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The Man I Never Knew

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The Man I Never Knew

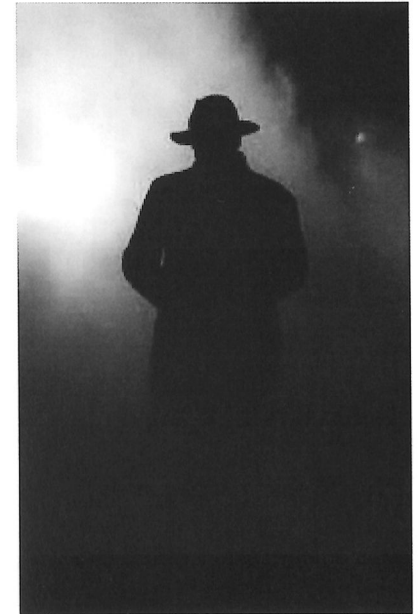
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By Brandy Sanders

After years of wondering and constant nagging of my mother, I set out in search of an unknown father. I searched for several months on the Internet with only a name I had been given years ago. I called dozens of numbers that bear his name and was getting nowhere. I hesitantly asked my mother one last time for some much needed information, a possible last known address. I then set pen to paper and sent the letter of a lifetime to a man I never knew.

A week passed by, and I had yet to hear anything in return. Did he get my letter? Did he even have a clue what I was asking? Was he the right person? Will my letter be “returned to sender” unopened? The questions that went through my mind of the unknown were driving me crazy. Then one night, while I was working the night shift at a motel, I got a message on *MySpace* from someone I had never heard of asking, “Are you the Brandy who sent a letter asking about her dad?” Tears immediately started to fall and I began to shake a little. I asked myself, “Is this really happening?” I replied that I was and asked who she was and how she knew. She was his daughter and had read my letter and began her own interrogation of her father. We spent countless nights chatting. Turns out we both worked the night shift and had a lot of time on our hands. Soon it was like we had known each other our whole lives.

A few more weeks passed by, and I finally received a reply from this man that remained unknown to me. He said he had lost several years of his memory and that he had no recollection of my mother. I would later find out from my sister that his memory loss was due to severe



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drug use. My letter had caused a fight with him and his daughter, and he asked me to please not contact him again. Those words, *please do not contact me again*, would haunt me for quite some time and broke a little piece of my heart. I chatted with my sister a few nights later and told her about the letter. It was true that she and her father were not talking because he refused to acknowledge me. He wanted her to have no contact with me, and when she refused he would no longer talk to her. We were sisters in our hearts and minds even though we had no legal proof.

Several years passed, and we continued our computer chats and constant phone calls. Her father would hang himself just a short time later. I would not attend the funeral because that was not how I wanted to meet my sister for the first time. We would meet several years later and only twice to this day although we live fairly close to visit each other. I don't know what stands in the way; life I guess. I don't think we will ever get that legal proof, but we don't really need it; we know we are sisters.

It would take several years to share my findings with my mother and tell her the whole story, as my heart would not forgive the years of not knowing a father. When I found out all the details that led to his life and the troubling childhood that would be my sister's, I knew God had me right where I needed to be. I just wished my sister had been with me. Looking back I think I'm glad I didn't meet the man I never knew. I was in search of a father, but found a sister.