**[Isla's Story](http://loveyoutoinfinity.blogspot.com/2011/12/islas-story_13.html)**

I always knew I wanted more than 1 child, a sibling for Emma and 2 children to fill our home with love and laughter. Towards the end of the summer of 2010, Todd and I decided that it was time to start trying to make that happen!

After a few months of disappointing negative pregnancy tests, I finally got my positive on February 3, 2011. I was relieved, excited and anxious! Mostly, I was happy for Emma, who had been asking for a “baby” for some time. We eventually told her that she was going to be a big sister sometime around October 10th although it was hard for her to understand that timing, so we told her that the baby would be here by Halloween. She immediately began insisting she was going to have a sister. Well, her wishes came true, b/c in May 2011 an ultrasound confirmed that indeed Emma was going to have a little sister of her own! She came to the ultrasound with us and was fairly non-phased. “I told you so” is what she said to us as we were leaving the office!

The pregnancy progressed in standard fashion. I was tired, nauseous and anxious for October to come. I couldn’t wait to be the Mom of 2 little girls! We decided on the name Isla after I found the name in a baby name book and loved the sound of it. We struggled a little, worrying that she would spend half her life correcting people who might call her Izla! But we really loved the name and decided to go with it. Her middle name, Marie, is after Todd’s mom, Maria and my Auntie Re (Marie) who was my Mom’s sister. I used Marie rather than Maria b/c her first name already ended with “ah”.

Anyway…during an ultrasound in July, she was measuring a little behind in the weight department. The doctor recommended increased rest so as to increase blood flow through the umbilical cord to deliver nutrients more effectively. I worked on that and things looked a bit better at the next visit. They continued to monitor the situation closely. At the beginning of September, they were still finding that she was measuring a bit small for her gestational age and they wanted to increase my rest more. So I began working half days from home so that I could dedicate more time to lying down.

On September 22, I went in for another follow up ultrasound and there was a lot of concern about her rate of growth at this point. She wasn’t showing a big increase in weight gain over a week, so they brought up the possibility of inducing me that evening. My initial thought was YES! Let’s do this…I can’t wait to meet my little girl and be done with the pregnancy (I hope that doesn’t sound terrible…but the discomforts of late pregnancy were getting to me). However, the doctor warned that she was only weighing approximately 4 ½ pounds and that they do not like to deliver such a tiny baby if it isn’t necessary. I didn’t want to see my little girl in the NICU and thought it would be selfish to proceed with an induction just b/c I wanted to meet my newest princess and be done being pregnant. The doctor said if I could commit to more rest, they would let me go another week. I decided that was best. Todd’s Mom and Dad were on their way that weekend to be with Emma whenever it was time for me to go in to the hospital to deliver, so I committed to another week of increased rest.  Her vitals were good (heartbeat, blood flow, fluid, kicks) were all great. So they sent me home and told me to monitor her movements, which I did all weekend long. By Sunday evening, Mimi and Grandpa had arrived and I mentioned to Todd that I was feeling a lot of movement and we were all excited about the possibility of meeting Isla later in the week.

Monday morning, September 26, I woke up got Emma ready for school, saw her and Todd off and got to work, as I had been doing while working at home the past few weeks. Towards later morning, a worried thought crossed my mind that I didn’t feel a whole lot of movement. I sort of dismissed it and reassured myself that I had a doctor’s appointment in just a few hours. I finished work and took to the couch for a bit before heading off to the doctors. Todd’s Mom asked if I needed her to go with me and I said nah, I’ll just be in and out…it was “just” the weekly check-up….pee in a cup, check blood pressure, listen to heartbeat , check dilation and schedule next week’s appointment. I cheerily left the house, asking if they wanted anything from Starbucks on my way back, as I had planned to stop for a Pumpkin Spice Latte on the way home. That was the beginning of the end of innocence.

