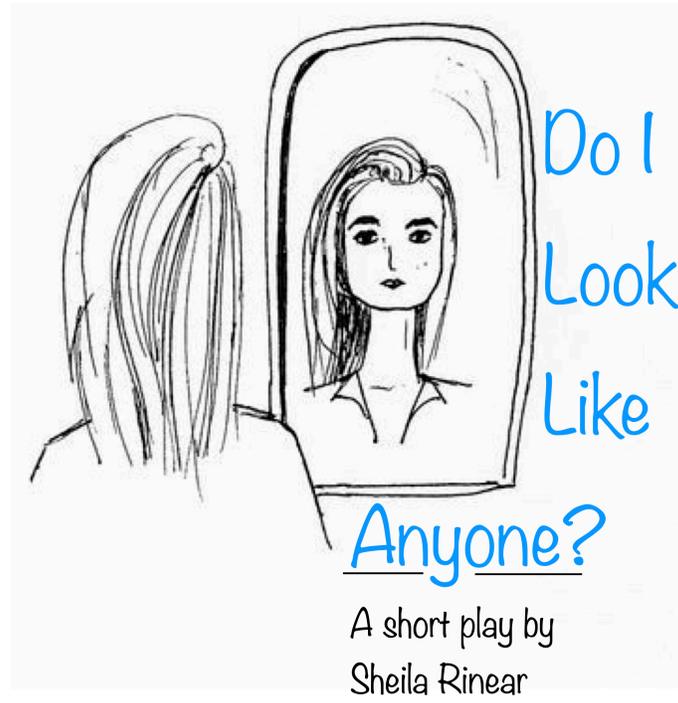


PERUSAL SCRIPT



A One Act Docudrama
by
Sheila Rinear



Newport, Maine

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DO I LOOK LIKE ANYONE?

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Rose de Witt/Sharon McNamara — Daughter

Constance McNamara — Mother

SETTING: 2436 Pine Road, Bethlehem, PA

TIME: The Present

NOTE:

This is a docudrama. Therefore the style is that of being interviewed, speaking out to the audience as if to a camera.

DO I LOOK LIKE ANYONE? A short play by Sheila Rinear. 2W. 20 minutes. Meeting your Birth Mother? Important, but not the most important moment in your life. Getting to see the long-lost child you had to give up, for whatever reason? Important, but... How can these moments compare to the moment when you realize that the parents who have lavished their love and concern over you are not your real mother and father? That is the moment of sunning silence for the child. And for the Birth Mother? The moment when you wish you had not given up your child. What comes between these two moments? Lives lived through wishing/remembering; by hopes and regret; by longing to see... These are the moments that fill this short mono-play. How does it end? That is up to you, because we never see them meet, but we will each bring our own perspective to the events portrayed and their probable, for us, outcome. This is strong, vital theatre that leaves us with necessary questions. For through this play we will have examined our lives a little; relived our dreams, hopes, demons; visited the memories of our own families. This docu-drama is perfect for live or online presentation. Easy to stage, or capture as an online event. **Order#3188**

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Sheila Rinear is a San Antonio-based, award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and teacher. Her work has been commissioned, developed and produced throughout the United States but especially in Texas where The Playhouse San Antonio, The Classic Theatre, and The Overtime Theatre are her artistic homes. Commissioned six times in the past 8 years by the City of San Antonio to produce performance pieces for Luminaria, Rinear has also taught theatre for many years in NEISD San Antonio and Playwriting at Trinity University, as well as serving The Dramatists Guild as Regional Rep for Austin-San Antonio. For more, see: www.sheilarinear.com

PRE-PUBLICATION PRODUCTION HISTORY

- Commissioned and Produced by **Luminaria**, San Antonio's International Contemporary Arts Festival – 2015
- **The Overtime Theatre** – Artist Spotlight [one of 5 of Sheila's works in the week-long run] – 2016.

Do I Look Like Anyone?

Lights up on a stage holding only a bench at SR; and a chair at SL.

The bench represents a bus stop bench across the street from Connie's house.

The chair is inside Connie's living room behind the front door of her house. Her house faces the bus stop.

The audience cannot see the front door, only Rose and Connie can.

ROSE sits on the bench.

She looks at CS, then at a piece of paper in her hand.

She looks at CS again, then back to the paper.

She folds the paper/letter on its existing creases and replaces it in an envelope. She then places the envelope into her purse.

Rose speaks to the audience.

ROSE: This is it? This is it?

(beat)

I've had thousands of fantasies about this very moment.

(beat)

For the past twenty-eight years I have been trying to track down the place where I came from. Twenty-eight years. Almost 3 decades searching for the woman who gave me life. And now, here I am at my... moment of truth.

(beat)

Supposedly I spent the first 6 weeks of my life in that tiny row home. The home of my birth mother. She still lives there. She still lives there.

Light goes down on Rose and comes up on Connie at SL.

Connie stands behind the chair, gazing at CS. Now she squints, looking hard through a curtained window that only she sees.

Connie speaks to the audience.

CONNIE: You know, I wish they hadn't put that bench over there at the bus stop. All sorts of people...you know...people who come knocking at your door to sell you a tree pruning service, roof repair, or their brand of God, for heaven's sake...

(looks hard again)

They come, and sit there, take a break, eat lunch. Then when they've got their act together, they cross the street, knock next door where poor Mrs. Sloan...who is deaf as a post...never answers and then...ta-da! They come knock on my door.

