

*To live or to kill a life – A detailed account of an abortion*  
*Adorto – International movement for family and life*

***Anonymous***

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***(A detailed account of an abortion)***

**Adorto editions**

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## NOTE

The book that you are about to read is the account of a young woman who had an abortion. It is meant to promote a better understanding of this often hidden and forsaken reality in which many young women find themselves living in silence and sorrow. But, above all, it is meant to be an aid for all those women who find themselves in the difficult situation of having to choose or having to make a decision. To all those women who are approaching that “crossroads”, this book is meant to show where the way to abortion leads through the thoughts and feelings of a woman who went through that experience.

If after reading this book, you think that it has helped you in any way, or if you wish to say what you think, you are welcome to send us your comment through this webpage:

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Have a good read.

Adorto – International movement for family and life

# 1

Behind the window-panes I find myself staring at the sky and contemplating its vastness and the colours of its sunsets, never to be the same again. Playful and melancholy, the sky seems to reflect the mood of my soul. Today the sky is sad, too, and reflects all my thoughts and images I entrusted it with.

Once again, I think about my life and of all the experiences I've had to face and that have left a bitter mark, experiences which have been difficult to overcome, but that I've never been able to avoid. I fought my mother's battle against leukaemia, which appeared in its most acute form, the bone marrow transplant she decided to undergo with the probability, indeed the almost certainty, that she would never come back home. Days and days of waiting, of aggressive therapies, of joy for her brief returns to her family, of kisses stolen from her when, her being kept in isolation, I was allowed to come close to her only after adopting the appropriate precautions (even being close to her was denied to me) and, eventually, the fulfilment of our hopes.

I have seen my teacher dying of a tumour and my dearest friend Francesco, only a few years older than I. A newborn cousin and uncle Matteo, too consumed with illness. I no longer have my maternal grandparents, who used to be strong points of reference in my existence and an endless source of love, which survived time and the forced separation...

I find myself listening to a song or remembering a fragment of the past spent together and I still feel deeply moved, I still cry in silence, I still look for them, I still suffer... A huge sense of impotence overcame me for not having been able to relieve their suffering or keep them with me forever, for not having been able to give them anything but my company, my smiles and

my love. “This is life and God’s will,” I have continually repeated to myself to find the strength to help me accept everything.

The atmosphere I was breathing in my house was not happy, either: The continuous arguments between my parents, between myself and my father, had upset me for many years until a few months ago, when I witnessed an unhopd-for family reunion (my father had gone to live at my grandparents’) and I started to enjoy the company of two parents who were so much in love as I had never seen them before.

And what about my disappointments? I’ve had so many! Like everyone else, after all.

Yet, in every recalled circumstance, I have fought, I have tried to be brave, to display true grit and, above all, I have never lost either my optimism or my love for life.

But there is a place in my heart which it is impossible for someone to know, not even if he wanted to. I did not know it existed and it came up when I decided to accept *the meanest and most gruesome compromise of my life: to reject the Love of my child by taking away its life in exchange for my freedom and peace, or so I thought*. But what peace! What freedom! Wounds heal, disappointments can be overcome... Whereas, now, I have been trapped by regret because I did not have the patience to reflect and understand what would have been right for me and for my child. It is a remorse that weighs and crushes like a boulder.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 I came across hell...

A little longer than a year has gone by since that cursed day, and yet I go through every moment again with painful lucidity; every time, a renewed suffering causes me unspeakable pain.

The more I try to forget , the stronger the memory. It thunders in my heart and I alone can listen to it, because I alone know what happened in that hospital, when I couldn't even invoke God's mercy, because I was unworthy of his mercy. I knew I was sinning, but only now I do realize that I killed. Myself of all people, considered to be sweet, sensible and sensitive by everyone, I killed my child – because this is what it is about. Myself, who should have protected it, I was instead its executioner...

I couldn't have known how true the words of my friend Liliana would become. After I told her about my decision, she had mentioned these words more than once: *“Think about it. You won't be able to go back...”*

I knew very well it was not about an “agglomerate of cells”. During a lesson of forensic medicine at my University, I saw with my own eyes a tiny embryo just one month old extracted from a deceased woman who did not know she was pregnant. My teacher at the time, who was strongly against abortion, had “preserved” it at the institute and had wished for everyone to see it so that they could realize the dishonesty of those who, because they are in favour of abortion, hide behind dishonest and false terminology. It was one of the most exciting and strongest emotions I had ever felt. Fantastic! The embryo, already formed, as small as a thumb, had a head, arms, tiny legs, mouth... Only the fingers were still stuck together, the eyes were closed and the sex unknown: in fact in its place there was a little hole. I told this story to everyone I met with a particular emphasis, mainly to spread the message that my teacher, during the lesson, had wanted to reaffirm in a loud voice, “Yes to life. No to abortion.”

