

May THE
to ROAD rise
meet you,

MAY THE wind BE
always AT YOUR back,

MAY THE sun shine
warm UPON YOUR face,

AND UNTIL we meet again

may

IN THE God HOLD
palm YOU

of his hand.



We are so excited to begin this journey with you! In this book you will learn a little bit about who we are as a couple, individually and the love of the people who surround us. We cannot express to you how grateful we are that you are taking the time to get to know us. One thing that can assure anyone reading this, is that your child will be raised in a home where he or she will never have any doubt that they are loved.



MEET STEPHANIE



I was born in the Bronx, NY to two amazing parents who raised their daughter to be all she could be. At 37, I can truly say that I have accomplished what I set out to do in this life apart from raising a child. I graduated in 2006 from the University of New Haven with a B.S. in Chemistry and a B.S. in Forensic Science. I still cannot believe I was able to complete two full science degrees in four years! After college, I worked at various chemistry labs ranging from Pfizer to Ocean Spray Cranberries. In 2011, I finally accepted my dream job as a Forensic Toxicologist for the FL Department of Law Enforcement. It was during my time there that I met Ryan and learned the true meaning of love. Since Ryan is in the Air Force, we have been fortunate to live in states I never imagined moving to! I've lived in a total of nine states! I currently work as a regional licensing and contracting liaison for a large insurance brokerage which allows me to work from home. It is my ideal job because I will be able to raise our child and not have to rely heavily on childcare. I dream of settling back in Tallahassee, FL once Ryan retires with a little one who will grow up with a huge back yard, chickens, goats, dogs and cats.



MEET RYAN

I was raised being taught that education and having a strong work ethic were important. These values have been vital throughout my life. I come from a large family (seven siblings!). My dad was an environmental engineer and my mom was a homemaker who homeschooled all of us. At the age of 20, I dropped out of college to enlist in the Air Force out of a sense of patriotism. It has been an interesting career. I have a daughter from a previous marriage whose mom I met while assigned to Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico. She is 11 now, and I love watching her grow up into the beautiful person that she is. I continued going to college while serving and am completing my 3rd degree. I am currently assigned as a Religious Affairs Airman embedded into a large group of 1,300 fellow service members to provide resilience, leadership advice and religious accommodation issues. My interests are eclectic and varied. I enjoy combat sports, foraging for herbs and mushrooms, philosophy and history. My character can be described as sincere; but eternally optimistic as I always try to see the bright side of things.





How We Met



BY STEPHANIE

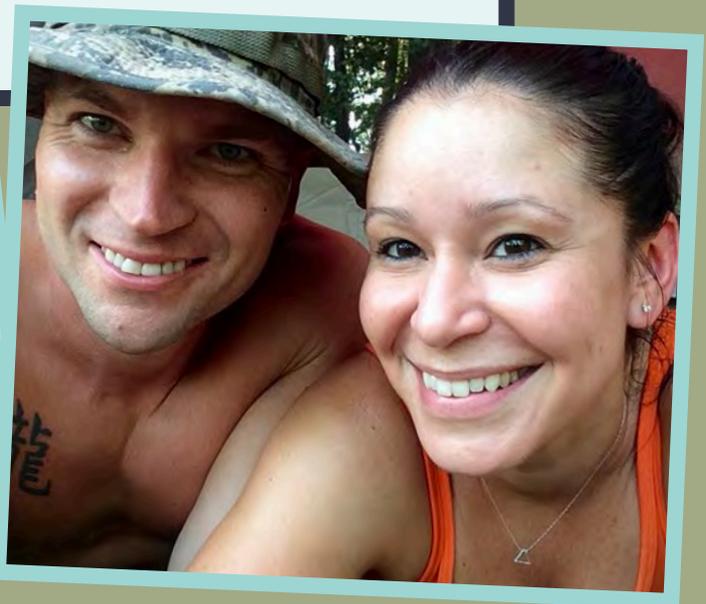
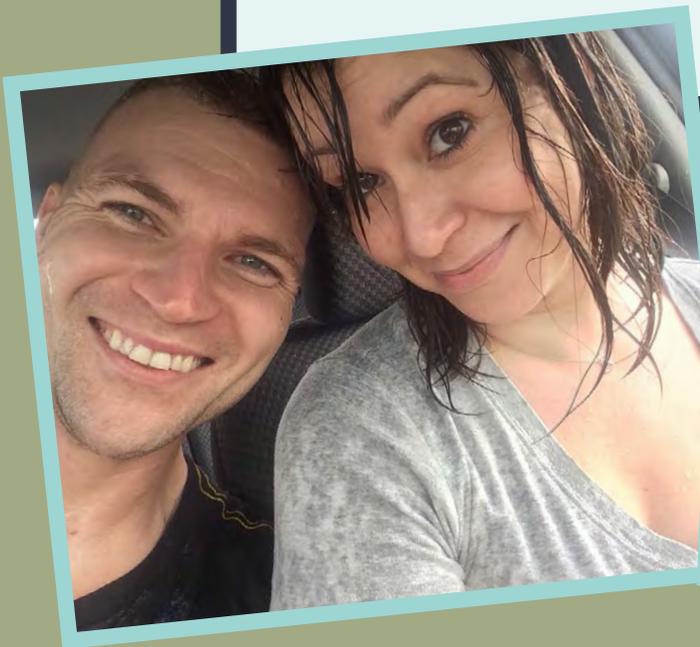
We connected on Match.com towards the end of February 2013. Ryan was living in Valdosta, GA and I was living in Tallahassee, FL. He was in my "rejected inbox," but the fact that the email was written in an attempt at Spanish, caught my attention. I checked his profile; saw he was an attractive man with a beautiful smile, and I couldn't resist the temptation to correct him. Even in that first email, he was telling me how beautiful I was. We exchanged a few emails for a couple of days, then exchanged phone numbers and talked every day. About a week later we Skyped so we could "meet" each other, and I

