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## **“Growing Up”**

By Bryce Black

My fiancé being pregnant and the birth of my child was the scariest thing in my life because I didn't know what to expect, or if I was making enough money to support a child. When I was first told the news, I felt so happy. I was left with so many questions such as how I would support a child, or how I would do as a first-time parent.

The whole pregnancy ended up being a nightmare. There were countless times that my heart was filled with fear. The first downward spiral came at 14 weeks. We tried to find our son's heartbeat, and nothing was picking up. My heart dropped, and I remember feeling so empty. We ended up going to the Olean Emergency Room. The doctor ended up ordering an ultrasound. We had found out that the placenta was anterior. Thankfully, the baby ended up being ok. But at 16 weeks there was another scare. My fiancé could not feel the baby move, though again thankfully he was fine. We both felt anxious and scared about the entire pregnancy. Another bad part of the pregnancy was at 19 weeks. My fiancé was bleeding. Our first thought was a miscarriage. We never got an answer and they told us to come back.

We went back to the hospital at 20 weeks. My fiancé felt like her blood pressure spiked. When we got there, it was 154/76. Within minutes it spiked up to 176/94. I felt a sudden panic. I was worried about my fiancé. She had never experienced an issue like this before. They had also run a test for Pre-Eclampsia. The test came back positive. Olean called OB-GYN. They sent us home and told us to call. I felt incredibly angry that nothing was being done. I also was angry that it was missed for 20 weeks. By this point in the pregnancy, I had felt very down. Nothing was going our way. All experiences up to this point were bad. The next day we were told to get to the hospital fast. I left work, and we rushed to the hospital. They did bloodwork, ran tests, and

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checked for the heartbeat. This was a constant cycle every time we went to the hospital. We once again got sent home with no answers.

By this point I had lost my job due to the fact of having to leave work to deal with these medical issues. I felt stressed, and didn't know what to do. The Coudersport OB where we went never helped. Anytime we had concerns or questions, the doctor never addressed these. The concerns were just brushed off, as if we never said anything. At 28 weeks my fiancé was leaking fluid. We went back to the hospital. They did not run any tests, and just sent us home. At 34 weeks we were in Erie at UPMC Hamot. My fiancé was experiencing high blood pressure, blurred vision, and urine discoloration. This was a concern. I rushed her to the hospital. It ended up being an infection. At 35 weeks we headed back to the hospital. My fiancé almost fainted in the store and had blurred vision. We rushed to the hospital. She had high protein in her urine, and they recommended we see a high-risk doctor. By that point I felt full of fear. For my son, and my fiancé.

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, we decided it was best not to wait. We went to Olean because of the protein in her urine. Her levels were triple the amount of a normal person. They checked her for blood clots. I remember the doctor coming in. He said, "we're going to deliver you tonight." The doctor decided we needed to be transferred to Buffalo. His decision came because she had Pre-Eclampsia with severe features. I remember being so scared that I asked if my fiancé and the baby were going to be ok. It was one in the morning when we got to Buffalo. My heart was racing, and I was terrified. By this point I felt sick to my stomach over the anxiety. They had run a battery of tests. They wanted to be sure she had severe features. By this point she was just shy of 36 weeks. At 6am on June 23<sup>rd</sup> they determined that she had severe features. Later that day they decided to induce her. This was done with Pitocin. She was also on Magnesium. They were

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concerned she may have a seizure. They put a bulb in at 2cm to get her more dilated. By the time she was 5cm, they broke her water. When they increased the dose of Pitocin the fetal heartbeat decreased. They dropped the dose, and the heartbeat would go up. They went back and forth with the dose all day.

By 5am on the 24<sup>th</sup> they decided she needed a C-section. I did not even know what to think or feel. At 6am she went in for the operation. I knew that there were risks that came with it. Our son was born at 6:39am. He did not make any noise at first. We both panicked. He was born at 36 weeks pre-mature. Our son was taken to the NICU two hours after birth. He had trouble breathing because he had fluid in his lungs. His birth was a happy, but also a sad time. He was in the NICU for 2 long weeks. We went through thousands of dollars to stay with him. We had many up and down moments. We also had countless arguments with doctors, and nurses. Our son ended up being diagnosed with Laryngomalacia. Which is the soft, immature cartilage of the upper larynx collapses inwards during inhalation, causing obstruction of the airways. I felt scared because I know that babies sometimes choke, and now he had an even bigger risk. Our son was also diagnosed with the CMV virus (Cytomegalovirus). I feel that he caught this because of carless nurses. The nurses did not take proper protocol or wear the proper equipment. We went to visit him every day, and multiple times he was lying in his own vomit. I was very unhappy to say the least. I don't feel that Buffalo provided us with equal care. They had no consideration for our feelings on anything. They also had a lack of communication with us.

All the doctors and nurses were unhelpful, and for a first-time parent, it leaves a lasting impact. For the rest of my life this will be the scariest and worst experience. After two long weeks, we finally came home. Everything was great. I had a stable job, and I was able to support

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my family. I have had countless sleepless nights, which is to be expected. I have no good things to say about the whole pregnancy. The only good that came out of it was my son being born.

This is why it is the scariest thing I've ever gone through. It changed my perspective on a lot of things. I never knew how stressful and complicated a pregnancy can be. I always thought it was a straightforward thing. I never wish anyone to go through what we went through. It matured me because I now have my own family to take care of and support. I could not be prouder of the person I've turned into in 9 months. A good thing that came at the end of it was my decision to go to college. I made this decision because I want to give people what I didn't get. I also want to always be financially stable, and able to do the things my parents did for me. I was super immature before all of this because I did not have any major responsibilities. I was irresponsible with money and credit. I am now debt free and learning how to save money. Having a child gives a new meaning to life, and I am so happy that it helped me build up a better person.