

A New Grandchild

by Katie's Grandpa

I remember how excited my daughter and her husband were when they told me they were planning to adopt a baby. My feelings and those of my wife Helen were a bit more complicated. We were excited, of course, but we were also anxious – not worried, but anxious. The baby was going to be born in California. California's a long way from Massachusetts; we just thought so many things could happen.

A few months later, Helen and I got a phone call telling us the baby was about to be born. My daughter and her husband got on a plane and hoped to arrive in California in time for the birth. We waited for a call to let us know they had arrived safely, and we waited for the call to let us know the baby had been born. When those calls finally came, we were very relieved. Baby Katie was born; she was healthy, and from what we were told, she was beautiful. With our other grandchildren, this call would have resulted in us driving to the hospital to verify this information ourselves. Katie was our sixth grandchild; we had quite a bit of experience with these things. But this grandchild was 3,000 miles away. There would be no drive to the hospital. We would have to wait, and so many things could happen.

We waited and waited to meet Katie, but her new family was on the opposite coast of the country for over two weeks. We were anxious while we waited – not worried, but anxious. We thought if they could just get home, it would be okay. Finally, on day fifteen, they boarded a plane headed back to Logan Airport. Helen and I drove up from Connecticut, picked up my sister and Helen's sister and were there waiting to greet them when they departed from the plane. I remember being so surprised seeing my son-in-law, not my daughter, holding the baby. He looked very fatherly, I might add. We milled about the airport, looking at Katie remarking how beautiful she was. And yes, my

daughter had told me this two weeks earlier but a grandfather likes to see for himself.

Helen and I spent the next night at Katie's new home. People came to visit, to look at Katie, and to remark how beautiful she was. I guess it's not just grandfathers who like to see for themselves! As I look back on that visit, my most profound memory is the tangible presence of love that permeated throughout the house. Helen and I talked about it as we went to sleep that night. The presence of love was so real we could both feel it.

In anticipation of the many visits Katie would make to our house, Helen insisted the baby needed a crib there. We bought a crib and although winter was at least six months away, we also bought a gorgeous pink snowsuit. The snowsuit seemed big to me, but I trusted Helen's expertise in this area. Well, three winters came and went before Katie was ever big enough to fill that snowsuit but she used the crib quite a bit. I remember the visits after she started walking. She would lead us all in a never ending pots and pans parade around the house. With the precision of a parade Grand Marshall and the temperament of a drill sergeant, she led us around and around. Ignoring our requests for relief or respite, refusing to accept any letters of resignation offered, she marched on and expected us to follow suit.

Katie is a young lady now. She has been the source of many stories I tell my friend. She's the leader I envisioned when I followed her around my house banging my pot and pan. She is healthy. She is happy. She is beautiful. And she is my granddaughter. Yes, so many things can happen when you adopt a grandchild.