DNA

A Ten Minute Play
By, Dana Hammer
CAST OF CHARACTERS

Seymour - a man in his forties
Lavina - a woman in her forties
Samira - their daughter
AT RISE:

LAVINA, a woman in her forties, sits at a table, messing around on her phone.

SEYMOUR, her husband, also in his forties, enters. He is excited, holding two envelopes.

SEYMOUR
Lavina! Guess what came today?

LAVINA
What?

SEYMOUR
Our DNA tests!

Lavina puts down her phone and reaches eagerly for her envelope.

LAVINA
Did you read yours yet?

SEYMOUR
No, of course not! I thought it would be more fun to do together.

LAVINA
Aw, you're the sweetest, honey.

SEYMOUR
You're the sweetest.

LAVINA
No, YOU'RE the sweetest.

They playfully push each other, then make out.

LAVINA
Ok, I really do wanna open this.

SEYMOUR
Me too.

LAVINA
I mean, I know this is cool for both of us, but being adopted, this is cooler for me. It just is.

SEYMOUR
I know it is.
LAVINA
I mean, you already pretty much know what yours is gonna say. But I have no idea. Like, I could be a direct descendant of...I don't know. Anyone! I could be royalty!

SEYMOUR
Ok, let's just open them and find out.

They open their envelopes and look over the contents eagerly.

LAVINA
Seymour! I'm Chinese!

Really?

SEYMOUR
I am, look!

Seymour looks at her results.

SEYMOUR
Ok, you're like point zero two percent Chinese. That's hardly anything. See? I am too.

He shows her his results.

LAVINA
Oh? That's weird.

SEYMOUR
Not really. It's probably because of Genghis Kahn.

LAVINA
What?

SEYMOUR
Genghis Kahn. Everyone is related to him.

LAVINA
That doesn't sound right, but ok.

SEYMOUR
Hey, it says here we can connect with our family members on the website.

LAVINA
Wait, what? You mean...if I go on this website, I can find people who are related to me? By blood?

SEYMOUR
Yep.
LAVINA
I didn't...I didn't know you could do that.

SEYMOUR
Yep, you can. Anyone who has had their DNA tested by this company will show up on there. So anyone you're related to will be able to find you. And vice versa.

LAVINA
I don't...I don't know if I'm ready for that. Seymour...what if my mom is on there? Or my dad? I mean, I wanted to know my heritage, but...meeting actual people is a whole different thing.

SEYMOUR
Well, hey. We don't have to do this if you don't want to.

LAVINA
No. No, I think I should. I mean, how bad can it be, right? And it's not like I have to meet these people in person.

SEYMOUR
That's absolutely right.

LAVINA
Unless I want to meet them in person.

SEYMOUR
Right.

LAVINA
But what if I do meet them in person, and I hate them? Or they hate me?

SEYMOUR
Ok, I think maybe we shouldn't do the website thing. It's clearly freaking you out.

LAVINA
No! We're doing it. This is just me processing.

Are you sure?

SEYMOUR

Positive.

SEYMOUR
Ok. Let's do this.

They type into their phones. A few moments pass while they look over the info.
Seymour’s face changes. At first, it’s confused. Then it’s horrified.
He snatches away Lavina’s phone.

LAVINA
Hey! What are you doing?

SEYMOUR
Nothing.

LAVINA
Give me my phone back.

SEYMOUR
It’s not safe.

LAVINA
What do you mean it’s not safe?

SEYMOUR
Phones. They explode. Yours had smoke coming out of it.

LAVINA
What? No it didn’t.

SEYMOUR
You phone was smoking.

LAVINA
No it wasn’t!

SEYMOUR
Yes it was. It’s dangerous and you can’t touch it.

LAVINA
Give me the phone!

Seymour throws the phone onto the ground and smashes it.
Lavina stares at him in shock.

LAVINA
What the hell has gotten into you?

SEYMOUR
Nothing. I’m fine. Everything is fine and we are fine and everything is totally fine.
Seymour is trying not to hyperventilate. He stands and paces.
LAVINA
Ok, Seymour, you're freaking me out. What is happening?

SEYMOUR
Ok. I don't think I can keep this from you. I mean, morally.

LAVINA
Keep what from me?

SEYMOUR
I mean. Ok, let's say there was some information that I had. And this information might upset you.

LAVINA
This isn't a hypothetical Seymour. You obviously have information and you don't want me to hear it. Was it something in the DNA report? Do you have some kind of predisposition to some terrible disease or something?

SEYMOUR
No.

LAVINA
Well then what is it?

SEYMOUR
The thing is. If you know this information, you can't unknow it. You'll know it forever. And it might...it will be bad.

