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The second time I saw my son, he was twenty-nine.

We met at a beachside resort in Hervey Bay, Queensland. It was a warm day and I had driven from Caboolture that morning. I checked into the hotel and sat in my room, contemplating our meeting. After all these years of no contact, after all the changing laws and policies, after all the letters, emails and phone calls, we had decided it was time to meet in person.

He chose and booked the hotel, since he knew the area, having spent holidays there as a child. I arrived early. My room had harbour views, but I didn't take them in. After I unpacked my bag I couldn't sit still. I paced the room and balcony, checked my makeup a dozen times, cleaned my teeth and tried to calm my growing anxiety.

My mobile phone rang.

'Sorry I'm late, I misjudged the time. What's the hotel like?' He sounded nervous.



‘The hotel is beautiful,’ I said. I knew from our previous conversations that if he wasn’t in a tent the accommodation had to be the best.

‘Take your time, don’t rush.’

Don’t have an accident was what I really meant. Not after I’ve waited this long to meet you.

I abandoned my pacing and went to the lobby. I wasn’t sure that this was the best location to meet my son – such a public place. But I waited there nevertheless. Try to act normal, I told myself.

I had wanted this for so long and yet for an instant I wanted to run away, to be back in the safety of Perth with my husband and our daughters.

My eyes darted from the receptionist to the car park to my nervous hands.

‘Are you okay?’ asked the receptionist.

‘Yes! Fine thanks. Just waiting for someone.’ I hoped my voice sounded perky.

I saw the four-wheel drive enter the car park and recognised it from a photo he’d sent. I tried to stay in my seat, but couldn’t. I jumped to my feet and ran outside. I was hit with a rush of emotions. Fear – would we get along? Anxiety – how would the meeting go? Sadness – for all the years lost. Joy – finally we were meeting.

His appearance shook me. He had sent photos, but that wasn’t the same as seeing him in the flesh. I looked at his face and saw my brother, my nephews who were about his age, but most of all, my father.



We embraced. I sobbed.

‘We have the same nose,’ he said. We were still in the car park and he was pointing at his nose. I took a step back so that I could see him fully in the afternoon sunlight. We laughed.

On the north side of the hotel was a long white beach with overhanging trees and it was to the beach that we gravitated. We sat under a tree and I wondered where to begin. He spoke first.

‘Thank you for not aborting me.’

I was speechless.

Eventually I said, ‘I did consider it.’

In the years after he was born, I often wondered if I’d made the right decision. In my darkest moments I questioned whether I’d paid too high a price for going through with the birth and with the adoption. After I married and had two beautiful daughters, I imagined my girls in the position I’d been in – young, pregnant and confused. I would not have hesitated to talk about abortion with them. I wouldn’t have been able to bear them going through the pain I’d experienced.

Of course, had they chosen to keep their child, I would have been the first to offer help. More importantly, I taught them about contraception.

Now here was the very boy I had cried over, ached for on every one of his birthdays and searched for in the eyes of every child I saw after his birth, thanking me for saving him.