

Little Person, Big Moment

By Olivia Carle

It has been said that today's little moments become tomorrow's precious memories, that we do not know how important a moment is until we look back on it later. One of those moments for me was meeting a tiny person who has taken over a large part of my heart.

On Thursday, April 29th I was practically shaking with anticipation and unable to concentrate. My sister was in the hospital. My mom finally got the call. "Born at 7:10". "Eight pounds, 4 ounces." "21 inches long." As I heard my mom's part of the conversation, I knew one thing was certain. I had a new niece. My first niece. I couldn't wait to meet her and find out her name, which around an hour later I discovered, was Nora Jane.

Having school the next day was hard; knowing we couldn't meet her in person until Saturday was torture. Saturday finally arrived. We got up fairly early, around 8, quickly got showered and dressed. Then we crowded in two cars and started on our trip of an hour and a half to their apartment. I could hear the clock in my mind incessantly tick tock, tick tock. The drive seemed endless. My mom had decided she would help my sister and her husband for the first week of Nora's life, so she was already at their apartment. We made no stops along the way to make the trip even shorter. Tick tock, tick tock. We walked into their new apartment that I hadn't seen before. I smelled the cats, and as if on cue, I was greeted by one of them at the door.

I felt his fur along my calf, as I fought the crowd of my sisters, mom and brother-in-law. What seemed like right away, my mom handed my niece to my sister and she sat on the couch and held her first. I stared, from a distance, at her baby face in awe. She lay so calm and peacefully in my older sister's arms. Though I had seen pictures, she looked different in person. Real. Pale skin, big blue eyes, baby hair. I sat there on the carpet waiting, all other chairs in the small apartment taken by family members also waiting for their turn. I felt a wave of nerves that I hadn't felt before as it was covered with my excitement and anticipation, yet eagerness at the same time. I had excitedly waited months to be an aunt, to have a new responsibility, and to have someone to dress up and play with but now, I was anxious in a way. Now instead of the tick tock of the clock, I felt like everyone in the room could hear my loud beating heart. I didn't want to mess anything up. I wanted to make a good impression, even though she was just a baby.

After a while of waiting for the moment I could really meet her, it was my turn to hold her for the very first time. When I held her I was nervous and scared that I would do something wrong but she didn't cry or seem agitated. It was like she was smiling, though that was not really possible. She looked up at me, trying to focus on my face, acting happy, yawning and stretching and sighing with contentment--almost like she was as eager to meet me as I was to meet her. I kept asking questions like "Am I doing this right?", "Does she look comfortable?", "Is she okay?". Here I was holding living proof of the time that has passed, my memories prior, and future possibilities flashed through my mind.

"Hi Nora, I'm your Auntie Livvie," I squeaked out.

Then I heard my younger sister whisper, "Livvie looks like she's crying" and all of a sudden I felt the tears I was trying to hold in on my cheek. I began to feel embarrassed. Why

was I so emotional? My mom reassured me that it's okay to cry because this was a big moment for me, and the months to follow really showed me that she was right.

When the moment I met Nora had passed, I came to realize that it was reality that my older sister, who once looked after me and my siblings, now looked after her own child. I love being an aunt and it has really altered my life in ways I never expected. Nora makes me so happy and it's amazing to see how her personality changes every time I am able to see her. I'm glad to have a new addition to my family and the fact that I am able to grow up as I witness her growing up too is really a gift. I am so grateful that she is in my life and to have this once little moment but now a precious memory, in my mind forever.