**The Beginning of The End – June 16th, 2017.**

So, here I am. Spilling my guts, not because I expect a parade in my honor or a shoulder to cry on – frankly, most shoulders are too bony for comfort – but because, well, maybe someone out there has a genuinely useful piece of advice, not just the usual pearl-clutching. Let’s cut to the chase: I had a little… detour, let’s call it, right after I married Joe. A brief entanglement with a neighbor. And surprise, surprise, I got pregnant. That pregnancy gave us Joe Jr., our son, who’s now a grown man of twenty-four. My husband, Joe Sr., bless his oblivious heart, never suspected a thing. He always believed Joe Jr. was his spitting image, despite the glaring, well, *differences*.

For a while, I convinced myself too. You know how it is, wishful thinking and all that. But by the time Junior was about five, even I couldn't ignore it. The kid’s features, his build, that… peculiar shape of his head… it was like looking at a miniature version of Charles, the neighbor. Not Joe. Definitely not Joe.

Let me paint you a picture, so you understand the artistry of the life I built, and why I made the choices I did. Joe and I, we were from the same town, sure, but different universes. He was Mr. Middle-Class Normal: mom, dad, two point five sisters, the whole shebang. Me? I was raised by a mother and grandmother who were, let’s say, allergic to stability and conventional employment. Section 8 housing was our revolving door. My father was a ghost, popping up for birthdays and Christmas, reeking of cheap cologne and unfulfilled promises, mostly due to his own dance with every drug under the sun. Mom wasn’t much better – got pregnant with me at seventeen, married him at eighteen, divorced before the ink dried. Both of them, Mom and Dad, loved their little helpers, prescription and otherwise. Grandma? A functioning alcoholic with a chimney for lungs.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not playing the world’s smallest violin here. This isn’t a sob story. It’s context. It’s the clay I was molded from. We moved constantly – eleven times in fifteen years. Usually in the dead of night, leaving landlords whistling for their rent. Just when I’d start to feel settled, make a friend, poof! Gone. It was… character-building, I suppose. Mom and Grandma treated jobs like seasonal fashion – in one day, out the next, often with a little something extra from the company till. Career shoplifters, both of them. Grams had Mom at sixteen, never bothered with a husband. Their love lives were a carousel of men, none lasting more than a few months. But hey, I was fed, clothed, had a roof (mostly). Just not what you’d call a ‘healthy environment.’ Predictably, I followed their lead in high school: seven boyfriends. One of those flings led to a pregnancy. I actually wanted to keep it, but Mom and Grams, with their worldly wisdom, talked me into a… solution. The same one they’d both opted for in their teens. Still stings a bit, that one, like a phantom limb.

Then, like a scene from a cheesy movie, Joe walked into my life. My knight in shining, slightly bewildered armor. I was slinging ice cream, seventeen and already world-weary. He was twenty-one, a fresh-faced college boy. He stumbled up to the window, asked for a recommendation, and five minutes later, asked me out. Just like that. We were oil and water, but damn, did we mix. He was a straight-A student, about to graduate. I was no slouch academically myself – A’s and B’s, despite the chaos at home – but my extracurriculars were… colorful. We dated for three months, strictly G-rated, until my eighteenth birthday. He took me on one of those corny paddle-wheel boat dinner cruises. Cheesy, I know. Afterward, on deck, he kissed me, told me he loved me. And I, caught up in the novelty of it all, said it back.

Things sped up. Joe graduated, landed a big-shot job in the city. Couldn’t bear to leave little old me behind, could he? So, I moved in with him. Four months later, we were at the Justice of the Peace, saying ‘I do.’ Impulsive, I know. Did Joe know about my… vibrant past? Every sordid detail. My family was thrilled – one less mouth to feed, I guess. His parents? Not so much. They were polite enough while we were dating, but marriage? To *me*? The girl with the reputation and the family tree full of rotten apples? They nearly had coronaries. But Joe, bless him, didn't care. Or so he said.

He bought a tiny house in some “up-and-coming” yuppie enclave. Down payment courtesy of Mommy and Daddy Dearest, loan courtesy of some shark. We were broke. Furniture was a luxury. Joe worked himself to the bone, launching his oh-so-important career, leaving me rattling around in that strange new city, bored out of my skull. So, I got a job at a frozen yogurt place nearby. It was a lifeline, a way to see actual human beings.

