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English B41A

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Cycle of Life, novel outline

Characters:

-Narrator: woman, early twenties. Remains unnamed entire novel despite nicknames mentioned by family members. Nickname: Bird/Birdie. Could be a metaphor for a foreshadowed aspect of the novel. Since Storks are known for being bringers of babes. Has symbolic meaning.

-Matt: husband, bestfriend. Late twenties. Loving, genuine, unconditionally caring. Works real estate. Steady job and head on shoulders. Nothing mentioned of his family.

-Mom & Dad: Parents on the narrators side. Unnamed other than “mom” and “dad”. Supportive. Hard-working. Dental assistant: mom. Oil-field manager: father. Always there for the narrator and her husband.

-Doctor: A regular toward the second half of the novel. Plays important role in a few chapters. Women’s Health Center. Male doctor. Older.

Conflict: Career changes, marriage spats, money struggles, raising children.

This story takes place in Bakersfield, CA. There are local doctor’s offices, doctor’s, restaurants, and scenery mentioned that takes place in Bakersfield. Most of the story revolves around the narrator. It is told from her point of view on the things around her. It is about her experiences meeting “the one,” moving in, living life, starting a family, and all the ups and downs that come along with it.

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September 4th

Eighteen. Eighteen full and blissful weeks.

Well, let's be honest: not all blissful. The first thirteen were rough. My life was an everyday cycle of wake-up, vomit, go about my day and pray I don't vomit again while out in public, until I finally make it back home to sleep and restart the cycle. But over the last five weeks things have gotten progressively better.

The morning consisted of a doctor's visit that confirmed we will be welcoming a beautiful baby girl into the world on February 2. I already had the entire nursery planned whether it be boy or girl, but inside I was hoping for a girl! Pink and gold, bows and princess crowns. The whole ordeal. And I could officially start shopping and decorating.

"What about Ella?" My husband asked interrupting my visions of bringing Disneyland to our house. Ella was a name from a Disney movie that happened to be about my favorite princess: Cinderella. "A princess name, for our future princess." I just smiled to myself. I swear love like ours only exists in fairytales. Everything is so effortless with him. There is never resistance. I have no doubt that he will be the best father in the entire world. You know, a real Jack Pearson type.

"Or maybe, Adeline." He thought for a second, "I think I read that it means noble. And she needs a meaningful name, a strong name." He was right. The more I thought about it the more I liked Adeline.

“Both are beautiful. We should get ready for lunch with my mother though. You know she’s been waiting to hear the news all morning. She is probably going crazy by now.” I stood up to head to the bedroom and get myself together.

I always told myself whenever I got pregnant in life that I would be one of those model, picturesque pregnant ladies. Dresses, heels, glowing natural make-up, hair done all the time. Dressed to the nines. Easy to say that didn’t happen. I’ve been living in yoga pants and my husband’s t-shirts for the last three months. My hair stays in the same bun and my face is lucky if it gets moisturized in the mornings. I don’t get those women who say, “Pregnancy is beautiful”, “I loved being pregnant”, “Pregnancy is fun”. Blah blah blah. Here I stand in the mirror, facing my reality. I’m in that awkward stage. The stage where I kind of just look like I could be getting fat. Everyone I know wants to ask if I’m pregnant but the sly chance that it could just be over eating stops them. Plus, I feel sluggish. Even though the vomiting stopped (thank God), I’m still constantly tired. It takes me forever to get myself moving.

“It’s one o’clock babe, are you ready?” As slow moving as I am you’d think Matt would be the one waiting on me. NOPE. He’s always been the woman in the relationship. His hair has to be perfect. I don’t mind though. He’s a dream to look at.

“Yes, yes. I’m coming. Where are we going anyway?” He asked.

“My mom made reservations for us at Tahoe Joe’s for 1:30.” Tahoe Joe’s has always been my favorite. But since I’ve been pregnant all I ever crave is their railroad shrimp. Which is strange because I have hated seafood my entire life. Pregnancy cravings, who would have known.

