

“Thank you. I figured Michael made you get up early and had you on that road all day. I was certain when you got here you would want a little snack. I made just a little something for us.

“Thank you Mrs. Long I really appreciate it.”

“Please Kristen. I would really love for you to call me mom or something other than Mrs. Long. That was Mr. Long’s mama. Besides, we are almost officially family now and I am gaining a daughter I have always wanted.”

“Aww thank you, thank you ma for accepting me- us- this situation. I know it was a lot to take in so thank you. You don't have to be so kind and understanding and I appreciate that.”

“I will be honest, your situation is not an ideal one, but I must admit you make my son happy. His happiness is all that matters to me. I was a bit worried when I found out, but he assured me that your love was strong for one another and the other man is totally out of the picture. He told me he wanted to adopt this baby. I told him if it is worth it to him, then it is worth it to me and his father. Now that is all that will be said about this situation from here on out. As far as Mama Long is concerned my son has brought his sweet fiancée and their unborn child home to spend time with his parents. Now come on in here and let this baby have some of Granny Long's cooking so he will know who granny is.”

Mike and his father walked in the door and witnessed Blue crumble with emotion and tears. She attempted to walk towards Mama Long and tripped. Mike caught her.

“Wait a minute girl. You can’t be around here falling. Our insurance frowns upon that and won’t cover it!” he teased.

“I am fine. I was getting ready to hug Mama Long and tripped. I can apparently add clumsy to my list of things that happen while pregnant. Waterhead being at the top.”

Mike and Pop Long looked at each other and simultaneously blurted out in laughter, “Mama Long?”

“Yes, now who wants to make something of it? She is the daughter you and I could never have Eddie.”

Mike's heart skipped two beats. On one hand he felt like a punk for the way he stood and smiled in the midst of the conversation but, on the other hand what and who he prayed for was now in arm’s length. He smelled her, touched her, felt her, enjoyed being near her now in ways that seemed so far-fetched a short time ago. He was glad there was a smooth transition from best friend to fiancé. It had been some time since his parents and Blue had been in the same space together but so far the visit confirmed he made the right choice and that Blue truly was the woman for him. They all went in the kitchen enjoyed the meal Mike's mom had prepared for them. After brunch, Mike and Blue cleaned up while his parents rested in the family room off from the kitchen.

They finished the kitchen and Mike took Blue for a walk around his old neighborhood. About an hour into their walk it began to get cool, since neither had a jacket, they hurriedly walked back to the house. Mike noticed a few extra cars in the driveway. He and Blue eased into the door with caution. Mike had no idea who the cars belong to. He was going to keep it safe and tread lightly just in case it was some of the old church ladies who still like to pinch his cheeks like they did when he was a child. He opened the door and walked into a house full of family. His parents had called their sisters and

brother and his cousins. Mike and Blue were swarmed by the greetings of hellos with hugs and kisses that awaited them in the family room of his old house. He could not believe it. He had not seen his extended family in a very long time. None of them had met Blue. His parents decided to make that happen.

To celebrate the new engagement, the families loaded up and went to Mike's favorite restaurant. It was a little buffet place with a southern style feel of comfort to it. The Longs and their extended family laughed and joked over dinner. Tears of laughter and joy flooded the table as they all reminisced about the past. They laughed at the present and made new promises for the future. Blue felt right at home amongst her official new family. The younger girls volunteered to babysit when they came to visit. The older women promised to show her how to really have a good time once she'd given birth. His parents were pleased to announce to the world or at least to all that were listening in the restaurant, that they had an unsurmountable joy knowing their son and the woman of his dreams had finally come to their senses and made the necessary provisions to spend the rest of their lives together. It was a night that none of them especially Blue would ever forget.

“Oh my God Mike. I am so in love with your family. I feel so welcomed. Do you think they know?” she whispered.

“Uuumm know what?” he whispered confused.

“About our situation?” she whispered.

“Uuuuummmmm what about our situation, and why are we whispering?”

“About the baby not really being yours?”

“What!? First off that is none of their business and second who the hell gone tell them and third why does that matter?! All anybody needs to know is that we are in love, happy as hell, and going to spend the rest of our lives together as a family. It really is as simple as how everyone sees us right now. The baby situation is null and void. The only thing that matters is that especially in the eyes of outsiders we are engaged, you are having my baby and I am extremely in love with you as are you with me.” he frustratedly cleared his throat.

“You're right that doesn't matter. The only people it matters to is you and me.”

“And knowing that tidbit of information, baby please don't bring that up again. You are going to drive yourself crazy. If I am ok, you should be. We really must move past that. Look around Blue, whether they know or not, nobody cares,” he assured.

“I know and you're right. I'm sorry,” she said scanning the smiling faces of his family.

“Are you finished eating. Come on let's get you back to the house and chill.”

They broke from their sidebar conversation and noticed the late hours of the evening hurried upon them. They finish with dinner. Mike asked for the ticket from the waiter but Pop Long took it from him and paid the bill. They hugged and kissed in massive amounts and left each other with kind parting words and farewell wishes until they met again. They collected his parents and went back to the house. They continued the laugh and fellowship on the drive home.

“So Kristen, when is that sweet little grandbaby of ours going to be born?” Mama Long peeped her head between the seats and asked.

“My expected due date is March 17th.”

“Mike that is daddy’s birthday. He would have been 100 years old had he live to see it this past March.”

“Oh woow. How old was he when he died?” Blue asked.

“He was 43. Mike never knew him. He died long before Michael was thought about. Matter of fact, you are his namesake.”

“Oh ok.” Mike noted.

“Kristen have you given any thoughts to the naming of the baby yet?” Mama Long inquired.

“I haven’t gotten any farther than Kristopher Michael Long if it is a boy.” she smiled.

Mike reached over and put his hand on hers. He was smitten with the fact she was to allow the baby to carry on his name. He wanted to pull the car over and tongue her down to show his appreciation for her right there on the side of the road. Since his parents were in the back, he hesitantly kept driving and winked at her instead. They arrived at the house and go inside. It is 8:45 and for his parents that was late. Mike convinced his parents to stay up a few more hours and they continued to talk about the events of the day. Shortly afterward everyone headed off to their perspective sleeping quarters.

“Maaaaaaaa! Where is my favorite blanket?” he whined.

“I put it on the couch already. I don’t know why you like sleeping on that couch with that old blanket especially when there’s a perfectly good bed in your old room.”

“Oh ok, I didn’t see it. That old couch is comfortable. I love you good night ma.”

“Good night son, love you more.”