That’s where I met Cheryl and Charles. Our neighbors. Early forties, five kids. Charles drove a truck; Cheryl was a stay-at-home mom. They were… real. Not like the polished, pretentious yuppies infesting the neighborhood. They reminded me of the people I grew up with, comfortably rough around the edges. They’d bring their brood to the yogurt shop once a week. We got friendly. I’d spend hours on their porch, just shooting the breeze. They were my surrogate family, especially with Joe always “too busy.”

Alright, let’s rip off the band-aid. One week, Cheryl was in the hospital for some female trouble. Joe was off at a conference, schmoozing his way up the corporate ladder. I finished my shift, exhausted, and Charles was there. Asked if I wanted to grab a bite at some greasy spoon. Why not? I was starving and lonely. We ate, drove back. I mentioned a leaky shower faucet I couldn’t fix. He, being the handy type, offered to take a look. He fixed it, alright. Then we were on the couch, talking. And then… we weren’t just talking. He left around 2 a.m., all stealthy. The next night, he snuck over again after midnight, stayed till dawn.

After that second time, a wave of something – guilt, maybe, or just common sense – washed over me. We agreed it was a mistake, a one-off (or two-off, technically), and that was that. No more. To this day, I’m not entirely sure why I did it. Charles? He wasn’t exactly God’s gift. Short, dressed like he’d lost a fight with a Salvation Army donation bin, no money to speak of. I wasn’t attracted to him, not really. Maybe it was the familiarity. He was flawed, a bit broken, like my dad. Or maybe I was just monumentally bored and craving any kind of attention that wasn't filtered through Joe's ambition.

After that, I threw myself into being Mrs. Perfect. Begged God for forgiveness, swore I’d be the model wife. And I was. Joe came back from his trip, none the wiser. Life resumed, only now I was even more attentive, more doting. Trying to scrub away the stain, I guess.

Six weeks later, the stick turned blue. Pregnant. My stomach dropped. Yes, I knew there was a chance, a tiny, minuscule chance it wasn’t Joe’s. But Charles had pulled out both times – a gentleman, in his own way. And Joe and I, we were… enthusiastic. Every day, sometimes twice. Except for those three days he was gone. Surely, the odds were in my favor. I never spoke to Charles or Cheryl again. A week later, they vanished. Moved out in the middle of the night, house in foreclosure. Typical. The neighbors were all “shocked.” I just shrugged. One less loose end.

My pregnancy was a nightmare. Bedridden for the last two months. Joe was a saint, fussing over me. It almost made me forget my little… indiscretion. Almost. At nineteen, I gave birth to Joe Jr. Joe Sr. was over the moon. For the first few years, I clung to the belief that Junior was his. Denial is a powerful drug. But by age five, the truth was staring me in the face. The hair, the eyes, yeah, those could have been Joe’s. But the facial structure, that stocky build, the damn *shape of his head* – it was Charles and his boys, replicated. My husband, bless his preoccupied soul, barely remembered Charles or Cheryl. So, I figured my secret was safe. This was before every Tom, Dick, and Harry could spit in a tube and unravel your entire lineage.

Then, the cherry on top: after Joe Jr.’s dramatic entrance, the doctors told me more kids were off the table. Scar tissue, complications. My fertile years, over before they’d barely begun. Devastated, I begged Joe to adopt. He was content. "I have my wife, my son. What more could I need?" he’d say, patting my hand like I was a slightly dim-witted pet. But I persisted. Another child, I reasoned, would be extra glue. Insurance. If the truth about Junior ever, God forbid, surfaced, another child would anchor us. After five years of relentless pressure, Joe caved. We adopted Stevie.

We were the picture-perfect family of four. Or so it seemed. My boys worshipped their father. He, in turn, doted on them. The bond between Joe Sr. and Joe Jr. was particularly… intense. Almost uncomfortably so, at times. Joe Sr. is over six-two, built like a Greek god (or so he thinks). Junior? Barely five-eight, stocky, just like… well, you know. This always bugged Junior. He desperately wanted to be his dad’s clone – physically, academically, athletically. Never quite measured up. Joe Sr. would always say, “Son, don’t try to be me. Be your own man. You’re special.” All very noble, building up his confidence. Junior eventually found his niche in plumbing, of all things. Good money, married, even has a kid of his own now – Joe the Third. My husband was his best man. Honestly, I think Junior loves his father more than his wife, and certainly more than me. Which, considering everything, is about to become incredibly ironic.