remember laughing for hours! About a week later, we had our first date in Tallahassee, FL and we have been inseparable ever since. Ryan always tells me that he knew almost immediately that I was "the one" and that he fell so quickly for me that it scared him. We mark March 8, 2013 as our official anniversary. Ryan proposed to me three years later and it was the best decision we ever made. We got married in late summer of 2016 in a very intimate back yard wedding held in the house I grew up in Connecticut.

Our Adoption Story

BY RYAN

Having a family is very important to Stephanie and me; and we started trying as soon as we married. After some time with no success, the military authorized us to begin fertility treatments. Stephanie was subjected to numerous treatments, after each of which I started losing hope just a little bit more. We talked about in vitro fertilization; but there were no guarantees that it would result in a child. We eventually sat down and had a serious conversation about what to do. We decided that we should provide a home to a child whose parents are making the biggest decision of their lives, in the name of providing their child greater opportunities. Coming to this decision lifted a large weight off my chest that had been growing ever heavier throughout the process of trying to start a family. It just felt like it was the right decision. Our families are supportive, of course. Two of my friends are from adopted homes and they were both very excited when I told them.





STEPHANIE'S FAMILY

My parents, Mariana & Robert Figueroa, were born and raised in Añasco, Puerto Rico but met in New York city decades later. Together they have three children: me, Christopher and Raphael. My brother Chris and I were raised in NY until I was nine and then moved to Connecticut to a beautiful house across the street from a lake. My brother Raphy was born one year later. My mother has five siblings and my dad has eleven! I am really close to my brothers and parents and am closest to my mom's youngest sister, Zulma (but I call her Titi Buddy). We do speak Spanish to each other, with my mom switching between Spanish and English during our conversations. I unfortunately do not get to see my grandparents very often since they are still in Puerto Rico. I try to go home to see my family at least once a year and they also come down to see me. My parents cannot wait to have their first grandchild and my brothers are really looking forward to becoming uncles. Since our child would be the first, I cannot even imagine how spoiled he/she is going to be!!



I come from a military background. My parents met when they were both in the Air Force. I always knew that I was going to serve as well. Church was an important part of life growing up; and my faith remains intertwined with my identity to this day. I am the fourth of eight children all boys except for the youngest. My dad was an environmental engineer and worked in the steel industry for 20 years after his time in the Air Force came to an end. My mom was a dental hygienist until she retired and home-schooled us. My siblings and I all seem to travel away once we left home and pursue wildly different careers. From professional dancer, to the military, to software development: we have all chosen different paths in life. I talk to my parents at least once a week and appreciate them more as I am getting older.





