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My Stressful Proposal

This is the story of how I proposed to the woman I love and why it was the most nervous experience of my entire life.



Scarlett and Me

In early October of 2015, I had unknowingly met my soon-to-be wife Scarlett June Edmunds. We met each other through work at a grocery store called Ingles, in Kingsport, Tennessee. I was a bagger, and she was a cashier. One day at Ingles, I was bagging for her and decided to talk to her since there weren't any customers at the moment. She had somewhat of a lisp, so I told her she reminded me of the babysitter from the Pixar movie *The Incredibles*. I thought she was really pretty, with her strawberry blonde hair, blue eyes, pale skin, trim figure, and no make-up for that nice natural look, so I asked her what her age was. She said she was 16.

Uh-oh. I was 19, and I knew there was no way her parents would approve of me dating her with that kind of an age gap while she was still a minor and I wasn't. If someone told me that she was going to be my fiancée in less than a year, I would think they were crazy.

Sometime later in mid-October, I got a friend request from Scarlett on Facebook. Since, I was already Facebook friends with other Ingles employees, I didn't bat an eye accepting it. Shortly after I accepted the friend request, she started to message me on Facebook. That kind of threw me off. Girls never message me first. But I let that go as most our conversations consisted of us getting to know what the other one's hobbies were and what we both enjoyed. She told me she was in band and played the flute and she loves Doctor Who and anything that relates to Math. She seemed a little nerdy, but I liked that because I am a huge nerd myself.

Scarlett was a part of the Sullivan South High School Marching Band. One day while she was coming back from a band competition, we were messaging each other. She was taking much longer to respond to my messages than she usually did, because she said she had to keep turning on and off her data on her phone, so she would not go over her phone's limit. To make it easier on her, I gave her my phone number so we could just text each other instead of using Facebook. Our conversations became more frequent after that.

About two weeks after we started to text each other in late October, I got a phone call from Scarlett that would change my life forever. Apparently, one of her friends, Sydney, took her phone and decided to call me. Sydney asked, "Hey, did you know Scarlett has a huge crush on you?"

"Wait what?" was the only thing I could utter.

Even though I should have picked up on Scarlett's hints, it still took me completely by surprise. (What's funny is that Sydney pushed me and Scarlett to the next level, and she will be Scarlett's maid of honor at our wedding.) Scarlett took her phone back and admitted to me, "It's true. I like you."

Well, I felt a pretty strong connection with her myself and said, "Well maybe we should start seeing each other, aside from work, and see where it takes us."

It would take us far.

We started to be with each other outside of work at the beginning of November. The first time we met outside of Ingles we went bowling. It was nice to see her wearing something else than the Ingles uniform, which was khaki pants, the Ingles brand collared shirt that was a solid color of either red, dark green, brown, or black, and an apron or smock. She was wearing a dark blue colored dress with black leggings and looked stunning. We both sucked at bowling, neither of us were able to break 100, but we still had a good time.

We also met at my house for two more dates. Those dates just consisted of movies, YouTube videos, and just talking to one another.

Before we were even started to go out, in mid-October Scarlett introduced me to her parents, Sam and Jessica. After our three dates previously mentioned, Scarlett told me that her parents wanted to meet me more personally at their house since Scarlett had come to my house twice. A few days before the meeting, however, her parents came into the line at Ingles I was bagging in. I'm not very good with faces, and I had only met her parents once so I didn't recognize them. I went about bagging their order without talking to them. Big mistake. Scarlett said her parents were pissed at me for not talking to them that much, because they thought I was

ignoring them. So come the time I officially “met” them at Scarlett’s house, I had to apologize and kiss ass like never before to make sure they would eventually like me.

About two more weeks went by of me and Scarlett being together at either one’s house. Scarlett said Jessica told her, “If he doesn’t ask you to be his girlfriend soon, then you should kick him to the curve.” Well I was growing more and more attached to Scarlett, so that was quite the incentive. I was still a little scared, though, because of the “ignoring incident.” But on November 16th, 2015, I decided to ask Sam and Jessica’s permission to date their daughter. I asked them that night at Scarlett’s house. They said that I had their permission and I was absolutely ecstatic. What’s funny was I didn’t even ask Scarlett her permission to date her. We both just knew the answer and became official that amazing night.

As crazy as it sounds, a little over a month into dating, in mid-December Scarlett and I started to talk about marriage. It didn’t feel awkward. It didn’t feel rushed. It just felt right. It was like we were meant for each other. In some ways it really seems that way because of how many times we could have met each other in the past. We both participated in a basketball program called Upward at a Baptist church in Kingsport and a soccer program called Scosa at Warriors Path State Park when we were kids. She was a freshman while I was a senior at Sullivan South in Kingsport, and in my senior year I went to many band events, to support my friends, in which she participated. We both lived five minutes away from one another. And Sam even worked with my late paternal grandmother, Mimi at Indian Trail School in Boones Creek, Tennessee. So as corny as it may be, it’s like Scarlett and I were destined to be together.

It had been a few months later in May 2016 and marriage was a pretty common topic of discussion between Scarlett and me. When I was going to propose was one of her main concerns. Her birthday is May 31. And she would be turning seventeen that May. We both agreed that we

would marry December 2017. I originally told her that I would propose a little after her eighteenth birthday in May of 2017, seven months before the marriage. Then, we “negotiated” that I would do it December of 2016, a year before the marriage. Little did she know, I was planning on proposing to her much earlier than she was expecting.