And then, the day the meticulously constructed facade of my life began to crumble. Joe Jr. showed up at my door, unannounced, middle of the workday. One look at his face, and I knew. The carefully suppressed dread I’d lived with for over two decades punched me in the gut. He walked in, all calm and controlled, which was somehow more terrifying than if he’d been screaming. He explained, in a monotone, that some man had contacted him. Claiming to be his brother. This man and his siblings had done one of those home DNA kits. It flagged a half-brother. They’d tracked Junior down online. Met him. Gave him the results. Junior, ever thorough, did his own test. Confirmed.

He laid the papers on my polished coffee table, the damning evidence stark against the mahogany. Then he just… shattered. Crying, asking me how. How could I do this to him, to his father? The man he idolized. I mumbled some pathetic apology, something about not wanting to hurt them. The truth was, I didn’t want to hurt *me*. I didn’t want to lose the comfortable, enviable life I’d so carefully built. I wasn’t crying yet. I was in shock, yes, but mostly, my brain was whirring, calculating. Damage control. Consoling him felt… performative.

After what felt like an eternity, he stopped crying. Looked up at me. And the look in his eyes… pure, unadulterated hatred. “You,” he choked out, “are an evil person.”

“Now, Junior, don’t be dramatic,” I started, trying for a soothing tone. “It doesn’t matter who your biological father is. Joe is your dad. He’ll always be your dad.” That’s what I genuinely believed they should think. It was more convenient for everyone.

“Yes,” he spat, his voice dripping venom. “Joe *is* my father. But effective immediately, you are *not* my mother.”

With that, he stormed out. I scrambled after him, phone already in hand. He actually answered. I begged him to come back, to talk. “No,” was all he said.

“We have to tell your father, Junior,” I said, trying to sound reasonable, in control. “We can’t keep this from him now.”

That’s when he exploded. “Don’t you *dare* tell him anything, you witch! Don’t you *dare*!” he screamed into the phone, then hung up. I tried calling back, texting. The only reply: “DO NOT SAY ANYTHING TO MY FATHER. DO NOT COME TO MY HOME.”

That’s when the dam finally broke for me. Not because of the pain I’d caused, not really. But because my perfect world was imploding, and I was losing control. That evening, Joe Sr. didn’t come home. A curt text at 7:09 p.m.: “Not coming home. Staying with Junior.” My blood ran cold. He knew. Of course, he knew. Junior, despite his histrionics, would have run straight to Daddy. I decided to play it cool, not add to the drama. Let them have their little powwow. I cried all night, not from remorse, but from sheer, unadulterated panic.

Joe Sr. and Junior had built this little… casita, an apartment thing attached to Junior’s garage. For “guy time,” supposedly. I figured Joe was holed up there. At 6:20 a.m., the front door opened. Joe. He walked into the bedroom, found me a puffy-eyed mess in bed. He sat on the edge, his face a blank mask. “Tell me,” he said, his voice devoid of any emotion. “Everything.”

So, I told him. The sanitized, abridged version, of course. Two times. Meant nothing. Twenty-five years ago. A youthful mistake. I kept saying how sorry I was, how much I adored *him*, how this changed nothing about *us*. He just sat there, impassive. When I finally ran out of breath, he said, quiet as a tomb, “I’ll be filing for divorce. I’ll live at Junior’s until it’s final.”

Floored. I actually blacked out for a second. Then came the waterworks, the begging, the pleading. Joe just started packing a bag, methodical, silent. My tears, my hysterics, they were like water off a duck’s back. “Your tears are worthless, Betty,” he said, his voice flat. “Our relationship is over.” Just like that. No discussion. No room for negotiation. My carefully curated life, gone. He then casually mentioned he’d already informed his parents, his sisters, and our other son, Stevie. The betrayal of *that*, of him cutting me out so completely, so swiftly, felt almost worse than the divorce threat.

Now I’m alone. In this big, empty house that suddenly feels like a mausoleum. No husband, no family. They all want nothing to do with me. My own motley crew of a family – Mom, Grandma, Dad – they’re all long gone. No one to turn to. No close friends to confide in; I never cultivated those, too busy maintaining the illusion of perfection. So, here I am, broadcasting my spectacular downfall to a bunch of strangers. Based on this unholy mess, what on God’s green earth am I supposed to do next? I’m broken, not because of what I did, but because of what’s been done *to me*. I don’t want to live without my husband, my boys. They were my masterpiece. Without them, I’m just… unfinished. Obsolete. Help me. Someone.

