

Fathers and Other Strangers

**by
Gordon Blitz**

Characters:

Lynn - Fifty-year-old retired Jewish gay man

Mark - Thirty-year-old straight man with early Parkinson's disease

Jack - Abusive seventy-year-old alcoholic with emphysema

Ava - Forty-year-old earth mother type; nurse, caregiver

Jane - Twenty-year-old female prostitute

ACT 1

SCENE 1

LYNN, a 50-year-old gay man, is sitting in his condominium reading a book. Sound of a buzzer is heard. He gets up from his chair to check who wants entrance to his condo.

LYNN

Who is this?

MARK

It's Mark. I'm your son.

LYNN

Is this some sort of con?

MARK

No. Please let me in.

LYNN

No, you must have the wrong unit. Go away.

MARK

Isn't this Lynn Pinchas? Unit 302.

LYNN

What is this?

MARK

Listen, there is a park next to your building. I just want to talk to you.

LYNN

No.

LYNN walks away in disgust, sits on his chair and begins reading again. The sound of the buzzer is heard multiple times.

LYNN

Are you crazy? Stop bothering me. I'm going to call the police if you don't stop this.

MARK

I'm begging you. Give me a chance to explain.

LYNN

If I come down to the park, I'll only listen to you for five minutes. or I'm going to call the police and say this is harassment.

LYNN walks off stage and enters the park where MARK is sitting with his head down looking forlorn.

LYNN

Just tell me why you are here. You don't expect me to believe your crazy story.

MARK

I've been looking for you. I wanted information about who my father was.

MARK's foot is tapping uncontrollably.

LYNN

I'm a gay man. What makes you think I'm your father?

MARK

It doesn't matter about you being gay. Just let me tell you my story. I grew up in foster homes. After I left my last home at eighteen, I started trying to find anything about my parents. My foster parents were of little help because I had been shuffled from one home to another. The trail was convoluted. I had to go through such bullshit to get birth records. All this red tape. Like it was a government secret.

LYNN

Get to the point. I'm only giving you five minutes.

MARK

I finally found my birth certificate. It listed Jane Elaine Lippman as my mother. No father listed.

LYNN

Did you ever find this Jane?

MARK

Another nightmare scavenger hunt. Remember, this was 1988 when she gave birth to me. It looked like a dead end until I found her death certificate. Thank goodness for the internet. AIDS was the cause of death. Another dead end until I found the doctor's name, Jim Becker, on the death certificate. Finally, I might have had a contact.

LYNN

I don't need to hear anymore. I don't believe this.

MARK

Just let me finish. The doctor was retired but at least he was alive. He was living in Las Vegas, so I drove out there. I prayed that he could help me. When he told me Jane was a prostitute, things started to make sense. That's why there was no father listed, and that explains why she had AIDS. Dr. Becker was the doctor she had been seeing after she was diagnosed with AIDS. She told him she'd given birth and given the baby boy away for adoption.

MARK starts crying.

LYNN

Mark, I understand how painful this must be. But what does it have to do with me?

MARK

The doctor gave me this letter my mom wrote before she died. I've read it so many times, I know it by heart.

MARK hands the letter to LYNN. JANE stands on the side of the stage and reads the letter:

I know you'll never forgive me for giving you away, but I couldn't bring you up having a mother as a prostitute. But I loved giving birth to you. It was a miracle that I got pregnant. I joked with the other girls that you were a virgin birth like Mary giving birth to Jesus. I mean, we were so careful. Always taking birth control pills. And we had started asking clients to wear a condom because we worried about getting AIDS. We never had accidents. Well, except sometimes if we didn't get a prescription filled, we might miss a day. That must be how you came to be. And if you're reading this you probably want to know who your father was.. I think his name was Lynn Pinchas. You don't forget a name like that. One of the youngest clients I ever had. This could be your father. He was the last man I had sex with before I tried to get out of the business when I got pregnant. I thought how could I be a prostitute and a mother too. But a year after you were born, I went back to turning tricks and then the virus got me. This virus is eating me alive. Remember, I loved you.

MARK remains silent for a few moments.

MARK

You can see why I was so angry with the doctor. Why hadn't he tried to find me? He said he couldn't locate me.

LYNN

It's impossible. This must be a coincidence. Look, I've never had sex with a woman, so I couldn't possibly be your father. I've heard enough of your story. You have the wrong Lynn Pinchas.

MARK

Look at me. We are connected. I know you saw that when you looked at me. This is a shock. I get that. You gave me five minutes and I've taken enough of your time. Maybe you've forgotten what happened over thirty years ago.

LYNN

I'm feeling sick. Going to go back to my condo.

MARK

Here's my phone number. Call me if you remember anything, or better yet, text me.

As LYNN walks away, his iPhone rings. He curses to himself.

LYNN

What did my father do now? Okay I'll come over right away.

SCENE 2

At the nursing home where JACK is living. AVA, an earth mother-type woman greets LYNN.

AVA

You already know how impossible your father is. He's on oxygen, yet he continues to find cigarettes and smoke. I'm surprised he hasn't blown

up this place. And he isn't supposed to drink, yet somehow, we find vodka bottles hidden in his closet, and his breath stinks. I don't know if he is paying off the attendants. But then today he was harassing his roommate, Alfred. He told him to fuck off. We've already moved him once. We're running out of places for him. And he won't wear his hearing aids so everyone is complaining about his television.

LYNN

What about a single room? I don't care how much it costs.

AVA

Can't do it. We don't have enough beds, and it's against policy. And you know, this isn't dementia. Your father is sharp as a tack. Was he always like this? Are you sure he's your father? My goodness, you guys are so different.

LYNN

Jack was always a monster. I like to call him The Beast. I guess he got worse after my mom died. It's just been the two of since I was seventeen.

AVA

Well, you are an incredibly good son to take care of him and come and visit. My goodness, my kids won't even talk to me. I doubt if they would visit me even if I paid them. I don't know what I did wrong.

LYNN

Before mom died of cancer, she made me promise I would take care of Jack. It seemed like such a cruel request. He was so awful; a horrible drunk. Do you know he killed my pet bird with a nail clipper!

AVA

How is that even possible?

LYNN

My mom gave this finch to me for my 10th birthday. We named him Domino. Dad said he wouldn't take care of Domino except for trimming his nails. You see, when we tried to clean his cage, Domino's claws would hurt our fingers. I loved Domino. I would hear his voice in the morning when I got up and be welcomed home after school by his long, sweet warbling. I hated school and on this particular day, I didn't hear Domino's tweeting. I panicked because his cage was empty.