(beat)

I wonder what that woman's going to try selling me. Something she'll say I can't live without.

(looks hard)

She's better dressed than most of them.

(looks)

I know the economy is bad but would Avon have gone back to door to door sales?

(looks)

She looks familiar. My gosh if she doesn't look like...

Lights go down on Connie and come up on Rose.

ROSE: When I was 22, my mother died of cancer. She held out long enough to see me graduate from college, bless her. They...my mom and dad...worked so hard to help me achieve...

(grins and shakes her head)

...their dream. Ah yes, I became a teacher. An English teacher. Mom and Dad were awfully proud of me. But you know what? We lived so close to New York City, up in North Jersey. All I ever dreamed of, as a teen, was moving to the city to become a poet.

(snaps her fingers)

The "beat" generation spoke to me.

(beat)

Just before she died, Mother said there was something I needed to know. Something she'd been afraid to tell me all my life. That when I was 6 weeks old, she and my Dad, had adopted me.

(beat)

She revealed this to me so I wouldn't worry about having a genetic predisposition to the kind of cancer killing her. Good to know, Mother.

(mournful laugh)

What? Was she trying to take me with her? I could have gone my whole life without that information. But...she loved me. She wanted to be the one to tell me.

Lights go down on Rose and come up on Connie.

CONNIE: *(looking at Rose)* I can't get over how much she looks like...good grief, my mother's been dead for 10 years.

(sits)

I used to look at babies all the time. Really hard. I mean, really inspecting them wherever or whenever I saw them. I always believed there was a chance I'd run into her one day, my baby. Then as time marched on, I watched toddlers, then teens. I was sure I'd know her the minute I saw her. That I'd recognize her. See a resemblance to myself, maybe. My little Sharon. I named her for the Rose of Sharon. Poetic? I thought so.

(thinks about that)

No, I've never moved away from Bethlehem, PA these 50 years.

(nods)

Always thought I'd best be here if she ever...

Lights go down on Connie and come up on Rose.

ROSE: I felt as though I was out of breath the minute I was told that I had been adopted. I still do.

(beat)

In my parents' generation and mine, that was a secret you guarded with your life.

(whispers, imitating her adoptive mom)

"I never wanted you to have to know, but..."

(beat)

She didn't want me to know so I wouldn't have to wonder why someone who'd carried me for 9 months in her body would give me away. She didn't want me to feel the hurt and pain that might come with those thoughts.

(beat)

Yes, that's exactly why people back then never told us...the adopted ones. It was kind...the premise, but dear God...they had to have known we'd find out sooner or later. And when you find out, you are left with so many questions and agonizing fears.

(beat)

As soon as my Mother died, I went to the records offices in New Jersey to find my birth mother. But they told me that the adoption records are sealed. The only way to unseal them is with a court order. To get a court order, the birth mother has to file a document stating she agrees to release the information. Did anyone tell my mother that? I asked the clerk, "Would you please contact her and tell her that?"

(beat)

She could have died before I got here.

Lights fade on Rose and come up on Connie.

CONNIE: I've often wondered what she'd think of this...of my house. It's nothing real special to look at, but I'm comfortable here. Thirty-five years as a receptionist at Bethlehem Steel. I have paid my mortgage off. Got some nice, decent furniture...these beautiful bookcases. My friends in the secretarial pool used to kid me about my immaculate housekeeping. "Connie, you keep this place so spic 'n span. Who you expecting a visit from? The Queen of Sheba?" I laughed with them but I never, ever told them about Sharon.

(looks around at her clean house)

Always ready just in case.

(beat)

You know I wasn't allowed to try to find her. I signed an agreement at Mother Elizabeth Seton Home for Unwed Mothers promising I'd never go looking for my baby. And dear Sister Helene kept me to it. "You do not want to complicate her life that way, Constance." Oh, Sister Helene, I trusted you too much. Of course she was right. But how could a nun ever understand a mother's need to know that someone was caring for her child in a kind and loving way?

Lights fade on Connie and come up on Rose.

ROSE: When my father...oh now there was a sweet man...discovered what I was doing, he told me...and I'll never forget how he looked so sad to have to even deal with this issue...he told me that I hadn't been born in New Jersey.

(imitating her Dad)

"Oh no, Rosie. You were born in Pennsylvania." Well wasn't that just a treat to find out I came from a state that all New Jersey residents make fun of. As much as Pennsylvanians do of New Jersey.

(shrugs)

Well, everyone makes fun of New Jersey. Imagine the identity crisis inherent in that border state rivalry! Long story short: Pennsylvania records are sealed too.

(paces)

Is it too much to want to know what she's like? My birth mother? Are we at all alike? And who was my father? What is he like? Am I like anyone else? Or am I just an odd nut as I'd heard my mother and father say one time when I was really upset and couldn't get over losing a tennis match.

(paces again)

I'd get really stressed over lots of things, actually. Still do, once in a while. I mean to tell you: real emotional. Sometimes during a tantrum my Mom would ask me, "Where are you, Rosie? Where is your sweet spirit roaming now?" In retrospect I think I was roaming the recesses of my soul trying to connect with someone who'd tell me they understood. That it was okay to feel how I felt.

(beat)

I so admired the calmness and kindness of my mother who raised me. The way she could always soothe my too frequently erupting temper tantrums or tears. Yes, you know...I used to wonder what family member, in the calm, ordered, simple life we led, what family member I was like.

4 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT