

## Chapter Two: *Baby Zoë*

... The nursery has light pink walls with a bunny rabbit border along the bottom of the wall. The ceiling is painted blue with clouds. In the center of the nursery is an all white crib, with a pink bumper pad. There are various toys in her nursery, including a three foot by four foot handmade doll house. There was a mobile of bunnies over Zoë's crib.

"This is your new home." Janet turns slowly to give Zoë, who is now awake, a look at her new home. "You'll be safe from the nasty old world in here."

Jack walks up next to Janet and caresses her head gently. "The doctors feel that in time she'll be able to lead a normal life."

Janet doesn't take her eyes off Zoë. "Those doctors had my baby for five months and they still don't know what's wrong with her." She finally looks up at Jack. "All they could tell us is that I may never be able to touch my baby."

Jack kisses her on her head. "They said we should avoid direct contact with her. We can still hold her and show her affection as long as something is between us, such as a sheet or some sort of clothing."

"I refuse to treat my daughter as a leper."

"I still think we should go back and get the incubator."

Janet snaps at him, "My daughter will not live her life inside that contraction nor be treated like a prisoner in her own house."

"All I'm saying is that we should give it some thought. We can't protect her forever."

"My daughter will live a normal life. End of discussion!"

Jack turns Janet to face him and looks into her eyes. He notice a very small cut on her left cheek that's bleeding a little. "What happened to your face? How did you get that cut?"

Janet walks over to the mirror that is mounted on Zoë's dresser. She studies her face in the mirror. "I don't know. I must have scratched it getting out of the car."

"You're bleeding. I'll go get something for it." Jack turns and starts walking out of the nursery.

Janet turns and looks back over her shoulder. "Don't fuss. I'll be fine." Janet walks over to Zoë's Crib and places her in it. She removes the blanket from Zoë's tiny body. She's careful not to come into contact with her as she covers Zoë with the blanket. She adjusts the blanket so that it doesn't cover Zoë's face. She gently gives Zoë a kiss on her forehead.

Jack sticks his head back into the room to ask Janet a question and catches her kissing Zoë. He snaps at her. "What are you doing?" He races into the room and over to the crib. "Don't you remember what Doctor Wells said? He told us no physical contact at all."

Janet becomes visibly upset and tears of anger and defiance stream down her face. Her voice starts to quiver slightly as she speaks. "I will not allow you, Doctor Wells nor anyone tell me I can't kiss my child!"

Jack doesn't say a word he looks at Janet briefly and then turns and walks out of the nursery.

Janet looks back down at Zoë. "My sweet angel, mommy will never let anything or anyone hurt you ever again." Suddenly fear grips Janet. She notices a cut on Zoë's left cheek. Janet lets out a shriek of horror, "Oh my dear God! No!" Janet runs to the door and calls for Jack. "Jack! Come here quickly, hurry!"

Jack can be heard running down the hallway towards Janet. Janet runs back over to Zoë. She stands there staring in total disbelief.

Moments later Jack comes running into the room in a panic. "What? What is the matter? Is Zoë alright?"

Janet stands there for a moment. She's at a loss for words. She is finally able to get her words out. "She just had a cut on her cheek a few seconds ago. Now it's gone."

"Are you sure it wasn't just blood from you?"

"I know what a cut looks like."

Jack looks at Zoë's face. "I don't see anything."

"It was there I swear." Jack looks at Janet's face and a puzzled look washes over his face. Janet looks at him inquisitively. "What?"

Jack reaches out and touches her left cheek, "Your face."

Janet asks, "What about my face?"

Jack turns Janet to face the mirror. He then turns her left cheek to face towards the mirror to reveal no cut. Not even a scar. "We have to get her back to the hospital."

"Why? So they can keep her another five months?" Janet shakes her head, "No. My baby is staying right here where she's safe, where she's loved."

## Chapter Two: *A Promise Broken*

Like I was saying I don't have many childhood memories, at least not happy ones. I do however remember my seventh birthday as if it was yesterday. A few years earlier dad took out the nursery and expanded my room.

You would think I would be able to keep my room clean with all of that extra room. Unfortunately the addition didn't give me any extra room. There was this hideous divider that cut off one quarter of my room, when heavy clear plastic curtains were drawn. It was like living in a bubble.

The first quarter of my room was the entrance slash guest area. When the bubble was sealed shut, there were only two folding chairs and a folding table on that side. They stayed in the far corner until I had company.

The other three quarters of my room is where I spent most of my time. I had all of my toys on this side, along with my queen size bed, dresser and walk in closet. I even had my very own private bathroom, complete with my own vanity room, which I almost never used.

My walls were covered with hand drawings. I loved to draw. I even drew some especially for mom and dad. Dad enjoyed taking them to work. At least that is what he said. Some were even good enough to make it to the refrigerator door. ...