

An adoptive mother's thoughts on Birthmothers Day

Our boys are such brothers.

As I watch them playing or arguing or just sitting next to each other while they watch TV, I find it hard to imagine either one of them without the other. They're different in so many ways, but they go together like peanut butter and jelly.

But that isn't how the story started. The story began as two completely separate stories in two different parts of China. Each had a different starting point and different people there to write and shape the first chapters.

I have so many emotions when I think about how those stories unfolded, even as I feel deeply grateful to be part of this part of their stories—of our story as a forever family.

Today, the day before Mother's Day, is Birthmother's Day, and I find myself wondering about the women who gave our sons life. They first held them and fed them and made the most difficult decisions I can imagine.

If I had the chance to speak with one of our sons' birthmothers, there is so much I would want to share. *He has such a compassionate heart. You wouldn't believe his sense of humor. You should see how creative he can be. Wait until you see him on the monkey bars.* But what I would want most would be to listen, to know them, to understand them, to marvel at the mothers who gave our children their beginnings.

The other day a friend posted on Facebook about her daughter's birthmother, and one of her friends commented about how the birthmother must also wonder about my friend, an adoptive mother who is raising her daughter. Is it astonishing that that never occurred to me?

Yes, I imagine each of my sons' birthmothers wondering how he is doing, thinking about him, imagining the life he has now. I just never considered that she would wonder about me, the forever mother who is raising the child she gave birth to. As

mothers, we often feel important but invisible, supporting in the background. But of course she must wonder, just as I try to understand each of the people who has played a part in helping our children grow, each of the people who have loved them—whether for a little while or for a lifetime.

What would I tell her about myself? *I'm an imperfect mother. I fail every single day. I forget to send in the field trip permission slip. I get impatient when he can't find his shoes in the morning. But I love him so very much. He's my life. He brings me—and his brother and father—unimaginable joy. He's growing into a strong, kind young man. You would love the person he is becoming. And I hope one day you get to see him again.*

I think of our sons' birthmothers often. We talk about them, wonder about them, pray for them. They will always be part of our children's stories—of our family's story. We will probably never meet them on this earth, but they will always be treasured members of our family. And I am so very, very grateful to each of them.