AVA

It reminds me of this guy I was dating who refused to cage his parrot and kept telling me, 'How would *you* like being caged up all day.' But it was disgusting because the bird's feces were on the pillowcases where we were sleeping. Ugh! So, what happened to Domino?

LYNN

Dad said Domino flew away when he was changing the cage. I didn't believe him because Domino would never leave me. Later that night, I heard my parents talking and mom asked Jack what had really happened to Domino. He was laughing and said that he was clipping the bird's nails and the clipper slipped and cut him in half. Mom wanted to know where the bird was. Dad laughed again and told her that he had thrown him away in the garbage. She tried to tell him how important Domino was to me and that there should have been a burial. The last thing I heard was Dad giggling and telling her, 'It's just a bird, for god's sake.'

AVA

He's a monster. I can see why you call him The Beast.

LYNN

After I cried all night, I figured out a way to make him pay. I refused to clip my own finger and toenails. I made him do it. He complained anyway that I left my nails too long or pointy and that they looked like a girl's nails. And you know, it was strange; not only would he do the clipping, but he would soak my feet in lukewarm water, and it felt like he was caressing my toes and massaging the balls of my feet. I had blisters from being forced to run track at school. After he did the trimming, he sprinkled talcum powder and then slapped me on the rump signaling that we were done. Very odd that this coarse man could be tender with my feet. He never showed any affection toward me.

AVA

My parents never even touched me. Like they were afraid of getting into trouble. I think it was some sort of religious thing.

LYNN

So, what about my father? What do you want me to do?

AVA

Threaten him that you won't pay any more, and that he'll have to move to a Medi-Cal home in Chatsworth, and you won't visit him.

LYNN

Do you really think I can reason with that man?

AVA

He won't listen to me. Just use your charm.

LYNN enters JACK's room. JACK is sitting in his underwear watching football with the television sound too loud. LYNN grabs the remote and mutes the sound.

LYNN

You know, you are going to get thrown out of here?

JACK

Who cares. This is such a dump. I can't believe you put me here after all I did for you. If your mother was alive, she would have never let this happen.

LYNN

She should have left you. You were a horrible husband and father.

JACK

Get out of here, and let me finish watching the game.

LYNN

You want me to leave? Okay, and I won't come back. You can just rot in here or out on the street when they toss you out and you end up in some shit hole Medi-Cal nursing home. I don't think that's what you want.

JACK

Then go. You know, I paid for your school and you always had food. I let you live rent-free until you were thirty years old. And even though I hate your so-called life style, I put up with it as long as you didn't talk about being a fag.

LYNN starts to leave the room until JACK tries to get up from his chair, starts coughing and stumbles, almost falling to the ground. LYNN turns around and tries to help him get into bed.

JACK

Damn! I need that stupid oxygen. I hate the way those plugs feel in my nose.

LYNN

Should I get Ava?

JACK

No, just get the oxygen tank and bring it to me.

LYNN attaches the plugs to JACK's nose and turns on the oxygen. JACK stops coughing.

JACK

And can you bring me my cigarettes?

LYNN

So you can blow yourself up? God, almighty; You're impossible!

JACK

You think I like being this way? Old and decrepit. You'll see what it's like one day, and you won't have anyone to take care of you. You never had a child. You don't even have a friend.

LYNN

Thanks to you, Dad, I don't have anyone. Well, maybe I do. Some guy came by my condo today and said he was my son. I thought it was a scam; it's impossible that I could be a father. But he showed me this letter from a prostitute saying that I was his father. She had my name -- Lynn Pinchas. It must be some kind of coincidence -- another Lynn Pinchas. I don't believe any of this.

JACK

Does that mean I might have a grandson?

SCENE 3

Thirty years before. A door slams, and a young LYNN in high school graduation attire and his father, JACK, enter their condominium.

JACK

You ain't queer, are you?

LYNN

No, what are you talking about? Aren't you proud of me for graduating?

JACK finds a magazine, Tom of Finland, and shows it to LYNN

JACK

I found this under your bed. Faggy stuff. Naked men.

LYNN

You're not supposed to go in my room. We had a deal. After you beat me.

JACK

There is no deal. I'm your father. You are such a pussy. That was no beating. My god, my Dad would hit me so hard, I couldn't sit down for a week. Are you queer?

LYNN

I keep telling you I'm not a fag. I bet Ethan left those magazines. It's a joke.

JACK

I told you to get rid of him. You can't be friends with a queer. You don't want to get AIDS, do you? Anyway, I have a graduation present. Get in the car.

LYNN

Where are we going?

JACK

It's a surprise.

They walk out of the condominium to JACK's car. JACK starts smoking.

LYNN

Dad, can you stop with the cigarettes?
It's making me sick.

LYNN turns on the radio.

JACK

No fag music.

LYNN

Dad, I'm getting a hunger attack. Can
we get some food?

JACK

No, Lynn. We're here. This will be
quick. It will just take thirty minutes.
That's all I paid for, anyway. We'll go
to a restaurant afterwards to celebrate.

LYNN

What's the surprise?

*They leave the car and approach a house. JACK rings the doorbell
multiple times. Finally, the squeaky door opens, and JACK takes LYNN's
arm and pushes him through the door.*

LYNN

What is this, Dad?

JACK

You are going to be made a man
today.

LYNN looks confused.

JACK

Lynn, you are going to have sex with a
woman.

LYNN

What are you talking about? What
woman?

JACK

You have thirty minutes to screw her.
Then I'll know you ain't queer. My
father did the same thing to me in
Poland when I was your age.

LYNN

I don't want to do it.

JACK

No discussion. This is going to happen. I paid money for this.

LYNN

You can't make me do this.

A bedroom door slowly opens, and a small washed-out woman enters.

JANE

Which one of you am I doing? It's extra if I do two at the same time.

JACK points to LYNN and almost winks at JANE.

JANE

My son. I'll be waiting right here, right outside.

JACK sits on a chair outside the bedroom where JANE takes LYNN. He reads a magazine. In the bedroom, LYNN is shaking.

JANE

I see you're nervous. I'm not going to hurt you. Tell me about yourself. How old are you, really? It's rare that I get someone so young. You should be happy your father took you here. Most fathers would never take their sons to a place like this.

LYNN's teeth are chattering until she holds his hand.

JANE

I am going to turn the lights off. I think you'll feel more comfortable. I know how scary it is to be naked. Maybe you want to do it with a man? I have a condom for you.

Stage lights dim, it's quiet except for the sound of JACK turning the pages of his magazine. JACK periodically gets up from his chair and tries to listen to any noise coming from the bedroom until JANE speaks.

