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I was wondering who this unknown and unimpressive man that was in front of me. He looked quite nervous. It was the look of a child hoping they pleased their parents. But he was one of my parents.

When I returned to our small, plain little apartment after school that day, I was not expecting to see a balding, Italian toad sitting on the couch in the living room. In my spot. He stood quickly.

As quick as he'd stood, my mom introduced me to him. Timothy. Or Tim, as his friends called him. Or Dad, as I was supposed to call him.

"Hi," I stammered. How is a seven-year-old supposed to act in that situation? 'Oh, you're Tim? It's an absolute pleasure to meet you. I've heard so much about you!'

I quickly went to my room. I was a shy kid, and this was not helping. Neither was my obligation to "[love] him, even though I barely knew who he was."

I stayed there for what felt like an eternity. I wish it had been.

This newly-found parent of mine had been in prison for the first seven years of my life. I realized I had met him before. I just didn't recognize him outside of his beige jumpsuit. Before his faded beige jumpsuit, he had worn Italian wool suits. He had been a lawyer in his past life. Ironically, fraud was the vice that imprisoned him. Still, he looked like a tall Danny DeVito.

Another seven years later, after I had finally adapted to living with two parents, my mom and my dad started arguing. Correction: they had been arguing. For about 14 years. But they had recently become much more vocal about it.

During one of their battles they were in such a frenzy, their voices shook the neighborhood. It was seemingly abrupt. I had come



upstairs to see what was going on. All I saw was my loving mother, who has been my caretaker for all my life, being berated by that same unimpressive stranger. Yet this time I was the nervous one.

Three long years later, I was home alone. I glanced out the window when I heard tires roll onto the rocky pavement. It was my dad. He was quickly pulled out of our blue Nissan by policemen, who I hadn't noticed sitting at the end of our driveway.

Once he was in the back of the squad car, I was invited to say goodbye to him after I heard his charges. Fraud. When I saw his face lit in the moonlight, I saw that pathetic stranger for the third time. Except I had regained my confidence. This time, I gave him a deserved disappointed look. People never change, if they aren't willing to learn.

