

Years 11 & 12
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A Blessing Called Life

“I may not be there yet, but I was closer than I was yesterday.”

I'm getting closer to delivering the baby. I feel a chill in my blood as my first contraction begins. The coldness brings the synapses of my brain to a standstill. My short sharp breaths are no match for the stabbing pain in my abdomen. However, the beam of sunlight is. It grips my hand, indulging me with reassurance, gradually taking the pain away. I look over at this beacon of light, and I see my best friend, Linda.

She's the reason why my shrieks currently echo throughout this hospital room. The nurse begins to slowly stab my back with needles as the light above disperses. I'm no longer in the hospital room and I'm currently facing Linda and her husband Eric, who are embracing one another. Happiness encapsulates them like a blanket. A smile spreads upon my face lighting it up with joy. They were finally happy. Infertility was a burden they had been carrying on their backs for years. Health complications piled up one after the other, and their struggle to conceive was unbearable. My heart couldn't handle the internal bruises Linda's cries committed. So, I decided to endure part of this agonizing weight. Their dreams were finally becoming a reality. They were going to have a baby. And I was going to become a surrogate mother for them.

The doctor told me they are going to begin the epidural. Then, darkness begins to wrap around me. The figures surrounding me in the hospital room turn splotchy as I let myself sink into the darkness. I feel a stinging sensation build upon my face. I look into the mirror, and my hand cups the spreading of reddish-purple patches forming on my cheek. I travelled to the same day my brain attempted to edit out multiple times. It was the 3rd of December, the eighth month of my pregnancy. Tom is looking down at me. No remorse. No regret. Just a furious look of anger built in his eyes, his rage ready to swing another punch.

“STOP!” I scream, tears glistening through the brim of my eyes. “You'll hurt the baby!”

“The baby?” he scoffs. “That's all you seem to care about these days. You no longer care for us.”

He had crossed the line. I was doing this for my best friend. He promised me he would support me through it.

“You know why I'm doing this Thomas. You were there when Linda and Eric received the results and you promised you'll be there for me. How could you say these things without considering their situation?” I say sternly.

“CONSIDER THEM?” he screams. “YOU DIDN'T CONSIDER ME WHILST MAKING THIS DECISION! YOU'VE COMMITTED BETRAYAL. HOW COULD YOU CARRY THEIR CHILD BUT NOT MINE?”

He starts yelling and throwing items across the floor. The flags all turned red. I knew I had to leave. His screeching was the last I ever heard of him.

“3, 2, 1, push!” I hear the nurse say. Her voice is distant yet not far. I don't see her face. Instead, I'm met with two other figures. The two people who are the cause of my existence. My parents. Their faces are lined with wrinkles, frowning with disapproval. I had just announced I was two months into surrogacy.

“Honey,” my mum sighs, “you shouldn't have made this decision so recklessly.”

“How could you say that Mum? I've been planning and pondering over this for months and you were there with me!” I tell her.

“Yes but . . . you should have told us that were actually going through with it. What would Tom think?” my father says.

“He said he supports me no matter what. This is for Linda,” I soothingly say, “you know how much she has suffered. It's the least I can do for her.”

“Sweetie, I don't think this is natural. It seems immoral to go against nature. Are you sure you want to go through with it? You should stop while you can,” my Mum told me.

Her words impaled my gut like a knife slicing straight through fresh meat. Her words made me doubt my decisions. Her words made me consider ending the pregnancy right then and there. But then I remembered who I was doing this for. The one who made me laugh a little harder, smile a little stronger and cry a little less. My sister in another life. I smiled, thinking about how grateful I was to find this four-leaf clover of a best friend, but I was met with another disappointed look from my parents. That day was a tough pill to swallow.

Flashing lights greet me in the hospital room. The light from the torch floods my right eye, causing me to become aware of my surroundings.

“She's fine everyone,” the doctor states.

The beckoning silence was filled with sighs of relief. I look down at myself whilst laying down. My belly was huge, purple, and covered in stretch marks. I thought to myself, is this normal? Am I normal? Was this the right choice?

“The baby's here!” a nurse joyously screams.

A collective inhale was shared by the room as we waited in silence. A newborn's cries fill the room, and the rest shed tears.

“It's a boy!” they tell me.

He's alive. He's breathing.

"Congratulations!" they tell me. "You did it!"

Excitement fills the air. The hours of pain disappear in a heartbeat. I gave birth. He's an angel from above. He's a reason to rejoice. Linda is holding the baby, tears streaming down her cheeks. She is happy. Eric is happy.

"You don't know how much this means to me. Thank you," Linda cries while her gentle limbs caress her child.

I think about how I broke up with Tom for this child. I don't feel sad. I think about how my parents hated how I carried another person's child. I don't feel upset. I look down at my body and admire the fantastic feat it has completed. The journey may have been challenging, but the gift was most rewarding. Holding the little life in my arms, I realized how blessed it was. Despite all the negativity I had faced as a surrogate mother, I had helped bring a beautiful new life into the world, which was something to be proud of. It was all worth it.