

Positive or Negative?

Twelve years is a long time to wait to become a mother. It sounds easy doesn't it? Eat healthily, no alcohol, a few vitamins, do all the other 'stuff' you have to do to conceive.

For Mari it was not that simple. There were blood tests and scans, operations and medications, tantrums and tears and layer upon layer of raised hopes and dashed dreams.

Each month her body forced her to relinquish that dream, then as days passed, she regained a tiny glimmer of hope whilst anticipating the next disappointment.

It was inconceivable that she could *not* conceive. At times she was resigned to life's fate; at others, pure anger seeped from her pores and pervaded the atmosphere. She ranted at her husband 'Mari means Mother, I was given a name that is a total lie' Stephan had long since given up trying to find appropriate answers, there were none. He silently sighed.

Doctors had 'good' advice 'What you need is to relax. Go on a long holiday to the Caribbean, make love on the beach' Mari smiled wryly. 'Does that come on the NHS?'

Stephan felt hopeless. He was a powerful man. He was in charge at work and managed his team with enthusiasm and professionalism. His Saturdays were spent coaching a local football team. He was respected, he was in control, yet this one issue was beyond him.

His 'part' in it was simple enough. He had produced a sample which had tested well, that was the easy bit. What was becoming increasingly difficult was having to cope with Mari's ups and downs, and having to 'perform' to order because it was day fourteen!

Stephan returned from work one day and with a little hope in his voice explained that since his recent promotion, he and his immediate family had been offered private medical cover.

‘I have asked, and although infertility is a pre-existing condition, they have agreed to us having an initial consultation and tests.’

Arrangements made; the following week Mari set off for her consultation. She was feeling unsettled and just ‘not quite right’. She put it down to anxiety, or maybe the stormy weather was affecting her.

She boarded the bus, constantly patting to check her pocket which concealed a urine sample in a plastic bottle within a brown paper bag. The sky changed from grey to black, ‘I hope this isn’t a bad omen’ Mari worried.

Arriving at the clinic, Mari was immediately ushered into the specialist’s office. The suited doctor peered over his half- moon spectacles ‘Good morning young lady, did you bring your sample?’ He dipped a testing stick into the bottle and glanced at his wristwatch. A flash of lightening and loud clap of thunder interrupted the silence. The Doctor glanced at his watch once more, looked at the stick and asked, ‘Are you ready for this?’ Mari’s heart missed a beat ‘Er... er.....’ She stuttered; she could hardly breathe.

‘Are you ready for this storm? Did you bring an umbrella?’

500 words