I got to the doctor’s, peed in a cup…had a normal blood pressure and went back to be hooked up to the heart rate monitor. The nurse had a hard time finding the heartbeat. I showed her the spot it was found last time and as she fiddled around some more, I pretty much wanted to rip the thing out of her hand and show her myself, b/c I KNEW where it was. I wanted to be like “give me that thing, I’ll find it”. She went and got the Nurse Practitioner and she came in and asked if my baby was giving us trouble again. One time recently, Isla was moving so much that she circled my tummy several times with the doppler before pinning that bugger down for a reading on her heartbeat! So when she came in the room, we laughed knowingly. She circled…..and circled…and circled. I looked at her expectantly, hoping to share a laugh about where Isla was hiding, but saw a shadow of concern. She kicked on their ultrasound machine and said she wanted to get a better look. A picture came up and I wasn’t seeing the normal movement I was used to and I started to get nervous. I asked what she was seeing and she said she wasn’t finding anything…I asked her what that meant and she said that they call it a “demise”. WHAT!?!?!?!?!!? So she told me she was sending me to the doctor where I had my regular ultrasounds (where I JUST was the past Thursday when everything was fine and we decided NOT to induce). They would be able to tell me more. I called Todd to tell him. I can’t even remember exactly what I said….except for crying out that they couldn’t find the heartbeat and that he needed to come to the ultrasound office. I live about 2 miles from my doctor’s office, so I called my Father-in-law to tell him and he had Todd’s Mom waiting in the car for me as soon as I pulled up. As we drove, Maria was reassuring me that we don’t know anything yet…the doctor will be able to give us answers. This ride was taking forever and then I got to the office and had to pay a copay and WAIT for what seemed like forever. They brought me back…I hopped up on the table, eager for them to show me…..on their MUCH better equipment that they had found Isla’s heartbeat and that this was just a big scare. They squirted the gel on my tummy….and started moving the wand around. The silence was deafening and the still vision I saw up on the monitor was louder than words. I hesitantly asked “what are you seeing??” And the tech shook her head that she was sorry. Todd’s Mom cried out and I bowed my head and sobbed.

Next thing I know, Todd was walking in to the room and I am crying and telling him how sorry I am for not keeping our baby safe. He hugged me and told me it wasn’t my fault. If only I could rewind a few days back and be sitting in the doctor’s office saying “yes, let’s go ahead and induce tonight”. Instead, I was scheduling my check-in to the hospital to be induced that evening. The next 48 hours would be some of the toughest I have ever faced.

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[**Silent Birth**](http://loveyoutoinfinity.blogspot.com/2011/12/silent-birth.html)

After learning that Isla had passed away, it was yet another blow to realize that I was going to have to go through labor and delivery to give birth to a baby who would not be waking up…that we wouldn’t be taking home. I was scheduled to check in to the hospital to be induced at 10pm on September 26th. As we headed home we discussed what we were going to tell Emma. We decided to be honest with her. Children can sense things and we didn’t want her wondering why we were so upset or to feel like we were not being truthful with her. When we got home we sat her down and told her that she wasn’t going to be a big sister. She asked why and we told her that Isla had died and we would not be bringing a baby home. It is hard to determine what she understood about it all. But we told her we loved her more than anything else in the world and that we were still a family and she could ask us any questions she had. She was quiet, but continued about her business.

We packed our bags and headed to the hospital in silence. There wasn’t much to say. We were facing an incredibly emotional couple of days. We pulled up to the Labor and Delivery parking lot and Todd turned to me and said “this is going to be difficult, but we are going to get through this together” before we got out of the car. Thankfully at 10pm it was pretty quiet, with no other women rushing in with contractions around me. Once I was all checked in, the receptionist took my hand and looked me in the eyes and said “God Bless You” before I headed up to my room.

We got settled and I was hooked up to all the necessary equipment and IV’s to prepare me for induction first thing in the morning. Once the nurse left us alone, Todd came to my bedside and opened up a flood of emotions. We just sat there and hugged and cried for our lost baby and broken dreams for our family. Last time we were here was so joyous, the beginning of our family when we brought Emma in to the world. This was so different. It seemed so cruel to be there….the baby bassinet sitting there, ready to hold our lifeless baby. It was so quiet and lonely and somber this time.

