

The Normal Heart

NED

That is just an evasion. If you thought this was a straight disease...

BEN

It's got nothing to do with you being gay.

NED

What else does it have to do with? One of these days I'm going to get you to agree that over 20 million men and women in this country don't require the services of a psychiatrist

BEN

Look, try to understand – I read stuff, I see TV; guys in leather and chains, dresses, high heels . . .I say to myself, "this isn't Ned".

NED

You know the media always dramatizes the most extreme.

BEN

You guys have a dreadful image problem.

NED

That's why it's so important to have people like yourself supporting us. You already have your dignity.

BEN

We better get some lunch. I've got an important meeting.

NED

Do you? How important? I'm asking for your support

BEN

In every area that I consider important, you have my support

NED

In the only area that I consider important, I don't have your support at all. In some place, deep down

inside you, you think I'm sick, don't you?

BEN

I think you've adjusted to life pretty well.

NED

All things considered

BEN

I saw how unhappy you were.

NED

So were you. You wound up going to shrinks, too. We grew up side by side. We both felt the same about mom and pop. I'll agree to the fact that I have any number of awful character traits but not tho the fact that whatever awful things they did to us made me sick and gay while you stayed straight and healthy.

BEN

We don't all react the same way to the same things...

NED

So you became a lawyer and I became a writer

BEN

Well, we have a difference of opinion over the theory.

NED

But your theory turns me into a man from Mars. My theory doesn't do that to you.

BEN

Are you suggesting I did something wrong in sending you into therapy so young? I didn't know you were going to stay there forever.

NED

I didn't think I'd done anything wrong until you sent me there. Ben, you mean more to me than anyone in the whole world. You always have. Ben, you've got to say it.

BEN

Say what?

NED

I'm the same as you. Just say it. Say it.

BEN

No. You're not. I'm not gonna say it.

NED

Every time I lose this fight it hurts more. going home.

BEN

Ah, come on. I still love you. Sarah still loves you. The cat still loves you.

NED

This is not a joke.

BEN

You have my love, my legal advice, my financial supervision. I can't give you the courage to stand up to me and say you don't give a flying fuck about what I think. Everybody's oppressed by somebody else, in some form or another. Most of us learn to fight against it, despite people's opinions, without the help of others. Stop trying to wring some kind of admission of guilt out of me. Agreeing that you were born just the same as I was born isn't gonna say your dying friend.

NED

That is exactly what is going to save my dying friend.

BEN

You make it sound like I'm the enemy.

NED

I'm beginning to think that you and your straight world are our enemy. I am furious with you. And every goddamn doctor who made me feel I was sick to love a man. I am trying to understand why nobody gives a shit that we're dying. Five million dollars for a house and

we can't even get 27 cents from the city? I know 43
guys who have died and you say it's my cause, not
yours? You still think I'm sick. I simply cannot
allow it for one single second longer. I will not
speak to you again until you accept me as your equal.
Your healthy equal. Your brother.