

A Perfect Match

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I woke up this morning without a pit in my stomach. It felt fantastic. My first thought wasn't - 'What day is it in my cycle?' or 'What injections, hormones or tests do I have to take today?' Nor did I have to worry about having sex. I realize this may sound odd, but, believe me, having to have sex every month on day eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen and eighteen of your cycle, with a couple of extra rides thrown in to be on the safe side, is not all that much fun. I like spontaneity - who doesn't? - and trying to get pregnant destroys that.

Now that we were going to adopt, I was looking forward to getting back to a spontaneous sex life that wasn't ruled by my temperature and didn't end up with me standing on my head for twenty minutes in a lame attempt to aid the sperm by adding my own version of gravity to the equation.

I looked over at James who was heading out to the shower.

'Isn't it great?'

'What?' he said, looking around suspiciously.

'The fact that now when you shower, you can masturbate to your heart's content. Your sperm can swim freely. You no longer have to keep them all in for baby making. Set them free, let 'em flow . . .' I said, waving my arms about over my head. I had previously banned James from masturbating, because I read somewhere that the redundant sperm needed to be kept in for as long as possible, so then they would be chomping at the bit during sex and charge up and fertilize the eggs.

'Thank you, darling,' said James, grinning at me. 'It's wonderful for a man to have his wife's blessing to play with himself. I may be a while.'

I went downstairs to make breakfast. I was feeling very Doris Dayesque as I whisked the eggs and fried the sausages. This was a new day. A fresh beginning. I had a really good feeling about it. No more stress about trying to get pregnant. No more doctors and hospitals and drugs. We were going to adopt. We were going to give a child a happy home. I pictured some poor little mite in a war-torn country gazing at me through the bars of her iron cot. Dressed in rags she looked up at me, her huge blue eyes begging me to take her away to a safe, warm place. I bent down to hold her hand and, slowly, she began to smile at me, her pinched little face lighting up.

'That's the first time Svetlana has ever smiled,' gasped the director of the orphanage. I beamed back at the beautiful little girl. I was special, she was special. We were made for each other.

I imagined James holding Svetlana in his arms as we burst through the arrivals gate in the airport. Our families, gathered to greet us, were holding 'Welcome home, Svetlana' banners and big red 'Congratulations!' balloons. I saw them 'ooing' and 'aahing' when they first met our beautiful, smiling daughter. James and I beamed at each other, proud parents at last. Fast-forwarding twenty years, I saw myself cheering as Svetlana won the best actress award at the Oscars for her portrayal of a deaf musician fighting against the odds to become a world-class pianist. In her acceptance speech she thanked everyone and then, pausing for maximum effect, she said, 'But most of all I want to thank my mother for saving my life. If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here today. This Oscar is for you. Mum, you are the person I love and admire most in the world. I owe everything to you . . .' I nodded and bowed my head as the audience rose to its feet to applaud me.

'Emma, what on earth are you doing? The sausages are burning.' James pushed me aside and pulled the pan off the hob, staring at his blackened breakfast. 'Are you all right? What's going on?'

'Nothing,' I snapped, embarrassed at being caught bowing and waving to the cream of Hollywood.

James shrugged and took over the cooking. He was well used to finding me daydreaming. When he was halfway through his scrambled eggs and burnt sausages, I announced that I was going to call the adoption people.

'Today?' he asked.

'Yes, today. No point in wasting any more time. We might as well get going.'

'OK, well, will you get them to send us out all the relevant information so we can go through it before making the final decision?'

'What do you mean final decision?'

'I'd just like to know a bit more about the process before plunging in, that's all.'