LAVINA
Ok, at this point, whatever it is can't possibly be as bad as what I'm imagining.

SEYMOUR
Well, it might be.

LAVINA
Tell me.

SEYMOUR
Are you sure?

LAVINA
TELL ME RIGHT NOW!

SEYMOUR
Seymour hands Lavina his phone with a shaking hand.

LAVINA
Look.

Seymour hands Lavina his phone with a shaking hand.

LAVINA
Seymour hands Lavina his phone with a shaking hand.

LAVINA
Lavina looks. Her face is confused. Then horrified.
She throws the phone.

LAVINA

Oh my god.

SEYMOUR

I know.

LAVINA

Oh my god oh my god oh my god.

SEYMOUR

Ok. I know. But let's just talk about it.

LAVINA

Talk about it? This says you're my...my...

SEYMOUR

Yeah, I know what it says. But you know, these things make mistakes all the time I'm sure.

LAVINA

Seymour...it says you're my brother.

SEYMOUR

Well...half brother, but yes. That is what it says.

Oh my god.

SEYMOUR

I know. But here's what I'm thinking. Our samples must have gotten mixed up. Like in the lab. They mixed some of my saliva with yours, and voila! The system thinks we're siblings.

LAVINA

But Seymour...I'm adopted. What if-

SEYMOUR

Don't even think it! No! My mom would have told me if she'd had another baby. Also! We're only four months apart in age.

LAVINA

(Desperately) That's right! We're only four months apart in age!

SEYMOUR

So it must be a mistake.

LAVINA
It must be! Except...
SEYMOUR
What?

LAVINA
I mean, your dad. Your dad could have...you know.

SEYMOUR
My dad would never cheat on my mom.

LAVINA
I know. Of course not. It's just...what if he did?

SEYMOUR
He wouldn't do that!

LAVINA
I know. He would never. But...what if he did?

SEYMOUR
Oh my god, what if he did?

LAVINA
He wouldn't though.

SEYMOUR
No, he wouldn't.

Lavina and Seymour sit in stunned silence for a few moments.

LAVINA
You know. We both have autoimmune disease.

SEYMOUR
What?

LAVINA
I have rheumatoid arthritis. And you have psoriasis.

SEYMOUR
Those are two completely different things.

LAVINA
But they're both autoimmune. We could have a genetic-

SEYMOUR
NO. They're completely different.

A few beats.

Seymour buries his face in his hands abruptly. He moans.
What?

Samira.

Oh god, Samira.

What about Samira?

What are we gonna tell her?

We're not. We're not gonna tell her.

She gets home from soccer in (looks at the clock) five minutes. We need to get it together by then.

We can do that. Let's practice.

Practice?

Practice acting normal.

How?

Just act how we always do.

Ok.

Beat.

So, how was your TV show you were watching earlier?

That's not normal! You would never ask me that, like that. You sound like an alien or something.

No I don't.
SEYMOUR
Ok, let's try not talking. We don't have to talk at all.
Let's just...be calm and quiet.

LAVINA
Ok.

A few moments while they stare straight ahead, shell-shocked.

SEYMOUR
Samira...she's ok, right?

LAVINA
Of course she's ok, what kind of question is that?

SEYMOUR
I mean, remember in third grade when she was having trouble with math? What if it's because...what if it's because of...

Seymour gestures between Lavina and himself.

LAVINA
What are you saying?

SEYMOUR
WHAT IF SHE'S BAD AT MATH BECAUSE SHE'S INBRED?!

Lavina gasps.

LAVINA
How dare you say something like that about your own daughter?

SEYMOUR
I'm sorry, but I don't know how to deal with this.
Our daughter...sweet Samira...

Lavina stands and goes to Seymour.
She sits on his lap and throws her arms around him.
She brings his face up to meet hers.
She moves to kiss him.
She stops.
They look at each other with horror.

SEYMOUR
We can't...

LAVINA
I don't think...
SEYMOUR
This is gross now, isn't it?

LAVINA
It's so gross!

She jumps off his lap and resumes her seat.

At that moment, SAMIRA enters. She is a teenaged girl, dressed in soccer clothes.

SAMIRA
Hey guys. What's up?

Seymour and Lavina both look at their daughter.

They look at each other.

They look back at their daughter.

SAMIRA
Um, is everything ok?

LAVINA
Yeah. Hey, did you know that most people are related to Genghis Kahn?

SAMIRA
Um, no? Ok, you guys are clearly in the middle of something. I'll just head up to my room and let you...do whatever it is you're doing.

Samira exits.

Lavina and Seymour exhale simultaneously.

Seymour reaches across the table and takes Lavina's hand.

She looks at him across the table. Their eye contact is desperate, sad, and longing, all at the same time.

BLACKOUT.