During the summer of 2016, Sam and Jessica invited me to come with them to Savannah, Georgia on a family vacation from July 2nd-9th. During the time between Scarlett’s seventeenth birthday and our Savannah trip, I decided that the Savannah trip would be a perfect time and place to propose, especially since she didn’t think I would for another five months. I asked Sam and Jessica for their blessings to marry their daughter and they said yes and were so happy for us.

For the ring, I wanted to get her something that really means a lot to me. I wanted the ring my paternal grandfather gave to my late grandmother, Mimi. I lost her when I was twelve, and she had meant the world to me. It only seemed fitting for Scarlett to have that ring, considering Mimi said it would be mine to give one day. It’s a white gold ring with eight diamonds stacked two by four. The funny thing was that it almost perfectly fit her finger. Just another sign that looked favor upon our relationship.

Come July 2nd, Scarlett’s family and I loaded up the black Ford Suburban rental and headed to Savannah. One of the most interesting parts about Savannah is that it has several “squares” which are about thirty yards by thirty yards. These squares are so old, they even predate the civil war. At that time, the squares were used for strategic planning like places to regroup and keep supplies. Today, however they are squares that feature fantastic statues and very well-placed plant life. I figured one of these squares would be the perfect place to propose

to Scarlett. I wanted to get her opinion though and find out which square she liked best so we could come back to it for our date night. Date night was just my excuse to get her alone.

Over the duration of the trip, we explored the city of Savannah to see all of the squares. Between the twenty-two squares and an excess of walking in ninety degree heat, Scarlett had finally picked the square she liked best: Whitefield Square. This square was just a simple square like any of the others except this one had a beautiful, white pavilion right in the middle. It was absolutely perfect. Now, all she had to do was pick the restaurant for date night and everything would fall into place.

On July 8th, 2016, Scarlett chose a place in Savannah called Boar's Head Grill and Tavern, unaware of what the rest of the night would bring her. Boar's Head was an older building with brick walls on the inside and was right across from the Savannah River. We had went in for an early dinner of about four o'clock and we were two of the very few customers in the building. They put us in the back room all by ourselves in a booth with a nice view of the river. It was as if the whole restaurant was in on it. The meal itself was unbelievable. Scarlett had some kind of pasta dish that she was fond of. I had a fish entrée with the best cheese grits I had had in my entire life. And for dessert, we ended the meal with astounding pie and cheesecake. When I paid for the very satisfying meal, we headed on to Whitefield Square.



Whitefield Square in Savannah, Georgia

What Scarlett also didn't know was that during the meal I was communicating with Jessica about her taking our picture when I proposed to capture the moment. Jessica and Sam said they were a little busy eating their own dinner but would hurry and meet me there. Accompanying them were Scarlett's preteen sister Rhiannon and her friend Carter of the same age. So having dinner with two kids could take a while. Because of that, I set our walk to a more leisurely speed.

When we were about halfway from the square, I got a text from Jessica saying that they were on their way to Whitefield Square as well. All was going according to plan until....BANG! While Scarlett and I were walking, we thought we heard an explosion behind us. It turned out to be a car that popped its tire and was headed our way. And I thought to myself, "That car sure does look familiar." And sure enough, it was the black Ford Suburban that Jessica and Sam had rented. In that moment, it was as if time had stopped and I was just devastated. I tried to hide it on the outside for Scarlett, but on the inside there was only panicked screaming and cursing. Sam and Jessica pulled the car to the side of a street about ten blocks away from Whitefield Square. I didn't know what to do except to offer assistance for Sam with the tire. He told me to just go ahead and Scarlett just pulled me to leave them without a second thought.

We finally arrived at Whitefield Square and no one else was in the pavilion, so at least we had a nice intimate setting. I kept trying to buy more time until Sam and Jessica could put the spare tire on and could snap the proposal picture. You only propose one time in a marriage, and I wanted to have that moment saved forever. So I stalled and we talked about a whole mess of random stuff and I must have shown her like ten YouTube videos. It felt like an eternity but was about forty minutes until out of the corner of my eye I spotted Sam and Jessica coming my way

with the kids trailing behind. Sam was covered head to toe in sweat, and I will forever be indebted to the effort he put forth to make my proposal all the better.

The second I saw Jessica with the camera, I couldn't hold back or wait any more. I hugged Scarlett. I talked of how we first meet each other. I mentioned all the wonderful things we've done together in our relationship so far. I let her know how much she means to me and how much I love her. I got on one knee, confessed, "Scarlett you're the love of my life and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Scarlett June Edmunds, will you marry me?"

"Yes," she cried out as she was bursting in tears, and I started crying, and it was magical. With kissed each other with more passion than ever before, not boyfriend and girl, but soon-to-be husband and wife.

When it was all said and done the six of us all got together and talked about what just happened. Jessica said, the whole time Sam was changing the tire, she had to wipe away the sweat off of Sam's head so he could see what he was doing. But the funniest thing was that Sam said while the four of them were walking to Whitefield Square to get our proposal picture, Sam looked right into the kids' eyes and told them, "If I hear a word from either of you and you ruin the surprise, your ass is grass." Meaning him and Jessica didn't work so hard to enhance mine and Scarlett's proposal experience, just to have them spoil it. But in the end, it all worked out so that's what really matters.

The wedding is December 16th, 2017, two years and one month after we became official, and I can't wait to say "I do".