

The Root of It All

by
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Marcel	glamorous, successful	40s	M
Dawn	recovering drug addict	50s	F
Oliver	confident, charming	31	M
Nathan	straightforward	31	M

AT RISE:

SCENE ONE

Marcel stands at the front of the stage, behind him a panel separates Oliver and Nathan from Dawn. They all sit on stools.

MARCEL

Welcome back. Before the break we said goodbye to Adrian. So, we're down to just two and Dawn has one question left with which to decide which of these lovely lads she thinks is the son she gave up for adoption all those years ago! Now Dawn, before we come to your last question, tell us a bit about what you were going through all those years ago that led to you giving up your son.

DAWN

They were dark days, Marcel. I got with a bad crowd when I was a teenager and I had a drug habit. I was in a bad relationship as well. It was all part and parcel really.

MARCEL

Oh dear, did you have anyone to help you?

DAWN

My family had given up on me. I don't blame them, they did their best, but I had younger sisters they had to think about.

MARCEL

Did you feel you had no control, love?

DAWN

I'm not making excuses, it was my own decisions got me where I was. In the beginning at least. But it was my bloke - the baby's father - who controlled me. I couldn't see a way out of it.

MARCEL

Then what happened?

DAWN

Then I found out I was pregnant. Well, that saw the back of the baby's father, but I was pleased. I thought it meant I'd get some help. But the social workers had different ideas. He was taken away from me.

MARCEL

Did they leave you any keepsakes?

Dawn sniffs, nods and takes a couple of items out of her pocket.

DAWN

I have this photo of him just after he was born and the bracelet from the hospital.

MARCEL

Awww.

DAWN

And I have this.

She pulls up her sleeve to show Marcel her tattoo.

DAWN

This is the name I would have given him. If anyone asks, I say “that’s my son.”

MARCEL

Adolf. That’s a name that’s fallen out of fashion.

DAWN

Yeah, but a lot of those old-fashioned names are coming back in now.

MARCEL

So, Dawn, how is your life these days? Your son is thirty-one and he’s sitting on the other side of this panel. What changed between then and now?

DAWN

Well, I’m off the drugs.

MARCEL

Oh, well done love.

Marcel, Oliver and Nathan applaud.

DAWN

I've got a job. I've got a little dog, Dusty. I've got a flat - private, not council. It's not been a bed of roses, Marcel, I won't pretend it has, but I've done it and now it's time to put things right.

MARCEL

And when you filled in the application form, what were you hoping for?

DAWN

Well, I hope for a relationship with my son, isn't that what this is all about? I know he might find it hard to forgive me, but I'd really like to try.

Marcel goes to the other side of the panel.

MARCEL

Boys, all we know is you were both adopted as babies and one of you is Dawn's son. How do you feel?

OLIVER

Curious. If it is me.

MARCEL

How has it been, growing up as an adoptee?

OLIVER

I don't think it's ever really been an issue for me. I mean, I never would have known if I'd never been told and would I have been any the worse off? Probably not. As far as I'm concerned my parents are my parents. I'd like to meet her, but I only really applied because my girlfriend wanted me to.

MARCEL

She thinks it's important?

OLIVER

She wants to get her hands on the prizes. Specifically the car and the holiday.

MARCEL

And you, Nathan?

NATHAN

Similar. I have a family and I'm happy with my life, but I've always wondered, what is she like? And if she's like me.

MARCEL

Are you a bit of an odd one out?

NATHAN

I don't think so, but I do wonder, how did I get my interest in space and science fiction?
From where is my passion for creepy crawlies?

As he mentions creepy crawlies, Dawn looks at the audience and pulls a face.

NATHAN

I'd like to say, this is who I am; this is why I am like this.

MARCEL

So you'd like her to be part of your life?

NATHAN

Yes, I'd say so. To be honest, I didn't take any action until my son was born, but yeah, I'd like her to see my son grow up.

MARCEL

And what about the prizes?

NATHAN

Umm... prizes are nice.

MARCEL

So, this is it. One last chance to really get to know the boys. We know what they'd be if they were a fruit. And Dawn's asked them about their favourite Lynyrd Skynyrd song - and yes, Nathan - it's a band, not a person!

Dawn shakes her head in disgust.