JANE

Now, Lynn, please get inside me.
Come on. I know you can do it. You
have to get hard, so you can put the
rubber on. Most boys your age go
around with a permanent erection.
Look, I'm losing my patience. I have
another client. Your cheapskate father
only paid for a half hour. Finally! See,
that wasn't so bad. Quick and dirty. I
hardly felt anything. Oh! You must be
one of those boys who don't like to use
a rubber.

LYNN dashes out and JACK runs after him.

JACK

What was the rush to get out of there?
Oh, I get it. You want to tell the world
you did it with a girl.

LYNN

Oh, yeah, Dad. Like now I'm no
longer a virgin. You don't have to
worry. Now, I'm straight.

SCENE 4

*LYNN's condominium. LYNN and Mark are sitting at
a table.*

LYNN

I want both of us to take a DNA test
just to prove I'm not your father

MARK

Okay, but Lynn, I *know* you're my
father. I've been looking for you for
ages. I have so much to tell you. When
I talk to you, it's like a mirror of
myself.

LYNN

Okay. Let me finish getting lunch
ready. What do you want to drink?
Water or juice?

MARK

Do you have any wine? I am really nervous and that calms me down.

LYNN

I never drink, but I think I have some red wine in the cupboard.

MARK

First off, I was thrilled that you called me so quickly and that you're making lunch. I was so worried after I barged into your life that you would dismiss me. That you would think I was some sort of crackpot. So, thank you.

LYNN

I still don't believe you, but I am intrigued. It's a convoluted story, and it's hard to believe that we are somehow related. Being an only child was isolating, and I felt deserted losing my mom to lung cancer when I was a teenager. Sometimes I thought of myself as being adopted because I was nothing like my father. And both parents were also only children. I had no siblings or relatives. So yes, when I met you, I thought to myself, is this story true? I convinced myself that I saw pieces of me when I looked at you.

MARK starts crying. As he speaks it is apparent that he has a tremor.

MARK

That has been my whole life until we met last week. I felt like a visitor from Mars. My foster parents were great, but still, you can't imagine the feeling of never really belonging. I would dig my fingernails into my wrists to distract from the pain of being alone.

When LYNN hands a glass of wine to MARK, his shaking becomes worse.

LYNN

Are you all right?

MARK

I shake when I'm nervous. I know I should see a doctor about this, but I have a hard time getting off from work.

LYNN

Where do you work?

MARK

I'm a checker at the Hollywood Trader Joe's and can't afford to lose any hours. My roommate moved out and having to come up with rent is tough. Lynn, I feel like I'm floundering. I just turned thirty-one, and this is the longest job I've been at. Almost two years.

LYNN

I'm sorry I can't help you. I wouldn't know where to begin. I have enough trouble running my own life since I retired. What about college? Didn't that give you some direction?

MARK

I never finished because I hated studying. I thought I wanted to be an actor or a teacher, but I just didn't fit in anywhere. Enough about me. What about you?

LYNN

I'm a retired CPA and I'm writing my memoirs. Don't laugh. I mean what could be more boring, but since I've been taking this writing class, it seems I have a story to tell. I mean, I don't know if anyone would be interested.

MARK

Can I read some of what you've written? I've been following your

blog. That's how I found you. You have to admit Lynn Pinchas is an unusual name.

LYNN

After the DNA test, maybe I'll show you my memoirs. It's very personal stuff that I haven't shared with anyone except other students in my class. We have a rule about our work being confidential.

MARK

Can I ask you about when you knew you were gay?

LYNN

I mean, I was always being made fun of. At first, I didn't know what they were talking about when they called me 'fag'. My parents never talked to me about sex. I had almost no friends until I met Ethan in my senior year at Fairfax High. I was a late bloomer. But I started obsessing about this guy, and I wanted to spend every day with him. He wasn't what you would consider typically good-looking, but to me, he was perfect. Still, it wasn't the sexual act. We never had sex. Something else was going on; this feeling with another boy that I couldn't imagine feeling with a girl.

MARK

What happened to him?

LYNN

Oh, my father did everything he could to stop my relationship, and then Ethan vanished. I'm cursed. When I turned thirty, I had a lover but he ended up dying of AIDS.

MARK

Sorry to hear about that, Lynn. I appreciate you being honest with me.

No one wants to talk about sex. I've never gone beyond dating girls. Sometimes I think I'm asexual. I just don't think about sex very much. I'm embarrassed about this tremor, like I'm an old man.

LYNN

So, you work at Trader Joe's, but what do you do with your free time?

MARK

This wine is delicious. Can I have another glass? I love going to the movies. I see at least two films a week. I'm not a snob. I'll see anything. I loved *Get Out*, *Moonlight*, *Roma*, *The Avengers*, and *RBG*. And it must be in a movie theater. No television and no streaming.

LYNN

Well, we have that in common. Although I would skip *The Avengers*. *Black Panther* is more my type of superhero.

MARK

We should go to the movies sometime.

LYNN begins staring at MARK's ears.

LYNN

Sorry, I'm staring at your ears. My lover, Gilbert, who died used to say that the best way to tell you that people were related was by matching ears. Your ears have an odd shape like mine, but smaller. I always felt self-conscious about my ears. It isn't so much about the size, but they're pointy. I begged Dad to let me have surgery. Of course, he refused. He wouldn't pay, and I had to wear my hair long so it covered my ears. And then the Beast would complain that I looked like a girl.

MARK

Who is the beast?

LYNN

Oh, it's a nickname for my father. It's been a tempestuous relationship.

There is a moment when MARK and LYNN want to embrace until Mark abruptly starts to speak.

MARK

I'm sorry; I need to go. When you arrange for the DNA test, call me. Thanks for lunch.

SCENE 5

A week later in LYNN's condominium.. MARK is entering and carrying a photo album.

LYNN

First, put that bag down and let's get the test completed. I want you to have peace of mind that I'm not your father. These cotton swabs need to get rubbed on the inside of our cheeks. Then we send this to the lab and they compare the epithelial cells.

MARK

I thought it would be a blood test.

LYNN

No, they assured me that the DNA cells in our cheeks would be the same as doing blood samples.

LYNN goes first by rubbing the swab inside his cheek and checks the directions as to what to do with the samples. Then it is MARK's turn. Afterward MARK begins crying. LYNN seems unsure about whether he should hug him.

MARK

I'm sorry, Lynn. I didn't mean to collapse. This is just so emotional

being here and having the test. I thought this would only be a shock for *you*. It seems that it's a shock to my system, too. I didn't believe I would ever meet you.

LYNN

I think I understand. Is that a photo album you brought? I didn't know this was going to be a show and tell.

MARK

I still think you are my father and would want to see me growing up. I was a really good basketball player.

