

Accepting The Unacceptable
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Are you sure you want to do this?

I have to.

You can't change it now.

I need to hold her, just once.

I drew a deep breath and squeezed my eyes shut but warm tears still seeped out. Fear tingled beneath my skin. The swinging door groaned as I pushed it opened. Goose bumps swelled across my flesh and a sting sprang in my nostrils as I entered the cold room reeking of disinfectants.

So puerile, she lay over crisp sheets on a cot, bony knees bent and spread. Sweat drenched parts of the stiff green gown clinging to her tiny breasts and gaunt shoulders. Dizziness swam in my head as a piercing screech escaped her stretched lips.

I smeared my shaking palms over my quivering thighs, pulling in an agitated breath before going to her. Soft brown eyes looked up and soaked into mine. Her face reddened and twisted, as cold delicate fingers squeezed my hand.

“The pain will be over soon sweetheart.” This time you’re not alone. I’m here for you.”

Purple flooded her scrunched face. Her swollen stomach collapsed, and a baby girl slipped out into the world. The mother arched her back and stretched her neck. A nurse pushed the girls shoulders to the bed, as the doctor whisked the infant out of the room. The girls pleading eyes searched mine. Fatigue rushed through me.

“I’m so sorry.” I pressed the words past the prickly growth in my throat. I pulled her close. Her adolescent body trembled against mine.

“I’ll be back.” I left the room.

I searched the rows of clear bassinets that cradled tiny babies bundled tight in white blankets. Pink or blue signs on each crib announced the infant’s name. My heart lunged as I spotted the lone basinet in the corner. The Pink nametag read “Baby Girl.” A sheet draped the crib concealing the infant. I slid the cover back and stared into the angelic face peeking at me. I picked her up, caressed her satiny cheek against mine, and wallowed in the fresh aroma of the newborn baby. Faint infant cries stirred a need in me to nurture.

It is so unnatural, to take this away from a mother. I cradled the child and bawled as I succumbed to the reality of this unchangeable situation. Her tiny round face shifted from side to side with her delicate heart shaped mouth suckling. I carried the baby like a precious treasure and placed her in the mother’s outstretched arms. She cuddled the infant to her breast and nursed her baby. I begged for time to stand still. I wrapped my arms around them and sobbed.

“We did what we had to do.” I whispered as I rocked my teenage self back and forth.

I opened my eyes and came back to the present, hot tears rolling down my face. Poignant pain still throbbed in my heart, even though so many years had passed since I gave that baby up for adoption.