

# Worth the Wait: Adopting our son 7 years ago today

I've never been good at waiting, but the wait to become a mother was the hardest wait of all.

Years passed before we found ourselves on the path to adoption.

Then more time passed as we filled out paperwork, met with our social worker, wrote our autobiographies, welcomed a health inspector into our home, rebuilt a railing at the top of our stairs, read books, and took parenting classes.

Then we were matched with the most beautiful little boy. He had a head of thick hair and penetrating brown eyes and questioning eyebrows. We showed his picture to everyone, and we waited some more.

Eleven months passed from the time we saw his first photo and when we boarded a plane to China. We flew on a long flight to Beijing. We toured Beijing and waited. Then we flew to Changsha. I don't know how I slept the night before we met our son. Then it was time. We climbed into a van and drove to a government office. We sat on a hard wooden bench, side by side, waiting for our little boy to arrive. But he didn't come. And he didn't come.

He's stuck in traffic, they told us. He's on his way.

And so we waited.

Somehow I wasn't surprised that we were the ones waiting, sitting in a room surrounded by families who were forming on every side. I watched siblings meeting siblings, parents meeting children. There were tears. There were smiles. They were video cameras running and cameras flashing. The room was packed with people and noise and different languages and emotions.

John and I just sat. There was nothing to do, nothing to say. We watched as, one by one, the other families finished their introductions, packed up their things, gathered their children in their arms, and left.

And—as we had for so many years, as people around us became parents with apparent ease—we continued to wait.

Only two other families stayed with us—the families with our agency who had already met their daughters.

Then finally, finally, finally, the child we had prayed and hoped for, the child we had waited so long for, walked into the room.

I can close my eyes and be in that moment again right now. Our little boy is there, and John is there, and I am there. We stand in a triangle, facing one another, ready but tentative. And though John and I yearn to embrace our child, for a minute we

wait.

Because, in that moment, for once, waiting made sense. We were giving our 2-year-old the time to size us up and take us in before we took him into our arms. And in that moment I was struck by how beautiful he was, how little and yet how tall, and how very, very brave he was to walk into that room to meet the people who would be his parents forever.

Then John picked him up, and the next page of the story began.



That was seven years ago. And that story? It has been extraordinary.

Last night as our 9-year-old and I laughed as he dodged my bedtime kisses, I found myself thinking that I am so very grateful to be his mother.

That whole journey to motherhood? It was definitely worth the wait.