MARK opens the photo album and points to a picture.

MARK

Look at the way I could jump up and almost hug the basketball hoop. And I wasn't that tall either. I can see you don't care about sports, but it meant a lot to me. I loved whacking or gripping the ball. It was something I was good at and could release my anger. I was afraid I had a monster inside of me waiting to escape.

LYNN

I wish I had something like that to release *my* anger. I guess I use music. The only sport I know about is swimming, and that's because my lover was a swimmer.

MARK

Really. I swim with the West Hollywood Aquatics. I know you probably think that means I'm gay. No, I am an honorary straight member.

LYNN

Oh, my god! That's Gilbert's team.

MARK

Amazing! What a coincidence! Then you know all about how great the guys have been. And this is where I learned about community. I led such a sheltered life at the foster home. We work out three times a week at the WEHO pool. Maybe you would like to come watch me do the butterfly?

LYNN

Maybe. I used to watch Gilbert swim. So how did you end up getting into swimming?

MARK

I can blame it all on the foster care environment. I was constantly sick from as far back as I can remember. Colds, sore throats, throwing up, stomach aches, and earaches. My foster parents, Ethel and Sam, were taking me to the Emergency Room monthly. Between the fevers spiking at 103, inflamed tonsils and bouts of strep throat, I was out of school for weeks at a time. Then when I outgrew being sickly, I started having anger issues. I failed on so many levels when I was being checked out by potential couples looking to adopt a healthy happy boy.

LYNN

Hard to believe you have a temper. You seemed like a sweet kid.

MARK

If things didn't go my way, I would punch holes in my bedroom wall. The foster environment was killing me. I shared a bedroom with Kevin when I was fifteen. He was ten and always pulling pranks. We slept in bunk beds because the bedroom was so tiny. I tried the lower bunk but it made me claustrophobic. On one of those rare

Los Angeles humid evenings, Kevin started shaking the bed. I hollered, 'Quit it, or I'm coming down, and I will make you stop!' I had a baseball game in the morning and between the restless sleep and Kevin being an asshole, anger started building. When I jumped to step down, I realized Kevin had moved the ladder. I flopped onto the wooden floor with my leg collapsing under me. I was startled before I began screaming in pain. I've tried to block out the rest of that summer and fall. With my leg in a cast from toes to hip, I was out of commission. No baseball, football, or basketball. The only sport left was swimming. It saved my life.

LYNN

What do you mean?

MARK

When I swam, mental and physical pain were gone. I focused on the stroke and forgot about my crummy life. So you haven't told me much about *your* life.

LYNN

There isn't much to tell. It's painful for me to talk about my lover, Gilbert, who died, and don't get me started with any more stories about my father. Let's just get these samples sent off to Heritage Plus, and hopefully, it won't take forever to get the results.

MARK

Okay. Oh boy, it's getting late, and I have my shift at Trader Joe's. Keep me posted with the results. Goodbye.

SCENE 6

A week later in LYNN's condo. MARK and LYNN are sitting in chairs hovering over a computer. After entering the password, they slowly read the results.

MARK

What is all this detail? I don't understand all these graphs. And what is this thing about the alleged father and child? And there is an asterisk. It's gobbledy-gook.

LYNN

Okay, I'll just skim to the bottom summary.

LYNN stops reading. His face shows no emotion.

MARK

Why did you stop? What does that asterisk mean?

LYNN

The possible father is not the biological father of the child since all data gathered does not support a relationship of paternity.

MARK jumps up pushing his chair against the wall with a violent force threatening to break the chair.

MARK

This stupid test! It's wrong! You must be my father!

MARK's tremor becomes pronounced and he starts to leave.

LYNN

Hold on. Don't just leave.

LYNN grabs MARK's hand before he can seize the door knob

LYNN

You're acting like a child. Calm down. I know I've screwed up but what about taking the test again? Maybe it's

wrong. I heard that using spit to check the DNA is a preferred method.

MARK

Why? You don't believe I am your son anyway. Why do you care?

LYNN

Well, I've had some time to think about it. Maybe I just want to be friends. We have stuff in common. What's so bad about taking the test again?

MARK

I don't want to go through this again. It's too painful. Anyway, you lied to me.

LYNN

What are you talking about?

MARK

I read your blog and saw your poem of the week about a prostitute. You never admitted to me that you'd been to a prostitute. I printed it out: 'We survived bullying at Fairfax High School. We came out at the Gay and Lesbian Center. We were afraid to tell our alcoholic fathers we were gay. We let our father take us to a prostitute to convert us.' That proves that you're my father.

LYNN

Wait a minute! That poem isn't just about me. It's what gay people went through when I was growing up. I used the 'we' format. Look, it doesn't prove anything. I didn't really lie to you, I just blocked out the memories of my father taking me to a prostitute. It was a horrible time in my life after my mom died and my best friend, Ethan, had been banished by my father.

MARK

So, you *do* remember. Why couldn't you tell me? I bared my soul to you, and you couldn't even admit that you did, in fact, go to a prostitute. She remembered your name. You had sex with my mother, and I'm the result.

LYNN

I felt like shit and wanted to believe you. I'm sorry. I know I've ruined everything. Maybe the second test will say we are father and son.

MARK

Do what you want. I don't know if I want you for my father.

MARK leaves and the stage lights dim.

SCENE 7

LYNN is visiting JACK at the nursing home.

LYNN

Dad, I've been thinking about when you took me to the prostitute.

JACK

What about it? It didn't work. You still turned into a faggot.

LYNN

Would it really kill you to use the word 'gay'? I hate when you say 'faggot'.

JACK

You are such a baby. I've been called stupid Polack or idiot Pole all my life. It's just words.

LYNN

But you're my father. I can't talk to you. I just wanted to know about the prostitute. It was thirty years ago. I

can hardly remember what happened.
I tried to blot it out.

JACK

Wasn't she hot? You know, I tried her
out the night before.

LYNN

What did you say?

JACK

I said I saw that woman. I wanted to
make sure she could help you.

LYNN

It was 1987. Weren't you worried
about me getting AIDS and yourself,
too?

JACK

That just affected fags. Why are you
asking?

LYNN

But drug users and prostitutes were
getting infected, too.

JACK

If you were so worried, you should
have used a rubber.

LYNN

It was so fast. I had trouble getting
hard. That evening is a blur.

JACK

You love to worry, Lynn. It was over
thirty years ago. You're fine. But
before I die, I want to see you married.
Some nice Jewish girl. I want a
grandchild.

LYNN

Good luck with that. And you know,
that man who said he was my son,
turns out he isn't. You can dream all
you want about having a grandchild,
but it's not going to happen.

