

Maternity

By

Meg Fry

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megan.l.fry@gmail.com

INT. CAR - DAY

CLAIRE, a business woman in her mid-thirties, is driving while on her cell phone. She is dressed in elegant business wear with designer sunglasses. She raises one finger on the steering wheel.

CLAIRE

Look, just because he *said* it was an emergency...

(pause)

Well my husband should know better than to have his *secretary* call me about PRIVATE matters.

EXT. BRICK OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls into a parking spot. Claire steps out of the car and continues talking on her cell phone.

CLAIRE

You know what--Daisy, is it? Has a client shot someone dead? Have we lost money in an inside trading scandal?

(pause)

Okay well then you listen to me. Tell my husband that I don't give a damn what he wants anymore--*I* never wanted this. And if you EVER call my private line again for any reason other than the ones I just listed, you're fired.

Claire slams shut the phone. She stands there for a moment with her hand on her hip, bringing her other hand to her forehead. She starts to sob for a moment, until she shakes her head and regains composure.

CLAIRE

No. No, no.

She takes a deep breath and turns to open the door to the office building.

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Claire enters the room and scans it. It's small, with only three chairs. A PREGNANT WOMAN and a MOTHER, also pregnant, sit on the end chairs, wearing sweats. The mother is fast asleep with her hand on a stroller. Her daughter BELLE colors at the magazine table, humming "Twinkle twinkle".

(CONTINUED)

Claire murmurs and squirms into the middle chair, crossing her legs and sitting up straight.

A NURSE comes through a door with a clipboard.

NURSE
Ms. Duffy?

The pregnant woman leaves with the nurse through the door. Claire stands up, smooths herself out, and sits in the empty chair. She places her small purse on the middle seat and texts on her cell phone.

Belle stops coloring and turns around. She picks up Claire's purse and holds it out to her. Claire doesn't look at her, but takes the purse. Belle sits and stares up at her.

BELLE
I'm Belle. I'm five years old. How old are you?

Claire doesn't respond. Belle holds up a child's drawing.

BELLE
I made this. Do you like it?

Claire slumps back against the chair and looks the other way.

BELLE
Are you gonna talk to me? I'm bored.

Claire looks over and shifts her sunglasses down to see Belle's mother passed out. She puts back her sunglasses and leans her head back against the wall.

CLAIRE
Fine.

The two sit in silence for a moment. Belle stares at Claire.

BELLE
You're pretty.

Claire cracks a smile.

CLAIRE
Thanks.

BELLE
Why are you sad?

The smile disappears. Claire looks over at Belle.

CLAIRE
I am not *sad*.

BELLE
My Mommy cries when my brother
cries. She says she's not sad too.

Belle stands up on the seat so she can whisper in Claire's ear. Claire twitches away from her.

BELLE
(whispering)
But I think Mommy's lying.

Claire looks Belle straight on.

CLAIRE
Everybody lies Belle.

Belle sits back down.

BELLE
I don't lie. Mommy says it's bad.

Belle looks up at her sleeping mother and smiles. Claire leans her head back again.

CLAIRE
Good luck with that.

Belle looks back at Claire and leans in close to her.

BELLE
Mommy's tired.

CLAIRE
Your brother keeps her up at
night. And she's having, another
one...

Belle looks at her sleeping mother.

BELLE
Mommy says I'm going to have a
sister.

CLAIRE
Who will scream, and poop, and
steal your toys.

Belle looks at Claire with furrowed brows. Claire sits up and looks over at Belle's mother.

CLAIRE
All these babies must make Mommy
very cranky.

BELLE
Nuh uh. We make Mommy laugh.

Claire stares down at Belle.

CLAIRE
Why does Mommy laugh if Mommy's not
happy?

Belle looks at her mother.

BELLE
Because Mommy loves us.

Claire looks straight out into the room. Belle looks up at
her.

BELLE
Are you somebody's Mommy?

CLAIRE
No.

Claire removes her sunglasses.

CLAIRE
A baby would be a disaster. Babies
take, and take, and take. I do not
have the time, or the patience, for
something like that.

Belle looks away from Claire. Claire looks forward, and puts
her head down.

BELLE
I wouldn't like it if you were my
Mommy.

Claire snaps her head towards Belle. An anger burns in her
eyes and voice.

CLAIRE
And why's that?

Belle doesn't look up.

BELLE
Mommies aren't mean.

Belle gets off of her seat and goes to pat her baby brother in the stroller as he starts to CRY. She sings "Twinkle twinkle" to him.

Claire stares at Belle. Her eyes tear up. She looks down at her stomach and touches it. When she looks up again, a few tears are streaming down her face.

Claire moves from her seat to the ground on her knees.

CLAIRE

Do you really think I'm mean?

Belle stops singing and looks Claire over.

BELLE

A baby will make you happy, like Mommy. You'll see.

Claire looks over at Belle's mother, still sleeping. She stands up, puts on her sunglasses, and grabs her purse. She pats Belle's head as she sings to her baby brother and exits the office.

EXT. BRICK OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Claire pushes open the door and walks towards her car. She reaches into her purse for her cell phone.

Claire presses the phone to her ear and pushes her sunglasses back on her head. PHONE RINGS. She waits, tear marks on her face.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Hello?

CLAIRE

Hello...

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Claire.

(pause)

Is it through? Do you need me to come...

CLAIRE

I couldn't do it.

Claire breaks out into a mixture between a laugh and a sob. Worry marks form on her forehead as she rubs the bridge of her nose.

An audible SIGH over the phone.

(CONTINUED)

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(laughs with relief)
Oh, Claire...just come home
sweetheart.

Claire wipes tears from her face as she climbs into her car.
The car door slams.

CUT TO BLACK.