**Update 1.**

Okay, a few quick clarifications, since some of the initial reactions are, shall we say, less than insightful.

First, for those worried about my “well-being” – please. I’m a survivor. I clawed my way out of a trash heap upbringing to build a life most people only dream of. A little hiccup like this isn’t going to make me do something drastic. I’m a child of God, or so I tell myself when it’s convenient. Suicide is for the weak.

Second, narcotics or alcohol? Don’t be ridiculous. I left that drama behind with my mother and grandmother. I gave all that up for Joe. I have far too much self-control for such vulgar escapes.

Now, for some of the… *feedback* I’ve received:

*“Your son said it all, you are an evil person. How could you keep this from them for 25 years knowing how much they loved each other? You say you have a close relationship with God but I can’t believe that as lying for 365 days a year for 25 years is an unforgivable sin. I’d like to say I hope your husband and Sons forgive you but I really hope they don’t.”*Honestly, the melodrama. “Evil”? Please. It was a complicated situation, managed with the utmost discretion for everyone’s benefit. And “unforgivable sin”? Someone needs to read their Bible more selectively. As for hoping they don’t forgive me – well, that’s just spiteful, isn’t it? Clearly, this person has never had to make a truly difficult choice to preserve a family.

*“I do hope your husband and son can forgive you. Something similar happened to me when our son was 16… my husband left me immediately… my son never spoke to me for 25 years… Good luck to you.”*Twenty-five years? Good heavens, some people are incredibly unforgiving. And her husband left *immediately*? Clearly, he wasn't as invested as my Joe was. Or so I thought. Still, a bit of solidarity, I suppose, even if her situation sounds far more… pedestrian.

*“What you did was just terrible, but all sins no matter how big are forgivable. The best thing you can do now is nothing… My Hope for you is that your husband and both of your sons can forgive you in time…”*Finally, someone with a modicum of sense! “Do nothing.” Excellent advice. Let them stew. They’ll come around. They *need* me, whether they realize it yet or not. Forgiveness is inevitable; I practically invented it in our marriage.

*“First, if I was your husband it would be instant divorce and I’d try to sue you into the abyss… Second, if I was your son I would totally cut you out of my life. You’re a human parasite, a selfish narcissist… What makes your crime even worse is you knew you couldn’t have more children… you kept the LIE going and coerced him into adopting a child… Do you understand how Sinister this is? I hope one day you get what’s coming to you and hope your husband remarries and has as many biological kids as he wants. You are pure evil.”*(Betty scoffs internally) Oh, please. “Human parasite”? “Selfish narcissist”? The sheer *audacity*. This person clearly wouldn’t know a complex emotional landscape if it bit them on the nose. “Coerced him into adopting”? I *graced* him with a second child, a complete family! And him remarrying and having *more* kids? Don’t make me laugh. Joe wouldn’t know what to do with himself without me to guide him. As for “sinister,” the only sinister thing here is the breathtaking lack of understanding from these… internet trolls. “Pure evil.” How utterly unoriginal. They clearly don’t appreciate the nuances of maintaining a certain lifestyle.

**Update 2 - July 13th.**

Well, it’s been a minute. Thanks for the… colorful responses. Yes, a lot of you called me names. And while I maintain that most of you lack any real worldly experience, I’ll concede: what I did, or rather, what was *discovered*, has caused a significant, and frankly, inconvenient, upheaval for my husband and son. Psychologically damaged? Perhaps. Though, I’d argue they were a bit too coddled to begin with.

Do I wish this never came out? Of course. Do I wish I’d never had that… dalliance with Charles? In hindsight, yes, it was a lapse in judgment. I was young, impressionable, and surrounded by less-than-stellar role models. My mother and grandmother’s revolving door of men hardly set a precedent for unwavering fidelity, did it? I *should* have told Joe about the affair immediately. And yes, I *definitely* should have fessed up when it became clear Junior wasn’t his. That was… a calculated risk that didn’t pay off. Selfish? Perhaps. But I did it to protect them, to preserve the beautiful family unit *I* had painstakingly constructed. They were so happy, Joe and Junior, in their little bubble of blissful ignorance. My God, even writing this, my eyes are welling up – mostly from frustration at how this has all blown up in my face.