“Have you seen my wallet?” Matt asked patting his pockets. “Already have it. And your phone. And your keys...” I replied trying my best to sound annoyed. He saw right through and rolled his eyes at me and kissed my cheek. We started toward the car and headed out.

“Over here honey!” I heard my mom’s voice from the patio as we were walking up. I looked and saw my dad as well. We went through the gate and were greeted with hugs and over ecstatic smiles.

“I thought you had to work today?” I asked my father.

“And miss my babygirl’s announcement of the first grandchild she is giving me? Work can wait Birdie. Plus, we thought it’d be a nice surprise.” He assured me as he squeezed my hand. Bird. Birdie. That has been my nickname for as long as I can remember. No one ever calls me that anymore except my dad. Him missing work was like canceling Christmas, it never happens! I felt my stomach turn and I got teary-eyed. (Stupid hormones).

“WELL, tell us! Are we having a little boy or a little girl?” My mom could barely contain herself.

“Oh, let them get settled and let’s get our appetizers.” My dad pat my moms leg. “It won’t be long. We ordered wings for Matt and myself, Moms salad, and I got you the shrimp Bird.” We talked about work and school until the food came. I devoured my shrimp in an embarrassing amount of time. I gave my parents each one last guess of what they think the baby will be before telling them it’s a girl.

“I told you!” My dad exploded with excitement.

“Well, now the baby shower planning can begin. I have already talked to Kelly and we have so many ideas for a girl shower. You won’t have to worry about anything! Oh, she is going to be SO spoiled.” My mom was already in overdrive. I wouldn’t have it any other way. I can only hope to be half the mother she is to my little bug. And I can only hope to have the same relationship my mother & I have. She’s such an amazing woman. Always putting her kids and husband before her. Working hard her entire life and loving unconditionally. I could feel myself getting teary-eyed again.

The rest of lunch consisted of plans. We discussed the shower, the nursery ideas, names, and shopping dates. I can’t even put into words how thankful I am for my parents. They have always been so supportive. I was enjoying the warmth from the sun but the cool from the September breeze as everyone chatted merrily. I could smell the scent of lavender and other flowers as I sat there thinking of what a wonderful day it had been. As they say all good things must come to an end.

“Any dessert?” The waitress asked.

“Ooo, can we take home some cheesecake?” I begged.

“Of course, can we get four slices of cheesecake to go?” My dad ordered. “That way we can all have one.” If you have never had Tahoe Joe’s cheesecake, you are not living your life right. It is the best cheesecake I have ever had. It tastes like pure sugar in a creamy form, on top of the sweetest crunchy crust. Once the waitress returned with our cake, and my dad paid the ticket, I thanked them both for lunch and their support and we made our way to the cars.

I woke up from a nap on the couch a few hours later that evening. I felt hot. My hair was damp and I felt like I couldn't catch my breath. I could feel a sharp pain in my stomach. Something wasn't right. The nausea was intense and I made a run for the bathroom while trying to yell for Matt in the process. I threw up and it felt like it was never going to stop. I was crying on the floor when I finally heard front door open.

"Hey babe, where are you? Is everything okay?" I faintly heard him across the house. I stood up and went to the sink to rinse my mouth.

"I'm in here." I choked out. I was still crying and trying to wave my hands to fan my face. He made it to the bathroom and had a severe look of concern on his face. He grabs my shoulders, "What's going on, do you need something? What can I do? Hey, look at me!"

"Can I have some water and a wet towel please." He left in a rush to grab it all for me. I stood there, looking at myself in the mirror and my hands grasping the edges of the countertop until my knuckles were white. I didn't look good. I looked like a ghost. My skin was pale with a tint of blue. The more I thought about it, the more I realized I hadn't felt the baby move at all. Normally when I vomit she starts kicking up a storm. Suddenly, I felt weighted. Like there was a magnetic force pulling me to the ground and my feet couldn't hold me up. Everything started to go black. I felt my head hit the edge of the counter and then- nothing.