LYNN begins crying as he leaves JACK's room and meets AVA.

AVA

I can't believe you let your father get to you.

LYNN

The Beast did something so horrible. He took me to a prostitute when I was eighteen thinking I would turn out straight. And if that wasn't bad enough, he tried her out the night before. It's like doing a test drive with a car.

AVA

Even that sounds pretty outrageous for Jack. It's ancient history.

LYNN

Yes, thirty years ago, but something else just happened. Some guy showed up at my condo saying he was my son. He had a letter from a prostitute that said there was a Lynn Pinchas whom she had sex with and got pregnant right afterwards. I knew it was a scam, but he seemed so serious and vulnerable. I mean what were the odds of this guy finding me, and that it was the same prostitute my father took me to. But still, I felt sorry for him. I figured why not take a DNA test. Put this guy out of his misery.

AVA

So, what happened?

LYNN

You know, before we both took the test, we got to know one another. I kind of liked him. I even thought to myself, 'What would be so bad about having a son.' I have nothing going on in my life since I retired; well, except for some writing classes and my daily blog.

AVA

You probably would make a good father.

LYNN

Better than Jack ever was to me. But it doesn't matter anymore. There's no shared DNA. I thought maybe the test was wrong, but Mark, that's his name, said he didn't want to take the test again. So that's it.

JACK's voice is heard.

JACK

Ava, I need you. I've lost the television remote.

AVA

Just a minute, Jack, I'm talking to Mark. I'll be in soon.

LYNN

I better go. You have your hands full.

AVA

No, Jack can wait. But when you were talking, I was thinking of something. You probably aren't going to like it, but have you considered that Jack may be the father of this guy, Mark?

LYNN

No. That's impossible.

AVA

Why not? You said Jack had sex with her the night before and then she had a child. Why couldn't it be your father who impregnated her.

LYNN

What a horrible thought that Jack has another son. If that were true, I would never want to give him that kind of satisfaction.

AVA

But Lynn, it might mean you have a step-brother. Wouldn't that be nice for you?

LYNN

I guess. You really think this is what happened?

AVA

Why not check it out? Get a blood test or whatever you need to prove either way. What do you have to lose?

LYNN

Okay. I'll need to send for another DNA test. Then we'll need to convince Jack to take it.

AVA

Don't worry. I'll help you.

LYNN

Boy, you remind me of my mother. She was so unselfish. Nothing like Jack.

AVA

I wish my children felt that way. I haven't heard from them in years.

LYNN

Do you know why?

AVA

No idea. I must have done something wrong that they haven't forgiven me for.

LYNN

What I would give to have a sibling.

AVA

I better go take care of Jack. But I am glad we talked. Anytime.

Lights dim for a few seconds, and when they light the stage, LYNN is looking at his computer. He reads the results partially to himself. He stops

and closes his eyes. A scream bursts and explodes through the condo. He blinks a few times looking like he had misread the results. He slams the laptop closed, and picks it up. It looks like he is going to throw it out the window. Once he calms down, he calls MARK.

LYNN

Can you come over? I need to talk to you.

Lights dim. End of Act 1

ACT 2

SCENE 1

A buzzer is heard and MARK enters LYNN's condo.

MARK

So, what is so urgent? I haven't heard from you since we took the test.

LYNN

I'm sorry. I've been having issues with my father. I know that's not an excuse. And I did like getting to know you, but now I just discovered something. Before I tell you I just want to explain what happened. You were so distraught when you found out we weren't father and son from the first test. When I told my father about you, and that he might be a grandfather, he told me he had sex with Jane, your mother, the evening before he took *me* to her. He was testing her out. Making sure she would make a man out of me.

MARK is shaking.

LYNN

I thought, is it possible that my father might have gotten her pregnant? I know this seems crazy. I mean what are the odds. Yet it kept gnawing at me. So, I contacted Heritage Plus, and

I asked that if I sent in my father's saliva, could they run it against yours.

MARK

Why couldn't you tell me this, Lynn? Again, I find out you lied to me. So many stupid lies. I hate this! It makes me not want to have you as my father if you can't tell me the truth.

LYNN

I was afraid about what the new DNA would show between you and Dad. I was torn. I didn't want you to have any expectations while you waited the month. I kept praying that you were my son. I couldn't face the truth even though the DNA didn't show any connection between us. Mark, I still wanted to think there was a mistake, that you were mine.

MARK

So, tell me what it showed.

LYNN

Jack is your father. There were enough DNA cells that matched to insure your ancestry. So even though you aren't my son, you're my half-brother. Same father, different mother.

MARK looks like a frozen statue, emotionless.

LYNN

Mark, I know this is a shock. You finally have your answer. Forgive me for not telling you. This is all very new to me.

MARK

Oh, shut up, Lynn!

MARK and LYNN embrace.

MARK

Are you sure? I can't believe it! Does your father even know he has another son?

LYNN

Of course not. And a couple of months ago, I told him that I might have a son and joked that he would be a grandfather. Something he thought was impossible considering I'm gay.

MARK

How did you get him to give you a saliva sample?

LYNN

I was surprised how easy it was to get his sample. I told him some story about doing a family tree and wanting to find out about his Polish roots.

MARK

So, when am I going to meet my father? It sounds so strange to say that out loud.

LYNN

Are you sure you're ready? Keep your expectations low. The Beast is not very fatherly. He can be an asshole. Don't think he's going to welcome you, or say he wants to get to know you. Actually, I don't know how he's going to react.

MARK

Can you set something up? It is kinda' scary, but I need to do this. I want to see who I came from.

LYNN

He has emphysema and is supposed to be on oxygen, but he's a strong guy. And he has the beginning of Parkinson's, so now you know how you got stuck with that.

MARK

Now I have a brother, too. How amazing! Thinking you were my father, and now this switch. I was looking for a father, and now I've found him *and* a brother. A much older brother.

LYNN

I thought I was an only child and then you came along.

Both laugh and hug.

MARK

It doesn't change anything that you are my brother. I am part of a family. No longer an alien. So much catching up to do. And now you can introduce me as your brother. I can't stop saying that I have a real live brother and father.

LYNN

Mark, let's plan on going out to visit Jack next Saturday.

MARK

Shouldn't we be celebrating now? Break out the champagne! Get drunk!

LYNN

I'm an emotional basket case. I can't even imagine what you must be feeling. I need all this to sink in and decide what I'm going to tell my father.

SCENE 2

At the nursing home, AVA, MARK and LYNN are standing at the entrance.

LYNN

Ava, I want to introduce you to my half-brother.

AVA

Is this the man you thought was your son? Now he's your brother? Is this some sort of magic trick?

