

FAR FROM THE NEWS

*All of the articles in this publication are based off the book
Far From the Tree*

Please note that many of the quotes in these articles have had verb tenses and subject pronouns modified from the original versions in *Far From the Tree*.

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GRACE'S PREGNANCY

Grace got pregnant in the winter of her Sophomore year of high school. Three months later, when her pregnancy test came back positive, her baby was the size of a peach. "I knew that I wasn't going to keep Peach. I knew that I couldn't," said Grace. "It wasn't even that babies cried or smelled or spit up or anything like that. It was that they needed you. Peach would need me in ways that I couldn't give to her."

At 9:03 on homecoming night, with her mother next to her and her soon-to-be child's adoptive parents waiting outside, Grace gave birth. She held Peach once before the baby was taken away.

Grace couldn't help feeling untethered without Peach. She stayed in her room, in the dark, for over a week. And after giving her baby up the same way she'd been given up sixteen years ago, there was only one thing left that she wanted to do. She wanted to find her birth mother.

MAYA'S MOM'S INCIDENT

Maya and her sister found their mom bleeding on the floor of her bathroom just before dinner. "I just found her in there," said Maya's sister, Lauren. "She was crumpled like a baby bird that had fallen out of its nest, and there was blood coming from her head, staining the marble floor," Maya added.

Maya scrambled to call 911, and the dispatcher sent an ambulance to them right away. "My hand was shaking so bad", she recalled. Lauren mopped their mother's forehead, shakily using a towel to wipe up the sticky, crimson blood.

After a recent divorce, their father had moved to an apartment 10 minutes away from the family home. The move had been hard for Maya and Lauren, especially since they'd begun finding numerous bottles of wine, both empty and full, that their mother stashed around the house. The night that their mom hit her head, their father was out of town on a business trip in New Orleans, still oblivious to his ex-wife's drinking problem. "I was horrified to hear about the wine bottles hidden around the house," he said later, once Maya and Lauren's mom was out of the hospital. She'd been moved into a rehab facility right away, and her kids hadn't seen her since. "I wanted Maya and Lauren to start going to therapy, too." Maya was dismissive of the idea. The incident had been hardest for her. "I couldn't decide if I wanted my mom to come home soon or stay away forever," she said.



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JOAQUIN'S PARTY

Joaquin's adoption/eighteenth birthday party was the same day Mark and Linda officially adopted him. Many people attended the party: Joaquin and his new parents; his sister Grace, her parents, and one of her friends; his other sister Maya, her family, and her girlfriend; his aunt and her boyfriend; a friend from the arts center he worked at, along with a kid Joaquin had taught there and his parents; his therapist and her husband; his professor; and his ex-girlfriend and her family. The party took place in Joaquin's backyard, with lights strung between trees and a mariachi band playing in the background. "The bougainvillea and morning glories were in full bloom, too, along with the jasmine that made everything smell as good as it looked," said Joaquin.

Still, as he was surrounded by friends and family, Joaquin thought of his biological mom. He was finally getting the life he'd always wanted, one he thought he'd never be able to have without her. "I hope I can make her proud," Joaquin said.

