

Nesting for Jessica

By

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INT. BILL'S LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON.

BILL FELDMAN, 35, a bull-necked plaid-shirted man with stern eyes and a tough-man gait, heaves a bag of baby accessories - diapers, pacifiers, bottles, etc - into his living room.

The calendar behind him reads, 'February 14th'. Scribbled in pencil - "Jessica's birthday."

LATER...He places plastic child-safe covers over all the plug-points in the room.

LATER...He is wearing overalls and carrying a toolbox.

On one door, he hammers a nail and hangs up a intricately sewn cross stitch that says 'Baby's Room'. Picking up two cans of paint - one blue and one pink- he enters the newly christened nursery.

INT. NURSERY. AFTERNOON

The room is starkly empty and the walls bare. He places the paint tins on the ground and arms himself with his paintbrush. And then he hesitates.

Blue or pink?

He decides to dip the brush into the blue paint.

Standing back, he surveys his handiwork and shakes his head. Dipping his brush into the pink paint, he tries again.

Standing back, he decides - it's still no good. He leaves the room.

INT. NURSERY. NIGHT

He returns with a new can of paint and his overalls still on. There is a mad glint in his eye and an urgency that wasn't there before.

Cracking the tin open, he paints a lavender swatch onto the wall, his forehead creasing with concentration.

He stands back and smiles with satisfaction.

Then he paints. All through the night.

INT. NURSERY. MORNING.

As the sun rises, Bill has finally finished.

Wild-eyed now, he pulls a beautiful old-style crib into the room. It is obviously an heirloom. It is already furnished with an exquisitely hand sewn blanket.

Next comes a chest of drawers.

Reverently he hangs up a picture. It is of himself and a beautiful woman. He is in a paramedic's uniform, radiating cheekiness as he holds a gigantic umbrella in one hand and his wife in the other.

In a rush, the sounds come back. The screaming, the ambulance sirens, and the whispered "I love you" and his own tortured sobbing.

Bill's lips tremble but the tears don't fall.

He looks down. There are other pictures. He holds each one of them up to his face in a torturous slideshow.

Jessica's now familiar grin holding a positive pregnancy test. Jessica showing off a slightly round bump. The first sonogram.

Suddenly Bill lets out a guttural scream. He swivels and begins to wreck the room. Pulling apart the beautiful crib. Crashing the chest of drawers to the floor.

His beefy hands seize the picture and he is about to send it crashing to the floor. When he sees her face looking up at him.

Bill slumps to the floor as if the air has been let out of him. Tears streaming down his face, he kisses the picture.

INT. NURSERY. LATER THAT DAY

The crib has been mended. But it is empty. The chest of drawers too, mended. But empty. The pictures are up. And full of memory.

OUTSIDE IN THE HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Above the needlepoint 'Baby's Room', Bill tacks up a handwritten sign. "Jessica and."