

## Donita de Villiers



Imagine your sister and best friend dying from an asthma attack at the age of 16.

Imagine you promising yourself that you are going to have lots of kids, because the loneliness is horrible and your only sibling dying left an enormous gap in your life.

Imagine being newly wed at 23 and being told that if you want to have children, you'd better consider doing so right away with the help of infertility treatment, because your reproductive organs aren't formed correctly and your fertility will deteriorate with each passing year.

Imagine going through the emotional roller coaster of 12 unsuccessful infertility treatments over a 3-year period and just totally snapping when all your frozen embryos burst during the last treatment.

Imagine the joy of holding your 5minute old adopted daughter in your arms 3 years later and thanking God for this miracle.

Imagine the frustration when the adoption agency tells you that there is no chance at all of adopting a second child, for there are just too few babies to meet the demand.

Imagine the ecstatic feeling when the nurse comes to tell you that you are pregnant after your 13<sup>th</sup> fertility treatment.

Imagine the fear and then relief when you start to bleed at 6 weeks and the gynaecologist telling you that it is just the foetuses fastening to the uterus wall. You are pregnant with quadruplets and with all your problems won't be able to carry them full term. Three doctors confirm this and tell you to abort at least 2 foetuses if you carry them to 12 weeks or you might lose them all.

Imagine your fear when you start bleeding at 8 weeks and the gynaecologist saying that you are spontaneously aborting part of the pregnancy. Survival of the fittest he calls it. He gets one strong heartbeat on the scan, and one very flimsy one and tells you not to count on staying pregnant with twins. You are so sad for the babies you lost, but also thankful to God for taking the decision of aborting them out of your hands.

Imagine the fear when you start to bleed again at 12 weeks and get admitted to hospital with a drip to try and keep the babies from aborting.

Imagine the pure joy of seeing two perfect foetuses with strong heartbeats and hearing that it is just blood left from one of the other babies you lost and you can go home.

Imagine finding out that you are carrying a boy and a girl, and the pure joy you feel because of being able to give your little adopted daughter a sister like you had.

Imagine having a perfect pregnancy thereafter with injections planned to help the babies' lungs develop from 25 weeks onwards.

Imagine waking up one night at 2am, only 24 and a half weeks pregnant, wanting to go to the toilet and realising that your babies are coming because you can feel your little girl between your legs, and the horrible, horrible feeling that she is going to die.

Imagine your husband rushing you to hospital and the nurse confirming that your baby is in the birth canal and is coming with her amniotic sac still intact.

Imagine your uterus forming a Bundle's ring (muscles contract and your uterus closes up, trapping your baby in the birth canal)

Imagine swelling so much that when the gynaecologist arrives 5 minutes later, he cannot do an internal examination and tells you that your babies have to be delivered immediately but that they are not viable before 26 weeks and asks if they should try to save them?

Imagine being given a spinal block caesarean and your husband wanting to faint next to you but managing to keep sitting while the doctor's assistant faints and the nurses having to take over.

Imagine your blood pressure falling to 65/35, because you're bleeding too much and feeling so ill that you cannot focus on what is going on any more, but realising that you never saw your babies or heard them cry.

Imagine having to ask your husband what your babies look like and him still being in so much shock that he can only tell you that they have his big feet and cannot even remember the names you selected for them. You decided to give your baby girl your sister's name Donita, and your son the family name, Pierre.

Imagine having to wait for the nurses to take you to NICU 16 hours later to see your babies for the first time and your first thought being that they are too small and fragile to survive.

Imagine saying "hello" and "I love you" to your baby boy, but sitting silently next to your baby girl the whole time because you still have the horrible gut feeling that she is going to die, even after the nurses reassure you that the girls are the best fighters and that her vital signs became stable long before your son's. Imagine walking to NICU the following morning holding on to the walls because you want to be with your babies and the personnel are simply too busy to take you there.

Imagine the fear when the paediatrician calls you to NICU and tells you that your baby girl is critical. She has 4th degree brain bleeding and cannot keep her blood pressure up even with medicine.

Imagine seeing your little fighter and wanting to fight with her for each breath and each heartbeat if you only could.

Imagine sitting on a bar stool for 3 hours praying and hoping with your hands next to her, for you are not allowed to touch her, her skin is still too thin and tears with each touch.

Imagine being asked if they can turn the machines off because her lungs have started bleeding and she is literally drowning in her own blood with each breath. Your head says yes, but your heart refuses to ever let her go.

Imagine the fear when your baby boy instinctively realises that his twin sister is dying and has a relapse himself, but you are so tired that the nurses have to take you back to the ward immediately for you cannot stay on your feet any longer.

Imagine holding your angel for the first time and having to give her away to the undertakers.

Imagine not once being able to hold her next to your heart for her skin still tears with each touch.

Imagine losing your baby girl, just like your sister whose name she carries, due to lack of oxygen and with her the dream of giving your other little girl a sister and friend like you had.

Imagine having to lay her to rest, with only your closest family and a few friends present on a Friday afternoon and the sky being dark with clouds as if nature is crying with you.

Imagine the sun breaking through the clouds as you walk away, as if your baby girl wants to give you a message that the sun will shine again in your life too and that she is with God.



Imagine the hurt in the years to come when almost no one remembers that your little boy was actually one of twins.

Imagine how you appreciate it when a very close friend makes a portrait for you two years later of how she might have looked for she is one of the few people who realise that you will never forget Donita.

**Imagine my baby angel Donita de Villiers  
Born on 13 July 2002, 24weeks, 660g and died 14 July 2002.**

