

My Scarlet Letter
"Fighting With Monsters"

I am troubled.

That moment when you come to terms with the fact that there is something going on inside you that you're having to fight daily. That brief moment right before you decide to pull the trigger, only to realize that you don't have the guts to actually follow through. That moment right before you are about to cry, and you realize you don't know how. That moment after waking up telling yourself that you will have a tremendous day, and reality hits your soul, turning your smile into a frown. These, as the popular show says, "are the days of my life".

I am depressed. In despair. Lost. Mad. Sad. Angry. Discouraged. Faithless. Pissed. Lonely. Trapped. Stuck. Resigned. I am on pause.

I replay the story my birthmother told me about the day I was born. Conceived by a black teenage boy and a young white teenage girl in 1969, I was already in trouble. It had nothing to do with me. I was the innocent one. I didn't know racism. I didn't know hate. I didn't know resentment or betrayal. I didn't know anger. But from the moment I was born, I was dismissed. I was rejected. My birthmother never even had a chance to hold me. When the nurse cleaned me, no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't clean the color of my skin. She couldn't clean the representation of sin from my body. She couldn't clean my Scarlet Letter. When she attempted to hand me to my birthmother for her to look into my innocent eyes for the first time and begin her journey of motherhood, her mother told the nurse "No. We are going to put the baby up for adoption." My birthmother, a confused 16 year old who just experienced the pain and joy of labor, looked up at her mother to hear "Don't try to go see her. This is what's best for you. If you try and go see her in the nursery, we will have you transferred to another facility."

I didn't know what was going on. Why couldn't I be held? Why was I raped of my first experience of being loved? Why was the nurse crying as she was looking at me? Why was my birthmother crying as she tried to reach for my tiny hand? I didn't know what all those tears meant, but I felt it. And then I heard it. My biological grandfather leaned down and whispered into my birthmother's ear, "Young lady, there was no way you were bringing that nigger child into this family." Although I didn't understand the hurt and hate behind the word "nigger", the words I did hear were NO and FAMILY. That was the last time I saw my biological grandparents.

I was taken to the nursery where I stayed in solitary confinement in a small rectangular glass prison. I was allowed no visitors. I was allowed no playtime. The only thing I was allowed to do was scream. It was then that I was marked. They put a big red X on a piece of paper at the end

of my cell. At first I thought it made me special. But I quickly learned otherwise. Jealousy became the one emotion that would stay with me my whole life. My housemates were being picked up and held and kissed. I had no one. For the next 220 hours, all I did was scream. "Who is going to love me? Why won't someone hold me? Why won't someone come kiss me and tell me I am beautiful?" I was scared. No one came to tell me it would be alright.

What I didn't realize was that two months later, I would get what I asked for. I was adopted by two amazing parents. They chose me. They wanted me. They could have picked anyone, but they picked me.

From the very beginning, I felt something so special. I felt something so normal. They didn't look like me, but that was ok. I didn't care. They brought other kids to live with me who had different color skin. But no one ever brought that up. I wasn't the "nigger child" anymore. I was my momma's babygirl. She told me and showed me she loved me every single day of my life. I didn't know what love was, but I did know that if this was it, I wanted to feel it forever. She told me I would be ok. She told me she would be there for me no matter what. Whenever I reached my hand out for hers, I found it. She took me from a nameless child and turned me into a real human being.

My birthparents were not absent from my life. They just didn't know it. My birthmother worked a few times a week for a pediatrician whose daughter was my bestfriend growing up. My biological father ended up going to college a block away from my house. He walked by my house everyday. He even dated my babysister and helped babysit me, not knowing who I was. They were there. They just didn't know it.

They watched me turn into an allstar high school basketball player. They watched as I played in 3 NCAA Final Fours and graduate from college. They watched as I was drafted into the WNBA, act in a Disney Movie, produce a multiplatinum song for a famous rapper, and create my own company, aptly named BLANK. It was then that I was told that the name I was given at birth was Destiny.

But it was my adopted parents who helped me reach for that destiny. They helped me become someone through their love and support. It has not come without challenges. But nothing great ever does. I still fight with monsters. I fight with jealousy, insecurity, abandonment issues, unfiltered anger, and fear of rejection. But I know that I have people in my life who will always be there for me when I fall. I now know what tears mean. I know what choices can do in and to someone's life. Many lives were turned upside down the day I was born. That has not gone unnoticed. But I'd like to think that my life was turned upright on that day. I'd like to think that a moment filled with hate, anger and uncertainty, turned out to be the moment my life actually began. The moment when I was available for adoption.

There is always so much emphasis on the children who are placed for adoption. Emphasis on their troubled pasts or emotional problems. All children who are abandoned and abused will have emotional baggage. While it should certainly be taken into consideration when adoption a child, it should not be the only consideration. At the end of the day, what matters most isn't who the child is that you adopt. What matters most is who you, as a parent, help that child to become. I came into this world as an X, a BLANK. My adopted parents gave me all the opportunities and support needed to make sure I don't leave the world as one. So instead of living in the world as a mark...I intend to leave one.

So now...

I am NOT depressed. NO LONGER In despair. ~~Lost~~ Found. ~~Mad~~. Happy ~~Sad~~. NOT Angry. Encouraged ~~Discouraged~~. Faithful ~~Faithless~~. NOT Pissed. NOT Lonely. UNtrapped. UNstuck. UNResigned. I am on play ~~pause~~.