MARCEL

So, Dawn, here we are. Go ahead and ask your final question.

DAWN

Weekends are a very important part of family life. What would you plan for a perfect family weekend with me?

MARCEL

Oliver, would you like to go first?

OLIVER

Well, I'm in the process of buying a house in the South of France to renovate as a holiday home. So, if you can wait a few more weeks, you could bring your overalls and a paintbrush and come and help us at Le Chateau. It won't be all work, work work, in the evenings we plan to try all the local hostelrys.

MARCEL

So, Nathan, where would you whisk Dawn off to for a lovely family weekend?

NATHAN

Well, I'd take her back home to Derby. She can meet the gang, take the baby to the park and relax in the evening with a barbecue and some of our home brew. She could bring her dog, the baby would love it.

MARCEL

Aww. Dawn, you've asked all your questions and now the hour is very nearly upon us. But before you tell us whether you think your son is Oliver, the stock broker from Chelsea, or Nathan, the call centre manager from Derby, let's have one last look at what's at stake. Here are all the fabulous prizes you could win if you guess the right one!

Dawn and Marcel gaze, entranced, at a screen above them.

VOICEOVER/ MARCEL

Dawn, you could be jetting off on a luxury holiday for six in the Caribbean. You could be driving away in a Toyota Land Cruiser. You could be watching family films on a Panasonic surround sound, 3D ready TV. You could be on a family trip to Thorpe Park, staying in their famous Shark Hotel. Or you could chose between cooking up a storm in a halogen oven, or polishing up those pearly whites with a precision-clean electric toothbrush.

DAWN

No pressure then!

MARCEL

None at all. Dawn, are you ready? Yes? Dawn, which of these boys do you think could have been little Adolf?

DAWN

Marcel, I'm going to say... Oliver!

Pause.

MARCEL

Oh, Dawn. It's the wrong answer. Oh, I'm sorry. All those lovely prizes. But no-one leaves empty-handed, you'll still get one of our It's A Boy! blue teddy bears.

He is handed a blue teddy bear which he presents to an unsmiling Dawn.

MARCEL

Would you like to meet Oliver anyway?

Holding back tears, Dawn nods.

MARCEL

Oliver, come on round!

DAWN

Oh, he's gorgeous.

Dawn and Oliver hug briefly and Oliver leaves.

DAWN

Are you sure it's not him? I think he has my eyes.

MARCEL

Yet not your DNA. So, Dawn, you won't be going on to play for the prizes, I'm sorry, love, but would you like to meet your real son?

Nathan stands up, excited.

DAWN

Go on then.

Dawn and Nathan step round the panel. Nathan moves as if to hug her, but Dawn jerks away. Silence. They stare at each other.

MARCEL

What's the matter, love? Is it all a bit emotional?

DAWN

It's... he's... the father was really fit.

NATHAN

I'm sorry, is this a bit of a disappointment?

MARCEL

Oh, she didn't say that. That's not what you mean, is it, Dawn, love?

DAWN

No, I didn't say that.

NATHAN

Would you say meeting me is more, or less of a disappointment than not winning the prizes?

DAWN

Ahhh...

MARCEL

Let's just take a step back, I think we might have...

NATHAN

(Overlapping). Shall we have another look at what you could have won. Shall we?

Dawn and Marcel glance, confused, at the screen above them, as Nathan takes a pocket book from his back pocket. He flashes pages of it at her as he speaks.

NATHAN

You could have won a meeting with my ten month old son. You could've met my wife, my sister, my cousins, my parents. You could have been at birthday parties, weddings, christenings, seaside outing, Sunday lunches. You could have come to school plays. You could even have won a scrapbook my mum kept for me, just in case I ever wanted to meet you. But that was obviously not what you wanted.

As he speaks, Nathan throws the scrapbook down in front of Dawn.

She stares at Nathan, but glances surreptitiously at the scrapbook from time to time. When he finishes speaking Nathan looks Dawn in the eye for a moment, then leaves. As Marcel steps forward Dawn picks the scrapbook up and leafs through it.

MARCEL

Hmmm... mothers and sons. They can be volatile. Join us after the break when we reunite a father with his long lost daughter. Don't go away!

Music plays. Marcel notices Dawn still on stage and shoos her away as the lights come down.