

Baby Love

The end of the school day at Harvey Wood Primary. Mothers standing in groups arranging play dates and catching up on the gossip, except for three solitary parents.

Sharon slouched against the bollards on the school crossing just outside the gates, flicking cigarette ash and blowing white clouds of smoke into the cold air. God it was so annoying having to drag herself away from daytime TV to pick the kid up from school. She was younger than most of the mums and wasn't interested in Jasmine joining ballet classes or gymnastics, besides she couldn't afford it. She'd got pregnant at eighteen and wasn't quite sure who the dad was, there had been a few one night stands. She was five months gone by the time she'd realised. She thought having a baby would be fun, but Jasmine was a nightmare. Cried every night until she was two. Sharon stubbed out the fag end with her Ugg-boot and pulled out the packet of Monster Munch for Jasmine to eat on the bus home.

Melanie, now 48, was the oldest mum in the playground. She'd tried for a baby for such a long time, initially thinking it was her age, it was a shock when the tests showed the problem was with John. After rounds of IVF and £30,000 down, she'd looked at the pregnancy test, blinked at John and whispered 'I'm pregnant.' He'd taken it well when a sperm donor was suggested and never referred to Poppy not being his biological daughter, but Melanie often wondered what Poppy's real dad looked like and where he was now, eight years on? Sadly they couldn't afford any more children so Poppy was extra special as an only child. Melanie didn't mix with the other parents, she felt she had little in common with them.

Steve's friends would describe him as a 'lucky bastard'. He had it all; good looks, great job, beautiful wife, a daughter and a son, couple of foreign holidays a year. Standing alone in the playground waiting to pick Emily up, he smiled to himself, an early finish for the family tennis lesson at 5 o'clock. He'd turned his life around, he'd been a 'player', sewn a few wild oats in his time, even donated to the sperm bank. But once his wife had brought those first pink baby shoes eight years ago, he'd changed. No more extra-maritals for him. He was a family guy and on the PTA!

Jasmine, Poppy and Emily came out of the cloakroom, arms linked, blonde hair swinging and green eyes flashing in excitement as they giggled. Watching from the office window the headmistress smiled and said to the secretary,

"Look at those three amigos, they could be sisters."

459 words – Song title Comp Nov 2020

Baby Love – Supremes 1964