

“It’s All in the Eyes”

By Marcy Hukill

As told to Kelly Fordyce Martindale

Even with the shooting outside our window, I didn’t regret or fear our quest to adopt the little girl waiting for us. I had had a vision of her eyes, and it was her eyes that kept me faithful to the end. The shootings, the desperate order of the police for us to leave that part of town, and the threat of arrest by an attorney were only a few of our challenges to adopt little Hannah.

My husband and I had two children by birth. It was during their adolescence that we knew we still wanted more children. I had undergone a tubal ligation years before, so we understood our limitations up front. After counseling with a specialist, we decided to have my tubal reversed. After two surgeries, we had to face the fact that scarring would prohibit the ovulation of my eggs and that we could not have any more children.

Still, the deep desire to have another child would not be quieted. After determining that there was absolutely no possibility of my eggs getting through my fallopian tubes, we took the next step: in vitro fertilization (IVF). My husband and I were healthy, and our eggs and sperm were too, so IVF seemed a viable option.

Our doctor was working with another woman at the same time he was working with us. Many times the three of us would meet and discuss issues pertaining to IVF. The doctor had explained to each of us that I was the perfect candidate for this procedure, I had already given birth and had healthy pregnancies. Everything was working just fine for me, except that the eggs couldn’t get where they needed to go. The other woman, however, had a slim chance of carrying

the embryos for multiple reasons. Not only did her husband have a low sperm count, but also she suffered severe problems in her uterus, and her fallopian tubes didn't function properly. By all the evidence, it seemed impossible for her to carry the embryos. On the other hand, my chances seemed very high.

After two weeks of waiting, we both showed up for our pregnancy tests. The nurses drew the blood, and we waited for the results. I prayed for her because I knew her chances were so slim. She had no children, and everything appeared to be against her. However, when our tests came back, hers was positive and mine negative. She was pregnant and I wasn't! The doctor did her test three times because he didn't believe it was accurate. I was devastated. There was no explanation for my test results.

I went through IVF three times—each with a negative result. The first time felt not only depressing but like the breath was squeezed out of me. And each time after that, more breath was squeezed out of me until I didn't want to breathe anymore. I was almost unable to function in any area of my life. I questioned God, too. Why would He put the desire in my heart and then lead me to a dead end?

One evening, around 8:00, I was running on the treadmill in my family room. There is a full-length mirror in front of the treadmill, and I was watching myself run. I had gotten to the point where I couldn't think of anything else except having a baby. I was so depressed. As I ran, I listened to music through my headphones. I suppose I had been running about forty minutes, watching myself in the mirror, lost in my own world. All of a sudden, the brown eyes of a little girl appeared in the mirror. I still cry when I think about this. It was so sudden it stunned me. I was catapulted off the treadmill. The headphones nearly jerked my head off my shoulders. Everything around me seemed to stand still in time.

I believe God deliberately stopped everything around me so I would hear Him and sense His presence. He didn't tell me anything audibly, but I knew those brown eyes belonged to the baby girl I would someday have. I didn't see her face or anything else—just her eyes. Before that moment, I didn't believe in visions.

Now, the problem was how to convince my family I saw this baby. I didn't tell my husband about it for a long time. Finally, one morning when I was praying in my dining room, I felt like I was supposed to take action. I knew I was supposed to get off my knees and start the search. I finally approached my husband. We agreed our only opportunity to have another child was through adoption. When I told him about the brown-eyed baby girl, he didn't really believe me. His spiritual experiences were very different from mine, so he couldn't understand.

We discussed adoption off and on. But every time I would talk about “the eyes,” it led to an argument between us. He thought I was losing my mind, and he wanted me to go to a psychiatrist. We eventually reached a point where our marriage started falling apart.

Everyday my eyes were bloodshot from crying. As time went by, the kids stopped asking me what was wrong because they knew I was crying about *the* baby girl. The sorrow was so excruciatingly deep that the kids started feeling like they weren't enough for me. I tried to explain but nobody seemed to understand this hunger in my soul.

For over a year, our family struggled. My husband and I couldn't even talk about a baby anymore.

One day I decided I must have not been praying for the right thing. God had already shown me the baby girl, yet everything else I loved was collapsing around me. So, I started praying for my husband and family. I quit talking about a baby. It hurt deeply to deny a part of my being, but I found a Bible verse that helped me: “With men this is impossible but with God,

all things are possible,” (Matt. 19:26) NIV. I reminded myself constantly of this. I was the first to admit we were in an impossible situation. I couldn’t have children physically, and my husband was now fine with not having more children. Because we already had two kids, we were put on a very long waiting list. Everything seemed impossible.

I was depressed and felt hopeless, I was even starting to think that perhaps I was psychotic. Maybe I should have taken anti-depressants, but I just kept thinking about that Scripture, believing it was up to God to find a solution to this insurmountable problem. If God had really shown me those eyes—and I still believed He had—then He would have to change my husband’s heart so we could move ahead with adopting.

One night while lying in bed, my husband asked out of the blue, “Did you call the adoption agency?” I was astounded. The question shocked me because we’d had no real communication between us for quite a while. After that, we started talking more.