MARK

Yes, Lynn is a magician with a little help from Heritage Plus.

AVA chuckles and goes off to her desk.

LYNN

Look, Mark, we're here. I haven't told Jack why I brought you, so if you don't want to explain who you are, that's okay. See how it goes. Who knows, there is a chance that you'll tolerate him.

MARK

Lynn, why don't you go in first? Just tell him I'm a friend. Just make something up about me wanting to meet him.

LYNN

Okay. I've thought of something.

As LYNN enters JACK's room, he is greeted by the loud football game. LYNN grabs the remote and shuts off the television.

JACK

Lynn! Another visit? Are you feeling guilty? Seems like I just saw you.

LYNN

I brought Mark. You remember I told you about him. He wanted to meet you. He has no family and even though the DNA showed I wasn't his father, he still wants me in his life. And you're part of my life, too.

LYNN motions for MARK to enter JACK's room.

MARK

Hello, Mr. Pinchas.

After JACK glances at MARK, he begins to shake and looks away from MARK.

JACK

Lynn, get me some water. I don't feel so good. Something's wrong with me. Call Ava.

LYNN leaves the room, finds AVA and brings her back.

AVA

Are you causing trouble, Jack? Trying to frighten your son. Drink this and you'll feel better. Does your oxygen tank need to be refilled?

JACK shakes his head and grabs the water. AVA checks JACK's oxygen.

AVA

Jack, you are fine. Don't play games with your son trying to make him feel guilty.

AVA leaves and LYNN follows her.

LYNN

Thank you. Maybe Dad had a panic attack.

AVA

No, your father is as strong as an ox. He's just playing with you. Looking for sympathy.

AVA walks away and LYNN returns to JACK's room.

JACK

Who are you? You remind me of someone. Do I know you? You're scaring me! Stop staring at me! Get out of here!

MARK leaves.

JACK

What's going on, Lynn? You have a strange look on your face. What are you not telling me? I'm not stupid! There is something about this Mark.

LYNN

Let me go get him, Dad.

LYNN walks out of the room and finds MARK crying.

LYNN

Do you want to go, Mark? I warned you about him.

MARK

No. It's such a shock to see someone who looks like me. I can't do it. I'm afraid of how he'll react when I tell him.

MARK's tremor is becoming more pronounced as he talks.

LYNN

Do you want me to tell him?

MARK

I don't know, Lynn. Just stay with me.

After they hug and cry together, MARK and LYNN go back into JACK's room.

MARK

I'm your son.

JACK

Bullshit! Lynn is my only son. Stop bothering an old man.

MARK

Sir, we tested the DNA and my cells match yours.

JACK

This is a joke, right?

LYNN

No, Dad, he's correct.

MARK

My mom was the prostitute you had sex with.

JACK

It's impossible! You can't be my son! Go away!

MARK

I have the letter from my mom that she gave to the doctor who later pronounced her dead. Please listen to me. I was given away by my mom. I had nobody until I found Lynn. When I found out my mother was dead, I hung onto the hope that I could find my father. Please, sir. I'm not asking for anything from you. Just that I'd like to get to know a little bit about you.

JACK

Lynn, could you leave us alone? I want to talk to my son alone.

Lights dim and when lights come back, MARK is leaving JACK's room.

MARK

Your father wants you to come back. I'll wait out here for you.

LYNN

What happened, Mark? What did he say? You look different. Things must have gone well.

MARK

Oh, god, Lynn! At first, he scared me. He wanted to know if I was queer like you. I said as far as I know, I was straight. Then he talked to me. I mean not like you, but he said he was sorry.

LYNN

Sorry about what? He didn't know you even existed.

MARK

I know. When I showed him the letter and how my mom thought you were my father, he was surprised. He wished she had contacted him.

LYNN

I can't believe it. Sounds almost normal, well, . . . except for the gay question.

MARK

When I started talking about sports, he went crazy.

LYNN

Figures. I never had anything in common with Jack.

MARK

Go say goodbye, Lynn. I'll wait out here.

When LYNN goes into JACK's room, he finds him smiling.

JACK

I asked Mark if he would move me out of here so I could live with him.

LYNN

You didn't do that!

JACK

He said he would try to arrange that. He wants to get to know me. He's a good son wanting to take care of his father. Not like you, throwing me in this dump.

LYNN

Fine! You think you can keep up this good behavior? It's an act. Wait until he finds out what you're *really* like. You're a poor excuse for a father.

JACK

Fuck you! I wish you weren't my son.

LYNN leaves and motions to MARK that they are leaving.

MARK

What's the rush? You didn't even let me say goodbye to my father.

LYNN

Did you tell him you would have him move into your condominium? That you would take care of him?

MARK

I didn't say that exactly. I have that second bedroom since my roommate left.

LYNN

Well, that's what he thinks. I can't believe you would do that. He's a sick old man, and you want him living with you? He needs help with bathing and cooking his meals. You haven't thought this out, Mark.

MARK

Why are you so angry, Lynn? You want to deny me getting to know him.

LYNN

He treats me like shit, and you enter his life, and it's like you're the son he's always wanted!

MARK

I don't understand you. I've been looking for this my whole life. And even if he's an asshole, I'm still a part of him.

LYNN

I can't take this emotional rollercoaster. First, I'm your father, then your half-brother, and now Jack wants to disown me.

MARK

When you come to your senses, we should celebrate as brothers. I'll buy

you a drink, and you can forget about your father. Just focus on our relationship.

Lights dim.

SCENE 3

LYNN'S condominium. LYNN is putting the finishing touches on the dinner table. MARK enters cradling his arm, and there are bloodstains on his shirt.

LYNN

Oh, my god! I was worried about you. I hadn't heard from you and it's been an hour since you said you would be here.

MARK

I was mugged after I left my shift at Trader Joe's. I'll be fine. This man had followed me to my car and was screaming at me. I said that I didn't have any money or credit cards. He didn't believe me. I lashed out at him with my fists and started to run, but he was a young kid and caught up with me. When he punched me in the eye, I was startled. He grabbed my wallet and was gone.

LYNN

He could have murdered you! And no one was around to help you?

MARK

No, I parked almost a mile away. It's a deserted area of Hollywood near Gower.

LYNN

Let me put some ice on your eye. Is your hand, okay?

MARK

It's nothing, Lynn. Do you have something to drink? A beer?

LYNN

I have some leftover wine. Are you sure it's okay for you to be drinking so much?

MARK

What are you talking about? Don't you see I am in pain and need to relax?

LYNN

I know. I just hate to see you use alcohol as a crutch like your father.

MARK

I don't want to talk about him right now. I just need you to take care of me.

LYNN gives MARK a glass of wine.