Our Home

We have the most adorable single-family house on a very quiet street in a small town in Missouri. It is 80 years old and has character that you just don't see in new houses. It has an open floor plan with three bedrooms, a front yard and a fenced in back yard. There are three large parks that are very close to the house where people go to fish or just to be in nature. We have four cats: Carbon, Mercury, Loki and Nautica who have the most hilarious personalities! We strive to always keep our home clutter free, clean and neat. We love to decorate our house during Christmas and plant vegetables in our small garden. We have a strawberry patch on the side of our house that we get to pick in early summer, and they are just delicious! Our next-door neighbors are just the sweetest, most caring people I have ever met. We often get together for back yard bon fires and we bake breads and cookies for each other.





Friends



Being a military family, we make it our priority to maintain our friendships. Our friends are more than friends, they are family. Many of them live in Florida who we miss dearly. My best friend, Michelle and her husband Shane gave Ryan and I the honor of becoming their daughter's godparents. Many of them have children who became our pseudo nieces and nephews and call us "Tia Stephanie" and "Uncle Ryan". When we get together, we have barbeques, game nights and fun times by the pool. They are the people we can rely on for a good laugh, a shoulder to cry on, and to be our biggest supporters. We love how no matter the distance, or the months and years that pass, we just pick up where we left off and carry on as if we never left.



Our Hobbies

We share many of the same hobbies. During the summer, we love going to the beach or the pool. Nature has always been a place of comfort and solace, so anything we can do outdoors is enjoyable. We plan trips for hiking, boating, and fishing at as many different state parks as we can. My most cherished past time is foraging for wild mushrooms. Steph has a passion for make-up, baking, and cultivating orchids. We both love to travel and plan to continue to do that. We have a list of countries we would like to visit with Spain being our top choice!



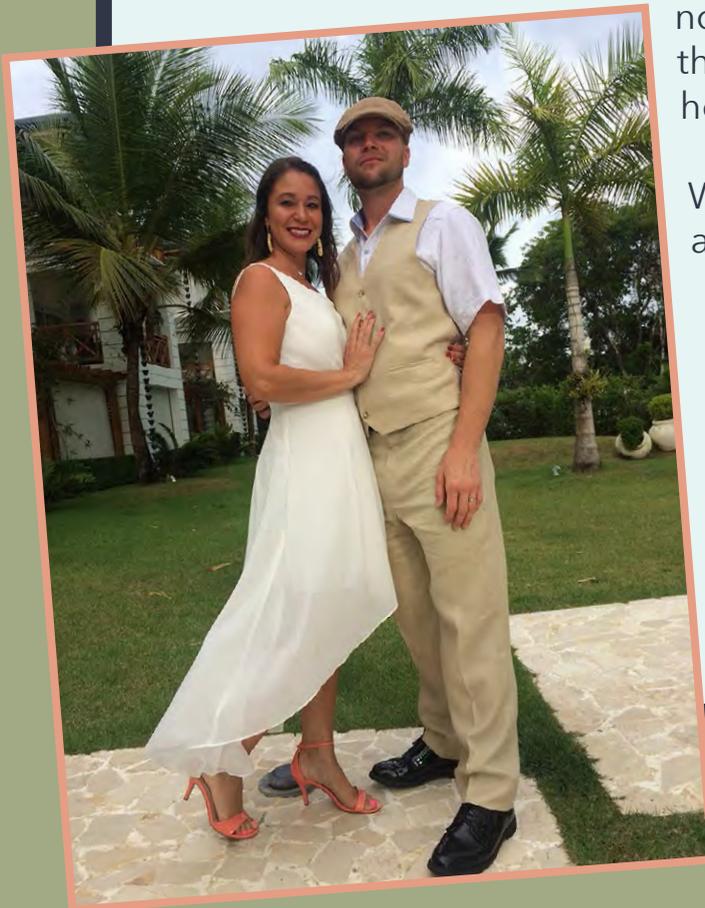
Dear Birthparents,

First and foremost, we want to thank you for your consideration in entrusting your child with us. We can't begin to imagine how difficult this decision must have been for you. Children are the future. Children are a blessing. We promise to nurture, love, encourage, discipline and prepare your child to excel in this world. We have so much love in our hearts and have such wonderful people in our lives, that we know will help to enrich the life of the child we are chosen to raise. If you are willing, we are open to staying in touch. We want to ensure that you are comforted that your baby is happy and healthy. We also want you to know that we will not hide the fact that our baby is adopted. They will know that although they were

not grown in my belly, they were grown in our hearts.

We thank you so much and God bless.

Stephanie
& Ryan





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