Eventually, we did our home study, one part of the adoption application process. We wanted to adopt any child as long as it was a girl—a brown-eyed girl. I had to go with my heart. I had seen her eyes and I knew they were brown.

The social worker questioned some of the answers on our application. She made me feel selfish and guilty for writing my desire for a brown-eyed girl. I stood my ground, even my husband supported me.

Finally, we received a telephone call from an attorney. “No promises,” he told us, “but we have a mother who might give up her baby girl.”

At the time I felt certain this must be the baby. The mother lived in another state, and we found out she was a drug addict. We made the trip to go see her but everything fell through. The

state told her if she would keep her baby, the government would pay for her to go to college and help her in other ways. We had hit yet another brick wall, and we returned home empty-handed.

We later received another telephone call from the attorney, but this time about a baby boy. Reluctantly, I met with the birth mom and that potential adoption also fell through.

Just before Thanksgiving, the social worker called us this time. She explained there was a birth mom wanting to relinquish her baby at birth. Apparently, other families were not interested in this adoption because it was considered a special needs adoption. We were definitely interested.

A month of anxiety went by before we heard anything. Then on December 23, the phone rang. It was the birth mom called. Without small talk or introduction she simply asked, “You were going to take my baby?”

I nearly collapsed from the shock of the phone call. She continued talking, “I always dreamed of living on a farm. I always wanted the things you wrote about on the application.”

When I finally regained my composure, we talked about her due date, how she was doing, and some other matters as well, then we hung up. I didn’t even know where she had called from or where she lived. The social worker was upset because the birth mom didn’t follow protocol. Clients are supposed to go through the proper channels and not speak to each other.

The birth mom wasn’t abiding by any of the rules. After Christmas she called us again, speaking to us from a McDonalds in Texas. “I think I’m going to have the baby,” she told me. “I’ve got a pain,” she said with a moan. Then the telephone went dead.

I called the operator and asked for a hospital in the area of Texas from which the birth mom had called. I realized I was looking for a needle in a haystack because there were so many hospitals in that metropolitan area. But I picked one and called it anyway. I asked for the

emergency room and explained I was looking for a woman who was having a baby. I could only tell them the mother's first name, and I knew nothing about the father. The nurse rang another room and asked around for the birth mom. Miraculously, I had called the right hospital. The nurse got back on the telephone and exclaimed, "Oh, she just delivered a baby girl."

I almost dropped the receiver. My whole family was standing around when I heard the cry of a newborn baby. The nurse delivered the news that we had our new little girl. I cried out in joy. Immediately, my husband handed me the credit card and said, "Go."

Without asking her, I purchased an airline ticket for my sister and me. I called her at work and told her I was coming to get her immediately. She stammered and said something about clothes.

We flew to Texas, with only eight hours having passed since learning of the baby's birth. My sister and I ran into the hospital, arguing over who would see the newborn first. The door was shut when we reached the birth mother's room. I looked at my sister and she said, "You go first."

"I can't." I think I remember her saying she'd open the door for me. I was so weak she had to hold me up.

When I finally pushed open the door, I saw the birth mother in her bed, and the newborn Hannah was in a bassinet near her. I learned later that the mom had not even held her yet. When the mom saw me, she asked who I was. When I told her, she got out of bed and pushed the bassinet toward me and said, "Here's your baby."

I looked at my new baby daughter, staring into her face. These were the eyes I had seen so long before in the mirror. I held her and soaked up her essence, her sweetness. I knew God had given her to me.

My sister and I were in that huge city for nine days. During that time, we had to get an attorney because I had forgotten important paperwork at home. I was told I could be arrested for kidnapping if I tried leaving with the baby without the paperwork completed and in order.

Another detail I forgot was a car seat. Unbeknownst to us, we had ended up staying in a hotel in a terrible part of town. As we drove around looking for a place to buy the car seat, a policeman pulled us over. When I attempted to get out of the car, he held my door in place until I opened the window. "You know the TV show COPS? This is where it's filmed," He explained. He told us to leave immediately because of the constant danger to strangers. We were already anxious to follow the policeman's advice to get out; especially after the nighttime shootings we heard staying at our hotel.

Thankfully, we safely accomplished everything necessary to complete the adoption of little Hannah. With paperwork, car seat, and other essential baby items in hand, we were prepared to return home.

The airline attendants treated us like royalty, especially after hearing about our harrowing experiences. The flight captain even made an announcement to the passengers, as we showed off our new family member. Crewmembers and passengers rejoiced with us the entire flight home.

As expected, my whole family was waiting for us at the airport. And in front of the whole crowd were my husband and two children, standing with balloons. As I moved to place Hannah in my husband's arms, I wondered if he would love her like I did. Inside, I struggled with what I would do if he didn't see her like I did. But when I handed her to him, he started to cry. His tears showed me that he loved her at first sight.

I think about that whole situation and marvel at God. I used to question if He really knew me, if He really saw *me*. Now I know without doubt that He had a little girl in mind specifically

for me. My will would have been to have the IVFs work. But His will turned out so much better.

I can't imagine my life without my daughter—little, brown-eyed Hannah.

Marcy Hukill lives in Idaho with her husband and three children. They own their own business where she drives a diesel construction truck when needed. Marcy is a *Jane of all trades and a Master of a few* and she loves to “lovingly” embarrass her children.