

Prologue

I never thought I would find Teal's father almost forty years after I last heard from him. Jimmy is such a common name that I didn't even try searching on the internet until the last remaining volume of my journal fell out of a box of tax receipts. I had written in the journal that he had married Paula. That turned out to be just enough information to find him as an associate with a full page on the Howard University website that had his photograph and enough other information for me to find a phone number as well. I was trembling when I left the message, "You will remember me as Sarah Gordon. I have some exciting news to tell you."

He returned the call the next day, but he needed his teen-aged son to help him with the call. He had had a stroke that affected the speech center of his brain. His speech wasn't at all slurred, but it was difficult for him to put the words together especially over the phone. He remembered me, of course, and he seemed happy to hear I had found our daughter. Paula came on the line to explain that he might understand it all better if I wrote him a letter. That was going to make it easier for me as well; I was shaky, trying to say the right things, since I didn't want to

MOTHERLESS CHILD

lose this contact. Teal wanted to meet her father.

It had been only three months since I had met our daughter, the child I gave up for adoption so long ago. I had tried many years to find her, and even signed up with the Adoption Registry, but until she decided to look for her birth mother, they would not give out the contact information. The idea of looking for her birth parents never crossed her mind until she became a mother herself. And now she wanted to know why I gave her up.

I called Teal to tell her that I had found her father. She seemed relieved that another piece of the puzzle was completed, and happy to know there was more family for her to meet. She had already developed a strong connection with my son Joshua through regular phone calls, and she hoped to have that same connection with Jimmy's daughters. I wrote to Jimmy, and sent photos to Paula and their daughters by email. The following month she met all of her long-lost family on both sides, giving her the brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts as she had never had and always wished for.

The experience of finding Teal has been such a blessing, but also caused me to replay that time through my memory. I hardly remember the girl I was back then, and it's difficult to sort out all the thought processes and reasons I gave myself. When I looked back over my life, I often wondered if I should

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regret giving a child away. How could I regret, when I didn't know how the story ended? I knew that at the time, I could not have provided for Teal what two loving parents could give her. Now that I know they gave her more than I ever could have, I know it was the right decision for that time, and I have no regrets.