

# WHERE YOU BELONG

ADULTHOOD AGES 18-37





## *Chapter 1*

### TRUST IN HOPE

**I**t was the straw that broke the camel's back - the day I received a letter from a bank revealing Jack opened an account with his father - without telling me. When I tried to address this with Jack, he told me his father suggested opening the account so Jack would be able to deposit his check and have quick access to his money. With Jack starting his first job and within a few months of turning 18 we discussed him waiting a few months to open his own bank account. Then he would be able to independently manage his funds, and would not need a parent to supervise his account. I told him in the meantime, I would help him cash his first checks. I was committed to driving Jack to and from work, and was completely unaware he received his first check. He clearly did not heed the advice I gave him about opening a bank account, and I was upset by his total lack of consideration - specifically his unwillingness to share this information. I told Jack I was doing my best to help him reach his personal goals. But, in the end he could care less about my thoughts or guidance, and was only willing to do what he wanted - regardless of the consequences. I was tired of him disturbing my peace. My argument

with Jack blew up that night and lasted quite a while. It ended when I walked out of his room and slammed the door. After I allowed the dust to settle I tried to go back to Jack's room a few hours later and have a calm discussion with him. While we were talking I could see his father was trying to reach him on his cell phone. I asked Jack if he had spoken with his father about what happened, and he told me he had the right to speak to his father. Jack believed I did not want him in my life, and thought going to live with his father would somehow give me a sense of peace. The bottom line - Jack wasn't happy living with me and thought I had a negative impact on his mental health. I told Jack even though living with me somewhat disturbed my peace, I still wanted him with me, and in my life. As his mother, I just wanted him to respect and consider my decisions, regardless of the negative things his father said about me. Ultimately, I wanted Jack to understand that I wanted to help him, and supported his goals, but also wanted him to be aware of the risk associated with sharing an account with his father. I ended the conversation and left his room.

When I arrived at work early the following morning, I had several missed calls from Jack and his twin brother David, along with a text from Jack stating he was leaving. At that moment, David called again, and I answered. He told me he was at my house with their father trying to get Jack, because Jack said he no longer wanted to live with me. David asked me what could have led to Jack feeling that way. I immediately felt overwhelmed, and told him I was at work, and I wasn't able to address the situation at that moment, but I would leave work early and be home as soon as possible.

When I arrived home, I saw their father, Tony, sitting in his car, parked on the side of the driveway next to the house. When I got in the house, Jack and David were there, and it seemed like Jack had already begun packing some of his items. My parents were glad I was home, because they also tried to reach me to let me know what was happening. I told them I would take a moment and go talk to the boys. I told Jack he shouldn't decide to leave just because of the conversation we had the night before. This was his home and I was just asking him to consider my opinion and be respectful of my rules. David agreed, and didn't believe it was reason

enough for Jack to leave. David also mentioned when he got his first check from his first job, their father opened a bank account for him - around the same time he did for Jack. I told the boys that they needed to be careful with their father being on their account, and explained that during our relationship, he withdrew money from my personal account without my knowledge or permission. However, the boys couldn't see my point, and felt that was my past and not like their situation. They just couldn't see that Tony was behind everything that was happening, and that it was all part of his master plan to take the twins away from me. I should have never trusted him, and because of his lies and manipulation, I realized I would now lose both of them. With tears in my eyes, I didn't feel like I was being heard. Jack still wanted to leave because he was not happy living with me anymore. I let him know that I didn't trust his father, but if that was the decision he wished to make, we would need to put it on the record that I was not kicking him out - because he was still a minor. He also disapproved of my decision to call the police, but as his legal guardian, it was necessary; he couldn't just decide to up and leave. Even after the officers spoke to Jack and explained the situation didn't justify his decision to leave, he had clearly made up his mind and no longer wanted to stay. Ultimately, the police documented Jack's decision and received his father's approval and Jack prepared to leave and go live with his father (with the understanding they would need to return to get the rest of his things). As Jack packed his things, he grabbed his school laptop. I said he would need to temporarily leave behind his computer, and that his father would have to officially sign it out in order for Jack to continue using it for school. Jack was upset, but I told him since he would no longer be living in my home, there would be no way for me to ensure the laptop would be returned to school. The following day I called the school to make arrangements for Tony to sign out the laptop. I was thankful for the principal's gracious decision to not only allow Jack to continue using the laptop, but to allow him to finish his senior year while technically living outside of the school's jurisdiction.

*It devastated me to lose Jack, as I knew this was all Tony's doing. I considered everything I'd been through up to that point, including my sincere desire to help*