Sierra Nielsen

Journal Assignment

February 11, 2019

It was September 6th, 2007 at 9:43 a.m. We were at the Anaheim Regional Medical Center and our little joy, Camille, had just been born. It was the happiest day of both my wife and I’s life together, but I had an underlying fear. I couldn't tell my wife this. I could hardly even admit it to myself because I knew it was partially my fault. What would she think if she found out that I’d already failed to protect one child? Would she leave to raise Camille by herself? Would she think me an incompetent father? It was so long ago but I never forget. I never stop dreaming about it, reliving it, imagining what I could have done differently... She’s been asking about another child, but I can’t do it. Camille was a surprise, a lovely one, but a terrifying one.

I was married before I met Abigail and we already had a child. Louis. He was a ball of energy and glee. Never frowning, constantly on the move. I’d never loved someone so much. He was the image of perfection in my mind.

Everything was fine until suddenly it was not. It’s funny how in a split second everything can go to hell. We were at the park as a family, enjoying the day and relishing in the beauty of spring. Louis was wandering around but was always within sight. Except when we looked away for a split second to look out at the water, he vanished. We searched the park high and low. We called the police and all the friends we could muster to search, but the search party yielded no results. We didn’t give up, didn’t lose hope, but after two years the strain on Abigail and I’s relationship was too much and it caused us to split. I think we blamed each other.

Fast forward to today: March 13th, 2010. My wife is begging me to have another child. “You aren’t even giving it any thought, Elijah,” she shouts. I have. She has no idea how much I’d considered it for hours on end before giving way to my fear and shutting it down.

I leave the room and get the newspaper article documenting Louis’s disappearance. Realization crosses her face. I expect her expression to turn to revulsion but instead, she embraces me. “It’s okay,” she whispers.

Maybe one day it will be.