



Chapter 2

Tuesday, 17th May, 2022

That night, I slept soundly. I was exhausted from the anticipation of the day before. Now it really was the day. Monday had turned out to be the practice run, but that day, Tuesday 17th May, it was happening for real. I would get to meet the beautiful little man who'd been kicking up a fuss for the past few months.

I recalled the first time he really made himself known was at Rose's end-of-year concert at the opera house the previous year. Apparently, he loved good music, because at only around 17 weeks, I felt my little fellow dancing around. I don't remember what piece of fruit he resembled at that point, but I know that it was much earlier than I'd felt Rose. I remember sitting in that pink theatre at the Sydney Opera house, in my blue wraparound dress, so excited that the tiniest little bump was starting to appear, wondering if I was imagining it, but knowing that it was real, that my little fellow was already making it known that he liked that girl he was soon to meet. His girl, who I was sure was about to become his best friend.

I jumped out of bed at around 5:30am, I was used to waking up at that time to get everybody ready for school and work so

I rarely needed an alarm. Everything was so rushed and chaotic when I went into labour with Rose because of the hemorrhaging. I had been lying on the lounge happily watching *Sex in the City* when suddenly I had felt a pop. The pop had been followed immediately by a huge gush of blood. My mum had rushed me to the hospital, and I had needed to be induced as a matter of urgency. I had looked as awful as I felt that day.

This time around things were going to be different, I was going to be like those women on TV and social media who look positively picture-perfect and glowing for that first picture with baby. I grabbed my make up bag, popped in and had a quick shower and spent lots of time applying my face. Just as I was happy with my perfectly lovely appearance in the mirror, a nurse walked in. She kindly stopped herself from laughing... I'm sure that walking in and seeing a big, round, heavily pregnant woman all made up and looking like she was ready for a first date must've been quite a sight at 6am. I'm glad I gave her a giggle. Once I was back in bed, I was checked over and told that the nurses would be in by around 7am to get me into my birthing room to get things started.

Back at home, the morning was shaping up to be like any other. Rose had been so excited about going to the Morgan's place for the day. The Morgans are the parents of one of my best friends, Tina, my longest time friend. In fact, we've known each other since we were just 10 years old, more than 35 years. We met in primary school and our families are more like family to each other. We always spent special birthdays together, we celebrated holidays and lots of other occasions whenever

possible. Rose was planning to cook, bake and discuss all sorts of topics with Cathy and Brian, she's wise beyond her years, that smart girl of mine, she will go far in life.

The Morgans had finally become grandparents for the first time just 10 days earlier. They'd always loved spending time with my girl, and she had been their surrogate grandchild. It was such a relief, knowing that Rose had something wonderful to look forward to while she waited to meet our little boy.

By 9am my girl had been left in the caring and capable hands of the Morgans. A quick cup of tea and chat about all the wonderful grandbabies and mum was back at the hospital with me. The midwives were lovely, they'd been so kind and understanding about my fears about the pain. I had wanted the cesarean at first but the doctors had talked me out of it and so we had agreed that I'd be given an epidural as soon as they started the drip to get my contractions happening. I was so thankful that Rose wasn't at the hospital. I was not expecting any issues but I didn't want her to be traumatised, I didn't want her to feel scared or helpless if anything went wrong, like it had with her birth.

By the time the contractions started to become regular, the epidural had well and truly kicked in. I was thoroughly enjoying the experience, suddenly labour was a piece of cake. It was fun, talking and joking with my mum and the midwives that came in. I couldn't tell you any of their names, but they were all lovely, and so encouraging. I had expected a lot of negativity around my age. There was no such negativity, though. Everyone I'd

encountered over the last eight-and-a-half months – whether it was doctors, midwives, my wonderful and supportive friends and family, even total strangers – were all absolutely lovely and so supportive. Maybe there was some judgement happening behind my back, but honestly, I had been waiting such a long time for this opportunity. I really couldn't have cared if that had happened.

After maybe a couple of hours, one of the midwives checked and asked me if I could guess how many centimetres dilated I was at that point. Trying to be conservative I think I said five or six, but she was quite excited to inform me that I was fully dilated, and it was time to start pushing. We started things off in the usual manner and things were going well. The epidural meant that the experience, although uncomfortable, was certainly not painful. Until about half an hour after I started pushing. The epidural had worn off, and suddenly I could feel everything.

During my pregnancy, every time I'd had a scan, my little guy was always waving his tiny hand, just like Rose had done. He liked to hide his face and try to keep some mystery in the relationship. As it turned out, he had decided he was going to be born with his hand on his face, meaning his elbow was sticking out, making it difficult for him to progress through the birth canal. As I was waiting for the anesthetist to come in and sort out the epidural situation, suddenly there seemed to be some fussing going on with the midwives.

I had been pushing for an hour at this point, baby was stuck, and as it turned out, he had now pooped in his waters. The midwives

kept talking about how they needed to do anything they could to avoid a caesarean. They talked about using forceps instead. I'd needed vacuum assistance when giving birth to Rose, so I didn't hesitate when they shoved a form in front of me to sign, saying that forceps were a safe way to deliver the baby, safer than a caesarean. All of this was happening while I was in an immense amount of pain. I kept thinking that surely, they should just do a c-section after all, but then I figured I should just trust them to do what was best. They were the ones who knew what to do. They'd get my baby out safely.