One source of comfort for me that night was my sisters and some close friends constantly checking in with me via text message. My phone was buzzing with words of support and comfort and it truly helped me to know that they were right there for me, like they had their virtual arms wrapped around me, reassuring me they were right there on the other end if needed something.

The next morning the nurse was there at 7pm to start the induction. I requested an epidural right away. The anesthesiologist was very gentle and did a great job with a painless insertion. Once that was complete, I laid back and waited….wishing that this was all just a nightmare. A few hours later it was time to push. My delivery was almost identical to Emma’s in that it didn’t take much effort to get her out. Three sets of pushes or so and it was over. Todd and I held hands and cried as our lifeless and silent daughter was brought into the world…living through the cruel irony that she had died before even being born.

Isla was taken off to be bathed, fingerprinted and photographed. She weighed 5 pounds, 11 ounces. Small, yes, but not nearly as small as it was thought she was going to be through recent ultrasounds. In fact she was only 1 ounce lighter than Emma. When they brought her back to us, she was a perfect little baby with a head full of dark hair. Why oh why couldn’t she just wake up?? We spent some time holding her and a chaplain came in to give us a blessing and assured us that all babies who die go straight to heaven and become angels.

We scheduled Isla for an autopsy to seek out some answers. After that, she would be cremated and buried with other little souls who shared her fate at a cemetery with a plot dedicated to their memory. Now it was time for the physical and emotional healing to begin.

Leaving the hospital empty handed was as depressing as it sounds and I cried as I walked to the elevator yearning to be toting Isla in her pink car seat on the way home to begin the rest of our lives. Instead I was facing a maternity leave with no baby…an empty crib and broken heart.

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[**Maternity Leave**](http://loveyoutoinfinity.blogspot.com/2011/12/packing-up-and-leaving-hospital-was.html)

Packing up and leaving the hospital was very emotional. Not only was I leaving empty handed, but the coming weeks were going to be much, much different than I had been envisioning in my mind, and planning for over the past 9 months. The end of the year was supposed to be filled with sleepless nights, adjusting to life with a newborn again, and the total joy that a new baby brings into your home. I couldn’t wait to show Emma how to take care of her sister and take pride in the love between my 2 daughters.   Just about as much as it hurts me that Isla is not going to be a physical part of our family, it hurts that Emma won’t be growing up with her. My heart hurts for Emma’s loss too, whether she fully understands it all or not.

The first thing I requested when we arrived home was the removal of the bassinet from next to my bed. I had lovingly gotten it ready only about a week before. I couldn’t bear to go to bed and wake up seeing it empty. I also needed Todd to put away the bouncy seat that Emma had spent a ton of time in when she first came home…I had planned to use it just as much for Isla and it was waiting for her up on the dining room table. I left her room alone, though. I had hung letters up over her crib and her clothes were all washed and put away in her drawers. I plan to put some select items away in a special keepsake box when I have some time over my Christmas break. I haven’t been able to bear to do it yet.

So…thus began my “maternity leave”. I was still granted 6 weeks off because a maternity leave is intended to be used for the physical recovery after delivering a baby. The first few days were spent mostly on the couch….replaying the what –if’s, should-be’s and general sadness and bouts of tears. Todd was home for 2 weeks and his Mom and Dad stayed to help us out….by lending a general hand around the house and with Emma…and a lot of moral support. We were really very grateful to have them with us. The day they left, I went inside and cried b/c the house felt so quiet and I hated that. But my Dad and Joye came to visit and it was nice to spend some time with them. The week Todd went back to work, my friend Kristin from High School came to spend some time with me, which was a great distraction and much appreciated company.

The rest of my leave I spent time just trying to take care of me and being good to myself. I took the time to enjoy my morning coffee while watching my favorite talk shows and enjoyed living life a bit more leisurely during this time and feeling more relaxed than I typically am as a working Mom! Laundry….dinner prep…showers….could all be done at a much more leisure pace, and for this I was relieved. It gave me time to begin processing the reality of what happened and begin to come to terms with it.

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