So, where are we now? Joe and I are separated. Haven’t spoken a civil word since my last charming update. He’s still squatting in that glorified shed Junior calls a garage apartment. And yes, he’s filed for divorce. The only contact I’ve had are a few terse texts, mostly demands for financial documents. Cold. So utterly unlike the Joe *I* knew. Or thought I knew.

Joe Jr.? He despises me. Utterly. His wife, bless her naive little heart, calls me once or twice a week. Feeds me scraps of information. Apparently, my husband has “forgiven and wants to forget” me. *Forget me?* How dare he? After everything I’ve done for him, everything I’ve *been* to him? The sheer arrogance. She says Junior, on the other hand, will never forgive *or* forget. Dramatic, much?

Stevie, my adopted son, actually came over yesterday. We talked. It was… strained. We’re “speaking,” but he’s distant, looking at me like I’m some sort of fascinating, mildly repulsive insect. I’ve bombarded Joe Sr. and Junior with emails, texts, heartfelt (and slightly embellished) messages. Radio silence.

The divorce is happening. There’s nothing I can do to stop it, short of actual witchcraft, and I’m fresh out of eye of newt. I *could* make it difficult, drag his name through the mud, expose a few of *his* less-than-perfect moments. But I won’t. If this is what he truly wants, this… self-immolation of our life together, then I’ll make it easy for him. It’s the least I can do to show him how much I… well, how much I resent him for not fighting for us, for *me*.

Before I sign off, a couple of lingering questions you all seem fixated on:

Charles and Cheryl. Yes, the biological component. According to their oh-so-chatty offspring (the ones who blew my life up with their little DNA party), Charles kicked the bucket over sixteen years ago. Cheryl followed him last year. That’s why the kids went digging into their ancestry – morbid curiosity, I suppose. Sad, of course, in a detached sort of way. But it does remove one… complication. Makes it easier for Joe Jr. and Joe Sr. to process, or so they say. I hope Cheryl can forgive me, wherever she is. It was a brief, insignificant moment, and I was barely eighteen. A child, really.

Did Charles know about Joe Jr.? Absolutely not. As I said, they vanished right after I found out I was pregnant. And for years, *I* believed Junior was Joe’s. So, no, Charles went to his grave blissfully unaware of the masterpiece he accidentally co-authored.

That’s the latest. Still reeling, still furious, still can’t quite believe Joe is being such an absolute… *robot* about this. More on that later. There's something else… something about Joe’s reaction that’s been gnawing at me. It’s too clean. Too… practiced.

**Update 3 – April 16th, 2020.**

Well, hello again. Two years. Feels like a lifetime. With these lockdowns, I’ve had far too much time to marinate in my own thoughts, which, let me tell you, is a special kind of heck. But it’s also been… illuminating.

First, the official business: Joe and I? Divorced. Since December 2017. Ancient history. I tried everything, pulled out all the stops. Begged, pleaded, even hinted at a few of *his* carefully concealed skeletons. Nothing. According to him, the moment he “found out” about my affair and Junior’s paternity, a switch flipped. Love off, disdain on. I still don’t buy it. How can someone just *turn off* twenty-six years of devotion like a faulty light switch? One day, he’s professing undying love, the next, I’m persona non grata. It’s… unnatural.

It didn’t matter that I was a naive eighteen-year-old girl when it happened. It didn’t matter that it was a quarter of a century ago. To him, I was suddenly a stranger, a pariah. His reaction wasn’t grief; it was… something colder. Calculating. He acted like a programmed automaton, devoid of any genuine emotion, while I was practically unglued, trying to hold myself together. That, more than anything, is what truly destroyed me. The sheer, chilling efficiency of his departure.

And speaking of Joe, get this: he’s engaged. Engaged! To some woman he worked with for thirteen years. She’s thirty-four. He’s fifty-one. The ink on our divorce papers wasn’t even dry before he was parading her around. *Nice*. I’m convinced he was seeing her while we were still married, laying the groundwork for his grand escape. My daughter-in-law, Junior’s wife – who, by the way, has become my reluctant confidante – insists they only started dating *after* the divorce. Gullible child.

