

Josephine's Café

Kappa Tau: Book Chapter

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Restoration Church – St. Peters, MO

1,785

At Josephine's Café the owners and staff are committed to three things: helping young adults who are in need of help, treating others the way they would want to be treated, and sharing the love of Jesus in any way possible. Josephine, the founder, hired teens she knew were in need of help and mentored them until they were back on their feet. Dakota, Josephine's grandson, and his wife Sophia are now managing the café and have big shoes to fill. Join them as they juggle finding their own teens to mentor, running the café, and living their own lives outside of the café.

“It’s a great day at Josephine’s Café. This is Sophia, how may I help you?” I answered the phone cradling it between my ear and shoulder while refilling drinks for my customers at the counter.

“Hey Sophie, it’s Denise at A Helping Hand.”

“Denise! It’s good to hear from you! How are things going over there?” I asked. A Helping Hand is a non-profit organization that helps young adults get back on their feet if they find themselves in bad situations.

“Things are great; I just placed two young men and a young lady in housing. Now I’m looking for work placements, which is why I’m calling.” She sounded like she was desperate.

I stepped into the back, not wanting the customers to hear the conversation. “As much as I would love to, I can’t take on three people right now.” Back when my husband’s grandma opened Josephine’s Café she made a point to hire teens in need, which is why we decided to partner with A Helping Hand. Since I took over last year, I have been able to place everyone Denise has sent me.

“Oh, I would never expect that!” She exclaimed. “I’m almost positive I can get the boys on at the railroad; they need to do manual labor. But the girl, Charlotte, she’s pregnant. Manual labor is not an option for her. Would you be able to take her?”

This was my biggest struggle in running the café, wanting to help but having to do what is best for Josephine’s financially. I sighed. “I’ll only be able to pay minimum wage. Things will be a little tight, but we’ll manage. God has always provided for us when we bring on a new employee that you have referred.”

Denise breathed a sigh of relief. “Oh that’s wonderful! I will have her stop by this evening to speak with you.” She paused for a moment.

“I will keep a look out for her. I would love to keep chatting, but I’ve got customers to tend to. Talk to you later!” I hung up the phone, immediately getting back to work.



All day I had been distracted by how Josephine’s was going to make it financially hiring a new employee. I run a tight ship; this would make things even tighter. Finally, after the dinner rush I sat down with my laptop to look over the financials. After running the numbers a few times, I put my head in my hands. From the way things looked, I had two options: pray for a quick pickup in business or take a second pay cut this year. Dakota would kill me if I took another pay cut.

To get my mind off of my money issues, I grabbed the bucket of soapy water and began cleaning tables. Just as I finished the second table, the bells on the door jingled indicating someone walked in the door. Before I could turn around to greet them, strong arms wrapped around my waist. I knew instantly from the smell of his cologne and the sound of his breathing that it was Dakota. I turned in his embrace. “Welcome to Josephine’s Café, where our job is to serve you. What can I get for you?”

He smiled. “A kiss from my beautiful wife.”

I rolled my eyes and gave him a quick kiss. Just because there weren’t any customers, didn’t mean one couldn’t walk in at any moment.

“Why are you cleaning tables? We pay people to do that.” Dakota asked taking my rag and bucket, putting them back behind the counter.

I stood with my hands on my hips. "I am capable of cleaning a few tables. Besides, I sent everyone home."

Kota gave me a puzzled look. "Why did you send them home?"

"Well, Olivia wasn't feeling well, Mason had the opportunity to get Madison for the night, which is rare, and I figured Kyle could use a night off." I replied.

Dakota took my hand and pulled me close. "I just keep finding more reasons why I love you." He kissed my forehead before he sat down at a table. "I got a call from gramps today."

I sat down across from him intrigued. "Oh, what did he want?" Dakota's grandpa made sure that Josephine's stayed in business in honor of his late wife.

"He called to tell me that he wants inject some additional cash into Josephine's." You could see the excitement in Kota's eyes. "Maybe we can increase your salary, and update the kitchen and dining room like you keep talking about, and..."

I put my hand up to stop him from going on. "Hold up, I have news too. I'm hiring a new employee."

"Sophia." He scolded. "How were we going to afford a new employee before I found out we were getting additional money?"

"I've been praying about it all day. This is the answer I was looking for." Out of the corner of my eye I saw a young girl walking towards the door. "We can talk more about this later, my new employee is here." I stood up to greet Charlotte as she entered. "Hi, you must be Charlotte. Denise said you would be coming by today." I put my hand out for her to shake. "I'm Sophia, and this is my husband Dakota."

