have your – flair.

LAUREL

I'm taking that as a compliment.

CLARA

It was meant as one....

(LAUREL just looks at CLARA.)

CLARA (cont'd)

Really! Cross my heart!

(Pause.)

CLARA (cont'd)

You're sure Dad isn't a moth or anything – 'cause they transform.

LAUREL

No. He's a butterfly.

CLARA

What happens if a wasp or a bird eats him? Does he die again?

LAUREL

That's twisted.

CLARA

I just wonder that's all. Butterflies have predators you know. Which one is Dad? Over there by the biggest rosebush – there are three. Which is Dad?

LAUREL

Clara! He's not a real butterfly! What are you thinking?

CLARA

You told me he was a butterfly!

LAUREL

Spiritually. Not an earthly butterfly!

CLARA

So Dad's a butterfly. He's here and you know he's here because the butterflies are here but the butterflies aren't Dad. Who is a butterfly.

LAUREL

Exactly.

CLARA

Talk about being twisted.

LAUREL

His spirit is a butterfly. He struggled so long and fought, you know? But when he decided to let go, he really did transform. It was beautiful.

CLARA

I wish I knew those things. I wish I could feel him here. And if I could feel him here, I would tell him to go to Mom! They're finally together again. They were the greatest love story ever told. *Tell him to go find Mom!*

LAUREL

Mom's busy.

CLARA

Mom's you know – gone! We just brought home her ashes.

LAUREL

But the ashes aren't the real Mom. Dad took the real Mom and brought her to her brothers and sisters.

CLARA

What?

LAUREL

There were a lot of people waiting for her.

CLARA

So Mom's partying on some cloud with harps and pasta and her original family.

LAUREL

Nooooooooo ... Mom's being welcomed into a world or a dimension we know nothing about – being transformed by past and present love.

CLARA

If you say so.

LAUREL

I do.

(Pause.)

CLARA

I wish – I was as sure as you about these things. I wish I could know that they're both – at peace. Together. All that jazz.

LAUREL

It'll come. There will be something. I promise. Cause it's true. They are at peace.
Funny that you decided to plant those bushes now.

CLARA

Always loved roses.

LAUREL

I know. Mom did, too.

CLARA

That's partly why I planted them. I thought that when she came over, she could breathe them in and I would send her home with bunches of them ... every time I look at them – I see her.

LAUREL

That's why you planted them. To have her when she was gone.

CLARA

No – I wanted her to see them!

LAUREL

She did.

CLARA

Is Mom flying around the yard, too?