

THE LEGACY OF AN INVISIBLE FATHER

a 10-minute family drama

by

Monique Franz

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Blue Moon Plays

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THE LEGACY OF AN INVISIBLE FATHER**a 10-minute family drama****Copyright© 2022 Monique Franz**Characters

ANGELA SMITH: A twenty-eight-year-old, African American (biracial) woman with get-it-done energy, wearing a pants suit and her curly hair tamed back with a headband.

SANDRA: ANGELA'S mother, a fifty-year-old, White woman with big hair who dresses skimpily for her age.

JIMMY SMITH: ANGELA's father, a fifty-year old, African American man in a khaki prison jumpsuit

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: A forty-year-old man with kind eyes, wearing jeans, a shirt and tie.

SANDRA'S BOYFRIEND: An offstage male voice.

Scene: Takes place at a private investigator's office in Southern California.

Time: The present.

SETTING: Scene takes place in an office with a desk.

AT RISE: The PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR sits on one side of the desk, while the client, ANGELA, sits on the other side, anxiously gripping a purse.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: So, Ms. Smith, the more information we have on your father, the better our chances of finding him. We'll begin with the basics. What's his full name?

(begins writing on a pad)

ANGELA: Jim Smith? At least, that's what my mother called him. Everyone called him Jimmy, so it could have been James.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: Do you have a middle name, by chance?

ANGELA: Sorry.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: His name's not on your birth certificate?

ANGELA: No. Um, it was a bit of a scandal that my mother was pregnant by him. She's White. He's Black. Her parents threatened to disown her if she continued seeing him. My grandparents are conservatives, and my granddad threatened to kill my dad and chop him up into hamburger meat, so my dad wasn't there to sign the birth certificate.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: (takes notes) Hmm. Do you know his birthdate? His approximate age?

ANGELA: No. I assume he's within a few years of my mom. She was born in '55.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: (pauses from note-taking) It might be helpful if I could talk with your mom, ask her a few questions—

ANGELA: (shakes head emphatically) I don't talk to my mom.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: Oh?

ANGELA: We haven't spoken in ten years. When my grandparents died, I lost contact with her and I'm not....

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: You don't want to reach out to her?

ANGELA: No. I know who she is. It's my dad I need to know about....

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: (writes) Okay.

ANGELA: I mean, I know it sounds bad, but I don't want to deal with my mom. (beat) Maybe something about how bad she was as a mom is part of the reason why I need to find my dad. You know? Like I'm so not like her at all, and maybe if I find my dad, I can make sense of who I am.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: Well, I'll do what I can to find him. Let's begin with the last time you had contact with your father.

ANGELA: Uh, let's see when I was thirteen, I used to write to him when he was incarcerated.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: What year was this?

ANGELA: 1989.

(Spotlight rises on ANGELA at her desk in her adolescent bedroom in 1989. It is decorated with 80's gadgets and posters of pop artists of that decade. ANGELA writes a letter under a desk lamp.)

ANGELA: (reads the letter aloud as she writes) Dear Daddy, how are you? You would have been proud of me today. I stood up for myself with those girls who are always picking on me. I put sardines in one of their gym bags. I don't think she knows I did it, but it feels good to know that I fought back in some way.

I'm sure they pick on me because I'm the new girl. I hate always being the new girl. I wish I could—

(SANDRA interrupts as she enters, throwing ANGELA a duffle bag.)

SANDRA: Pack a few things, Angela. You're going to spend the weekend at Aunt Fiona's.

ANGELA:
Wait? What? Why?

(MAN's voice calls from another room)

MAN: (offstage) Sandra...

SANDRA: (turning back towards the other room) Angela's getting her stuff. (to Angela) Get enough clothes for the week just in case.

ANGELA: (repeating) Wait? What? Why?

SANDRA: Just do it, Angela...and hurry up.

ANGELA: Fine.

(SANDRA exits. ANGELA returns to writing.)

ANGELA: Daddy, I'm pretty sure that I'm going to be over Aunt Fiona's for a while. This is what mom does whenever a new guy is around. She pawns me off to someone else. I can't wait until you come back, and I can live with you. I'm pretty good at cooking and cleaning, so I won't be too much trouble. Your loving daughter, Angela.

(ANGELA reaches into a box with a small picture frame and kisses it and puts the photo back into the box. Lights dim.)

(Lights up in PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR's office.)

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: Where did you live at this time?

ANGELA:
Um, I'm not sure. My mother moved like every six months. We never lived anywhere more than a year, but I think we were in Northridge...California.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: Do you know where he was incarcerated?

ANGELA: Chino? I think? (pondering) I actually received one letter from him in all of those years. I used to picture him writing me....

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