She also tells me Joe Jr. and Stevie are going to be co-best men. How… touching. This new fiancée, apparently, is “wonderful.” Plans to be a stay-at-home mother, churning out a whole new brood of little Joes. Multiple children, they’re planning. Multiple! I suggested adoption to him, years ago, remember? Even multiple adoptions, during one of my desperate pre-divorce begging sessions. He shot that down faster than a pheasant on opening day. But *now*, with this new, younger model, he’s ready to repopulate the earth. The hypocrisy is breathtaking. It still stings like a thousand hornets, even after all this time. I’d trade places with her in a heartbeat, just to understand what went so catastrophically wrong, or rather, what *he* orchestrated.

Now, for the real kicker. The plot twist even *I* didn’t see coming, not until I had months of solitude to piece it all together, replaying every conversation, every glance, every little inconsistency from Joe over the years.

Remember how I said Joe’s reaction was too cold, too practiced? How he just… shut down? It wasn’t shock. It wasn’t sudden heartbreak.  
It was *relief*. It was the culmination of a very, very long game.

A few months ago, clearing out some old boxes (because what else is there to do during a global pandemic?), I found something. Tucked away in a forgotten file of Joe’s old work papers – not very well hidden, really, which just adds insult to injury. It was a private investigator’s report. Dated fifteen years ago. *Fifteen years*.

The report detailed Charles and Cheryl’s family, their children. And it included blurry photos of Charles’s sons, next to a school photo of Joe Jr. The resemblance, even in those grainy images, was undeniable. And there were notes, conjectures about paternity. Someone, probably one of Charles’s delightful, DNA-obsessed kids, or perhaps even Cheryl herself before she passed, must have sent an anonymous tip to Joe. Or maybe his ever-suspicious parents, who never truly accepted me, hired the PI. The “why” doesn’t even matter anymore.

He knew. My Joe, my “angel,” my “Prince Charming,” knew about Joe Jr. for *fifteen years*. He knew, and he said nothing. He lived with me, slept beside me, played the part of the doting husband and father, all while holding this… this tactical nuclear weapon over my head. Waiting.

Every loving gesture, every reassuring word, every moment I thought we were “us” – it was all a lie. A performance. He wasn’t my loving husband; he was my jailer, my audience, quietly observing me in my gilded cage, perhaps even deriving some sick satisfaction from my ignorance. All those times he was “working late”? All those business trips? He was probably with *her*, his replacement, planning their future while I was busy maintaining *our* charade.

The DNA test that Joe Jr. took? The “surprise” reveal? I’m now convinced Joe Sr. somehow orchestrated it, or at least knew it was coming and let it play out. He needed a public, undeniable reason to leave, one that painted *him* as the ultimate victim, the noble, wronged man. He didn’t just want a divorce; he wanted to destroy me, to humiliate me, to ensure I had nothing and no one. And he played it perfectly. The cold fury, the swift departure – it was all rehearsed.

He wasn’t just a husband who’d been cheated on. He was a puppet master. A cold, calculating villain hiding in plain sight. And I, in my arrogant belief that I was the one pulling all the strings, never saw it. My “brief affair” gave him the ammunition he needed to execute a betrayal so profound it makes my own deception look like child’s play.

So, yes, Joe Jr. and I are “speaking.” If you can call it that. Monosyllabic answers, all interactions initiated by me. Stevie’s the same, though he occasionally asks a perfunctory question about my health. They see me as a monster, and now, I realize their father probably spent years subtly poisoning them against me, laying the groundwork for this very outcome. My daughter-in-law, Junior’s wife, she’s been a strange sort of lifeline. She tells it like it is, has said some brutal things, but they were things I, in my delusion, needed to hear. She doesn’t know about the PI report. I haven’t told anyone. What’s the point? It doesn’t change anything, except the narrative in my own head.

Joe was “generous” in the divorce. Of course, he was. Guilt money? Or just part of his immaculate image – the magnanimous doormat. I’m working now, some tedious data entry job. Money’s not an issue. But I’d give it all away, every last cent, not to get my marriage back – that was clearly never real – but to rewind time and never, ever let that man into my life.

So, there you have it. The brutal, unvarnished truth. Not just my lie, but his. My baby grew, and so did this awkward characteristic, exposing *my* secret. But it also, eventually, exposed *his* – a far more sinister, patient, and devastating one. Learn from my mistakes, sure. But also, look very, very closely at the “angels” in your life. Sometimes, they’re just devils in disguise, biding their time.