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Memory Believes

by Miriam Silver

It was my idea, to meet over a drink first. After all, we hadn't seen each other for a very long time. Although we had not fallen out, distance, jobs and marriage had made it very difficult to have a family get together.

Personally I had no wish to go to what had been our family home. I'd made little effort to go there while they were both alive.

They, Rufus and Lorna were there, I'd have recognised them anywhere. My younger brother looked slightly unkempt, which was an appearance he'd always cultivated and my baby sister looked quite matronly.

"Don't know why I'm here really, nothing in it for me?"

"Come on now Lorna dear, think positive...I'm hoping...even a few thousand might help," Rufus said

We stayed, had a sandwich, reluctant to move, mulled over old times, each having different memories.

"I know he was my Dad, I look like him," Rufus insisted, "he was always there for me, through thick and thin."

"Bit late aren't you, you always gave him real grief," Lorna smiled as she remembered, "I know he'll have remembered his only girl."

I kept quiet, not at all sure where I belonged with this family, I only knew as the eldest I was presently responsible. They'd supported me through law school and proceeded to explain my feelings.

"I feel guilty, never saw them, well at least let's get on with it, just try and remember the good things."

“You always were a goodie good Marcus,” Lorna observed, “don’t pretend, you must hope for a bit too.”

“Must have left something, never spent much,” Rufus pointed out.

“Rufus, I’d hoped you’d left your nasty streak at home,” Lorna added.

“Oh! Come on, we’re not children, don’t let’s blame ourselves, we’ve had lockdown to contend with,” I said, trying to excuse our neglect, “we couldn’t have visited, well, travelling was virtually impossible.”

Their joint funerals had been an anonymous affair where the only others present were strangers to me. Distancing, rules and masks prevented me from making contact and also of course there was nothing afterwards where we could have met and chatted.

“Come on let’s get going,” I encouraged then we made our way to the house which was within walking distance.

Without anyone speaking, we went into the cold space which had once, been home to us. Surprisingly Lorna went straight to the kitchen saying she’d make a cup of something.

Rufus started at the desk while I emptied all the drawers, sifting, sorting, old receipts from direct debits. The idea being we would tip it onto the dining room table and we could all be involved in trying to find some evidence of our origins.

Their solicitors had told me there was a will, maybe some shares, but other than this house there was nothing to realise in terms of inheritance and that it stated clearly this was to be shared equally and named us three.

“There’s no evidence here that we were ever formally adopted,” I announced in my best legal manner.

“Where does that leave us then?” Rufus asked.

“Up to Marcus, he’s the legal bod of the family.”

She was right of course, although they were the only parents we had known, they had never shared their family memories with us, on reflection we’d never asked about aunts or grandparents.

It was all here, envelopes labelled, ready for us, our mother’s early life. The brief affair, a baby, disgrace for her family resulting in adoption, all pushed under the carpet, forgotten never mentioned again.

After marrying our father, and not producing any children, perhaps as compensation, or to assuage her conscience, she fostered us and we became her family.

“Now we have a problem, the baby is older than us and in a position to inherit,” I threw out, without mentioning those two who were at the funeral.

And then the front door bell sounded.