MARK

Oh, god! I feel much better. Now I'm starving. What a beautiful table.

LYNN

You know, I've never been in a fight, Mark. I was always afraid to stand up for myself. And Dad never taught me how to physically fight off bullies. But Mark, there are smart ways to defend yourself without risking your life.

MARK

I had to learn fighting skills or I would have been beaten up at the foster home.

LYNN

This is different. This guy was threatening your life. Look, I was constantly getting punched in the stomach, but I became an expert at distracting tormentors with words, so it never turned into a fight.

MARK

That's not me. I wouldn't know how to do that.

LYNN

I don't know if that's something I could teach you, but I can try. You know I want to apologize for the way I acted when I took you to see Jack. I was out of line.

MARK

And I shouldn't have gotten mad at you either. It was just so much happening at once. You didn't shut me out. It means a lot to me, Lynn. I love having you as a brother. And I have learned so much from you.

MARK's left hand begins trembling, and he uses his right hand to steady his hand.

LYNN

Stop it. You're making me cry.

MARK

Lynn, I think my shaking is getting worse.

LYNN

Mark, when you were diagnosed with early Parkinson's disease, did you ever get a second opinion or follow up with any new drugs that might have been developed?

MARK

No, I've been really lax about that. This quest to find my father had been consuming me.

LYNN

You know, I could ask around for a doctor who specializes in that area. I would go with you if you like.

MARK

I would love for you to help me.

LYNN

And maybe the genetics from Jack could help, too. So, tell me what's going on with Jack.

MARK

We got together last weekend. I wanted to take him out to lunch at Brent's Deli. He was in a foul mood, and I thought it would cheer him up to get him away from the home.

LYNN

Brent's is famous for their corned beef sandwiches. He must have loved that.

MARK

It didn't go well. Very awkward with the oxygen. He kept pulling the nostril plugs out. Saying he didn't need them. But I could see how much trouble he had breathing without the oxygen.

LYNN

Yes. I can only take him in short doses.

MARK

And I really screwed up about wanting him to move into my condominium. It would never work. He was angry when I tried to explain why I couldn't do it.

LYNN

Are you getting to know him?

MARK

Not really. We talk about sports, but we don't have anything else in common. He hardly asks anything about me. I brought beer and between the two of us we knocked off a six pack.

LYNN

What about your mom?

MARK

He says he has no memories about the evening. It's all sordid. You haven't even told me what went on.

LYNN

Do you really want to know about your mom's life as a prostitute?

MARK

Lynn, I don't know what's wrong with me. I went to all this trouble to find him. I was idolizing what would happen. That he would be a loving father. But you know Jack. That isn't in him.

LYNN

Looking for a magic solution, Mark? It's still new. I never stood a chance with him, but at least you talk about baseball strikes, touchdowns, and dribbling. And you're straight. You could bring a girlfriend for Jack to meet. And you could give him grandchildren.

MARK

That would be a miracle. I can't get the hang of dating.

LYNN

I'm not giving you any pointers. I barely know how to hook up with men. And Mark, I'm concerned about your drinking; that you have that alcoholic gene that Jack has. I would like you to consider going to an AA meeting. I would go with you.

MARK

Let me think about it. I can't imagine admitting that I am an alcoholic but maybe it would be a good idea to go to a meeting. And if you were there, I think it would be okay.

SCENE 4

AVA and LYNN are sitting in LYNN's condominium.

AVA

You have such a nice place here and so big. You really live here alone?

LYNN

Yes, my lover, Gilbert, lived here with me, and it was just enough space for the two of us. Ava, I wanted to talk to you privately. It's about Jack and Mark. The relationships between the three of us have gotten so complicated. I thought since you had children maybe you could help me maneuver through this mess.

AVA

I may be the wrong person for this. I told you my son and daughter won't speak to me.

LYNN

Well, I thought with your experience at the home you may have a clue. Anyway, here is the shortened version of what happened. Mark showed up at this place, unannounced, and tells me he is my son because his mother was a prostitute that I visited when I was eighteen. It didn't make sense, but I insisted we take a DNA test to check out his claim. Turns out I wasn't his father, but his cells did match with Jack. The Beast had sex with the same prostitute the night before I did. He wanted to check her out. Don't laugh. So now I have a stepbrother with the same obnoxious father. You know I refer to him as The Beast because he is so abusive as a father. I feel bad for Mark. He has been searching for a father his whole life.

AVA

Wow! Jack finding out he is a father. Sounds like the plot of a soap opera. I don't see what the problem is.

LYNN

I can't stand to be with Jack, but I feel I owe it to Mark that we act like a family. But you see the way he treats me. How is he going to treat Mark?

AVA

You know one thing bothers me about all this testing. I want to be sure I understand something. So you had results saying you and Mark had no connection.

LYNN

Correct, no matching cells. I wasn't his father.

AVA

But if you were brothers, well half-brothers, shouldn't there have been a DNA match? If you had the same father but a different mother, there had to be some gene similarity, right?

LYNN

Yes, there should have been. You know with all this high drama, I hadn't thought of that.

AVA

I don't want to cause you any more grief. But if this is really true, then Jack may not be your father.

LYNN

What did you say?

AVA

Jack isn't your father.

LYNN

But that would mean that my mom had sex with someone else who fathered me; that it wasn't Jack.

AVA

It seems to me that you need to compare *your* saliva with Jack's to prove this.

LYNN

Oh, god! This is starting to make sense. I was born less than nine months after they married. Mom would have been pregnant at the altar. But why didn't she tell me. And The Beast never said anything. Despite his poor parenting skills and abuses, it seemed like he thought of me as his son.

AVA

Maybe because your mom died when you were eighteen, she never got a chance to tell you. It was a secret she took to the grave.

LYNN

But we were so close! Why did she keep it secret? And will Jack never tell me the truth? I always felt like an extraterrestrial around The Beast. What if I'm an orphan now? This would explain everything. And now that Mark shows up, Jack feels like he has a real flesh and blood son. I have nothing. Not even a sibling.

AVA hugs LYNN

AVA

Let's not jump ahead of ourselves. Wait until you get the DNA test back.

LYNN

I can't wrap my head around all of this. You don't know how I've been

feeling about being a father, a mentor, someone to leave a piece of me when I die. And when I got over that disappointment, I was going to be a big older brother to Mark.

AVA's cellphone rings. She looks alarmed, and then moves off and takes the call.

AVA

That was my daughter. She said my son, Larry, just got diagnosed with cancer and wants to see me. I need to book a flight. I know Jack is going to be pissed because he'll have to train someone else. But I'm sure I'll be back. He'll have to understand. Family is more important.

