

when they were married, only a year ago. It was a quiet affair. She was a good girl from the neighborhood, he courted her and made his intentions clear, and they performed the ceremony with both their families within three months of his graduating university. He wonders if all the other women's husbands in this room are thinking the same thing as he is — how impossible all of this seems, that they are fathers. It is shocking how common the most difficult thing in the world is.

The nurse takes him to a bassinet and tells him he has a son. “*Congratulations,*” she says. He realizes he has forgotten to ask the sex. He is relieved it is a boy, and shocked at himself that he had forgotten this aspect of having a baby. “*Very good,*” he says.

His son is huge. “*Would you like to hold him?*” the nurse asks. She places his son into his arms, reminding him to support the head. His son is heavy; his son is a giant. The nurse leaves to look at the other women. One of them is in labor; the nurse yanks the curtains shut around her bed. The woman suffers silently.

You open your eyes and look at your father. Your father looks back, frozen. You have large, dark eyes, and your father thinks you look just like his mother.

You curl your hand around your father's finger. He does not hold your hand back. It is so small; he is too afraid of breaking it. He looks at you, and he promises the same thing all parents do: that your life will be better than his.