

## HERE'S A QUICK GLANCE . . .

This book, *My Father's Daughter*, will force every father to rethink their engagement with their daughter and inspire discussions that otherwise would not happen.

The gripping portrayal of a young girl longing for the presence of her father will leave readers breathless. The father is a savvy New York politician and former college professor who mysteriously disappears after returning from the Armed Services to pursue a new life. The story summarizes the unmatched power, intrigue and influence that fathers possess over their daughters.

Esther Turner's struggle to share her father's life is mixed with conflict, betrayal, rebellion, and in ultimately coming to terms with what she does not understand about her father—the secret good that he did for his community—Harlem, New York. His public life was intertwined with the emotional turmoil from his past, but fueled his passion to excel, which paved the way for many black leaders to rise to prominence

During this era, when men held most of the high paying positions in the workforce, they were not taught the importance of balancing family and work; they were natural hunters who are driven to pursue their passion for work because that was their identity. In contrast, women identified themselves as emotional creatures and natural nurturers, in spite of being influenced and controlled by numerous societal rules that associated a woman's identity to her degree of submissiveness. Unfortunately, this perspective entangled with manipulation and stereotypes, often led to missed opportunities for women to discover their true self-worth.

## PROLOGUE

I, like most little girls, loved my daddy. I idolized him. Being the only child, I did not have to share my father with much of anything except my mother and his work. Other PEOPLE's demands upon his time and affection literally took me a lifetime to understand, but I initially despised the process. A sentiment that will reoccur many times throughout this book details numerous conflicting emotions, while at the same time accentuates my proverbial wish list to have a family—a Mom and a Dad in the same house.

Both of my parents were very young when they married; my dad was 17 years old and my mother was a few years older. I was born soon after their marriage. Of course, as with any newlyweds, their new life together was exciting and they wanted to expand the family. However, my father interrupted their bliss when he entered the Service. This created the first gaping hole in our family that would be followed by his ultimate disappearance. What we did not know was my father's insatiable appetite to be somebody. His desire to rise above the status quo came with a hefty price to the entire family and left mom and me without any answers at a time when society was in turmoil as protests for civil rights, for jobs and desegregated education, and against the Vietnam War erupted throughout the country. Fortunately, my parents did not fall victim to many of the social ills that permeated America. (I believe God preserved them.)

Also, I say with much pride they never lost sight of achieving their professional goals. Along the way they both had to deal with much personal turmoil and an unfathomable betrayal. In this environment, keeping the family happy and together was daunting, but one they were equally committed to making work. For a while, we

represented an ideal family in that era—a two-parent household. While many black families struggled to maintain a two-parent household, I benefitted, for a short time, from the power and strength it gave me to have both parents in the household. Still, there is no comparison in the world. My parents were doting—God-fearing and very engaging. My mother worked as a nurse and was petite, attractive, sassy and strong. My dad was a tall, chocolate-toned, well-spoken, career-driven, charismatic man that could talk his way in or out of any situation.

My relationship with my father was unusual, as I guess most relationships are for any child whose parent is a public figure or executive. However, the many responsibilities of being born into a large family riddled my dad's upbringing. This subconsciously shaped numerous decisions he made when he started his family that were not necessarily good, but as with anyone who is still essentially a teenager, your experience and development is limited—you can only use the tools you have.