Lights fade.

SCENE 5

A week later at the nursing home. LYNN has a letter from the DNA Heritage Plus in his hand as he walks into JACK's room.

LYNN

So, who the fuck is my father?

JACK

I'm your father.

LYNN

No, I had our DNA evaluated, and we aren't related. It's in this letter. You are nothing to me.

JACK

What are you talking about, Lynn? I'm the one who brought you up. Paid for your schooling. You never needed to work. I even helped you buy your first car. I've been a good provider. You are talking crazy.

LYNN

But you aren't my birth father. You didn't give life to me. Mom must have told you that she was pregnant before you got married and that you weren't the father. How could you keep that a secret from me?

JACK

Of course, I'm your father. You're confusing me. Dolores was my wife, but your mother had secrets that she didn't want anyone to know.

LYNN

Stop it, Jack! Tell me the truth. For Christ's sake, just tell me what the secret was.

JACK rises from his chair and comes to LYNN.

JACK

You're right. I could never give birth to a homosexual. I'm glad you're not my son. Mark is a real man. He'll give me grandchildren.

LYNN

You're a hateful old man and a lying bastard.

JACK

Okay, Mr. Big Shit. You wanted to know about secrets?

LYNN

What are you talking about?

JACK

Your mother had a secret.

JACK begins wheezing until he gets more oxygen into his lungs. He coughs and it makes his eyes tear.

JACK

I told you how her parents wanted to pawn her off on me. She was beautiful to me despite being older. We hadn't

known each other very long but your mom kept telling me that she wanted to get married to get away from her parents. I was glad that we eloped and didn't have a big wedding.

LYNN

A shotgun wedding. She was pregnant with another man's child.

JACK

I swear I had no idea until you told me. You were born eight months after we got married, but she said you were just slightly premature. I was young and stupid. I didn't suspect.

LYNN

So, Mom wasn't even a virgin. I can't believe you.

JACK

I didn't care that your mother wasn't a virgin. I was inexperienced. The only woman I had ever had sex with was a whore my father took me to when I was eighteen. Just like when I took *you* to a prostitute. That was her big secret, that she had slept with someone before she met me. I felt sorry for your mother. I figured the rush was because she wanted to get away from her parents. She seemed so innocent and simple. Why would I think you weren't my son?

LYNN

Didn't you wonder that I didn't look anything like you?

JACK

So, you looked more like your mother. I didn't look at you and wonder if you were my kid.

LYNN

I just can't believe that she never told me or you.

JACK

I don't know why. I'm actually shocked. How do you think I feel?

LYNN

I don't care. And now I'll never know who my birth father was. I'm an orphan.

LYNN storms out.

SCENE 6

LYNN's condominium with MARK. A week later.

LYNN

I did another DNA check that has nothing to do with you, Mark.

MARK

Wow! You are getting addicted to DNA testing.

LYNN

I've been so obsessed with figuring out who your father was, I'd completely missed a piece of this convoluted puzzle.

MARK

I know there have been so many twists and turns. You being my father, you being my brother and Jack being my father.

LYNN

I realized that something was off. It didn't make sense that none of my cells matched yours if we both had the same father. How could that be? So, I thought, is it possible that Jack isn't *my* father? I couldn't believe it, but it sorta' made sense. To prove my

theory, I had Heritage Plus compare my cells with Jack's.

MARK

And, of course, they matched.

LYNN

No. Jack is not my father.

MARK

What?

LYNN

My mom must have had a lover before they got married. Jack says he was clueless.

MARK

Oh, god. I'm sorry, Lynn.

LYNN

I feel like shit! My life is a lie. My mom never told me. I keep rehashing why she would keep it a secret. And I can't believe anything Jack says.

MARK tries to hug LYNN, but LYNN pushes him away and cries. Then LYNN lets MARK console him.

LYNN

Mark, do you think there is any chance I could find my birth father?

MARK

You're looking at the expert. It can be a father-son-brother project.

LYNN

You don't have to call me father or brother. I don't want you to lie just to make me happy. I know there is no blood connection

MARK

But you're wrong, Lynn. I witness families being created all the time. Especially the guys on the swim team.

Today, the definition of family is fluid. I choose you to be my father.

LYNN

Are you trying to make me cry again?

MARK

Do you realize what you've done for me in the last six months? You gave me the ability to like myself. I found my birth father. Lynn, the unconditional love you've showered on me is priceless. I'm changed. In fact, I'm going back to school to finish college. I want to be a teacher.

LYNN

Mark, you know you've changed me too. After Gilbert died, I was soulless. When you arrived in the park, Lynn Van Winkle woke up. I had been given a purpose. Mark, I know your roommate moved out. What would you think about moving into my place? I have a second bedroom.

MARK

Would it ruin our relationship?

LYNN

Ha! I don't think anything could change us.

MARK

I would save a ton of money which I'll need now that I'm going back to school. What would Jack think?

LYNN

Don't worry about Jack.

MARK

I need to get over to Trader Joe's. My shift is starting soon, and I have an AA meeting tonight. Maybe you want to come with me?

LYNN

And one other big thing. It's something I've been thinking about for you, Mark. I want to adopt you.

MARK

You are full of surprises today. Amazing! I find my real father, and now a man who has no blood connection to me wants to adopt me.

LYNN

It's a big step, Mark. I've done the research, and since you are over eighteen, we don't need approval from Jack. I want to do this.

MARK

Can I think about it, Lynn? You've caught me off guard. Springing two major events at me.

LYNN

I think of you as my son and want to formalize it. I want you to have my inheritance, power of attorney and health directive.

MARK

I understand. I'm honored you want to do this. I still need time.

LYNN

Of course. Take as long as you like. I'm not going anywhere.

MARK

And I might have a girlfriend. One of the other checkers at Trader Joe's asked me out.

LYNN

So, Jack may get a grandchild after all if he doesn't kill himself with smoking and drinking.

Lights dim and when they come up it is a week later. MARK and LYNN are huddled together.

MARK

Lynn, I've thought about the adoption and moving in with you. The realization that we aren't related is hard for me to understand, but I've been looking for my father all my life and I thought I found him when I met Jack. But I realized I had already found my father . . . you, Lynn. And yes, I want to be able to call you 'my father'. I want to be your son. And what better way than to have you legally adopt me.

LYNN

I love you, my son, Mark.

As the light fades you hear a voice

Voice of A Judge: It says here that you, Lynn Pinchas, want to adopt Mark Lippman. Please tell me why I should grant this request?

LYNN

Your honor, Mark is my son, and I want to share this with the world.

MARK

Lynn is my father.

Voice of the Judge: Approved.

THE END