She shook my hand. "It's nice to meet you. Denise said you may have a job for me?"

"Yes, come sit. Let's talk." I gestured towards one of booths. "Hungry?" I asked as we sat down.

She shook her head. "I'm a little short on cash."

"It's on the house." I assured her. "Today's special is a bacon cheeseburger with fries, or the whole menu is behind the napkins." Dakota was going to hate me for sending Kyle, our cook, home. "You're welcome to choose whatever you like."

"The special sounds great. Thank you." She hung her head in embarrassment.

I looked up at Kota. "You mind cooking for us?" I asked sweetly.

"Three bacon cheeseburgers coming up." He kissed my cheek before he left.

I turned back to Charlotte. "So, do you have any restaurant experience?"

She slowly shook her head no. "I've babysat before and I was an honor roll student, but no formal work."

I shrugged. "That's okay, we will make you into a waitress. When can you start?"

She was visibly taken aback. "What? You're going to hire me just like that?"

"Josephine's partners with A Helping Hand. Denise only sends us those she thinks will be a good fit. She's never been wrong before." I replied.

"What about the time off I'll need for doctors appointments? What about when the baby is born?" She asked pointing to her baby bump.

I smiled. "Just let us know in advance. We will find someone to cover you or I'll do it myself if no one is available."

"Why would you do that for me? You just met me." She asked, skeptical.

“Here at Josephine’s, it’s our mission to treat others the way we would want to be treated and share the love of Jesus in anyway that we can. One of the ways we do that is making sure our employees have the time off they need.” I hoped I wasn’t scaring her off. She seemed like a good kid who got herself in a bad situation.

Her face fell. “So, I have to like, convert?”

I shook my head. “No, no, no. There is no pressure to do anything you don’t want to do.”

“Good. My mom’s church kind of burned me when I got pregnant.” Her hands immediately went protectively to her bump.

“That really is a shame. I hope we can show you that all Christians aren’t the same.” The door opened and a small girl with blonde pigtails ran in.

“Miss Sophie!” Madison yelled. She climbed into the booth next to me wrapping her arms around my neck. “I missed you!”

“I missed you too, Maddie!” I replied hugging her back. “Where is your daddy?” I was beginning to get concerned since Mason didn’t walk in with her. The door opened and Mason walked in. “I send you home and you come back?” Maddie was already playing with the toys I kept behind the counter for her.

“The princess wanted to come here for dinner. I couldn’t say no.” Mason replied watching his little girl play in the floor.

I nodded. “Hey Kota!”

Dakota popped his head out from the kitchen. “I got it, another special and chicken fingers for Maddie.”

Mason looked puzzled. “Dakota is cooking?”

“I sent Kyle home tonight, too.” Mason sat down next to me. I realized Charlotte was still sitting across from me. “Oh, how rude of me! I am so sorry.” I apologized to Charlotte. “This is Mason, one of our waiters. Mason, this is Charlotte. She will begin waitressing soon.”

Mason extended his hand to Charlotte. “Nice to meet you.”

Charlotte nodded, smiling at him. “Nice to meet you as well.”

“I know I’ve talked a lot. Do you have any questions?” I asked Charlotte.

She thought for a moment. “Would it be okay if I asked Mason a question?”

Mason nodded. “Sure.”

“Why do you like working here?” Charlotte asked.

Mason looked over at me before answering. “This place, these people—they are my family. Maddie’s mom wanted to move back here when she found out she was pregnant. I had to follow her here if I wanted to be part of Maddie’s life. I didn’t know anyone, nor did I have a place to stay. Denise helped me get housing and got me this job. Dakota and Sophie took me under their wing.” He sighed. “And, it’s nice to have their positive influence for Maddie.”

I smiled hugging his neck. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“A family, that sounds nice.” Charlotte mused.

“Foods up!” Kota yelled from the kitchen. “Think I could get some help?”

“I got it.” Mason said. “Charlotte, can I get you anything to drink?”

Charlotte looked up at him surprised. “Lemonade please.”



Mason flashed a smile at her. “Lemonade for Charlotte, sweet tea for Sophie and Dakota, milk for Maddie, and Coke for me. Coming right up.” Mason left to get drinks and help Kota bring out the food.

Charlotte looked a little overwhelmed. “Bet you weren’t expecting this, were you?”

“Honestly, no. I figured it would be another interview for a job I wouldn’t get. I’m truly grateful for this opportunity.” Charlotte smiled as she spoke.

“It’s our pleasure.” Dakota set her plate down in front of her. “Welcome to the team.”

Mason passed out the drinks. “He means welcome to the family.”