How much tenderness the vision of that “puppy” – as I called it - had stirred up in me. “I would never do it. A baby, any moment God's willing, would be a blessing!” This is what I said.

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I have respected nothing of what I was.

I rejected what would have been my unconditional happiness.

*What is more loathsome than a mother who takes away, deliberately, the life of her own child, blood of her blood, flesh of her flesh?*

Is there anything dirtier than me? I stained myself with MY CHILD's blood because of a crime that I cannot undo.

## 2

A chapter of my life was about to end before I found out that I was pregnant.

Tired, yet at the same time full of hope for a new beginning, I had invested all my energy in the preparation for the state exam which would enable me to become a lawyer. Years of study, of sacrifices, of renunciation, of continuous efforts to overcome mental tiredness were about to be rewarded. My greatest wish was to fly away and become independent to be free. It was about to happen for real!... and it did happen.

Having overcome the obstacle, which at times I regarded as insuperable, joy was no longer a feeling that I hoped I would experience as soon as possible, but it had become real: it was the perfect end of an immense effort. Now, everything looked downhill. Such great satisfaction! I was feeling alive, enlivened by great vigour, contented as I had never felt for some time, ready to face the world.

And next to me I had a wonderful man, whom I loved as I had never loved anyone before, who was my support in my daily life and who was my smile and my happiness...

Then...

...darkness.

Alarmed, even though it was only a minor delay, I felt overcome by great despair for some days. My period had always arrived regularly and for that reason my instinct told me that the delay was almost certainly due to pregnancy. And if that was true, what would I do? I chased my thoughts away in the attempt to exorcize them, as if my indifference were able to dissolve them and avert what I was afraid of. But, inevitably, my mind was projecting into the future and I was afraid.

Fear...

Fear of growing up? Of taking my responsibilities? Of forcing destiny's hand and of getting married out of duty? Of tying up a person whose intentions I hardly knew? Of becoming a burden to Stefano and to my family, since I did not have a job and I was unable to give my child all it would need?

I do not know... I cannot answer...

I "only" know that I would have loved that child immensely, I would have saved all my love for it.

But I was feeling so confused that I couldn't easily put order in that tangle of conflicting emotions.

There was only one way to end my torment: I had to do the pregnancy test. Doing this required prudence: as I lived in a small mountain village in Italy, I had to be discreet to avoid the gossip and comments that would be unavoidable. I had to go to the chemist's of a nearby town: yes, that would be the best solution.

The car journey was full of silence. The more we drove, the sooner we approached the moment of truth. And I was so much absorbed in my anguish that I lost the sense of space,

of time, of Stefano's proximity. I only remember that we were holding hands and that, in that difficult situation, I was overcome by numbness: there were no colours around, no light, no voice.

I would have wanted children, and I would have liked my beloved Stefano to be their father. I happened to daydream about our family, but there was no stability in my life.

And what about him? What was he really feeling? Would he feel trapped in case of a positive result? He would certainly remain by my side... But all of a sudden it felt as if I didn't know either him or myself... Inexplicable.

After the purchase, the return journey was the right time to read the information leaflet and to become familiar with the instructions for using that "thermometer for hormones", which was so small and yet capable of changing the direction of our lives.

More and more certain that I knew the answer without waiting for the colouring of the lines, I was nonetheless hoping that I was wrong.

Only a three-minute wait was required... Endless moments...

The result was positive.

Overcome by great despair, I felt suffocating... Never felt such anguish.

It was as if my life had ended in that moment. I was crying and I couldn't calm down. In a certain sense, my reaction surprised me, too. I repeated, "I don't want it!"... As if it had been an unwanted present to turn down. But the child was already inside me, was living inside me, was breathing inside me... What was so tragic in the life that I was carrying in my womb? What was so tragic in the absolute and pure innocence of that child? Nothing. Nothing at all!

And yet, I persisted in being unable to understand...

I felt lost. Now nothing could be done – except throw it away! Yes, things must be called by their proper name.

Initially, I didn't consider the possibility of having an abortion because it was against my principles, the values and teaching that my parents had imparted to me and, therefore, in conflict with my own conscience...

... My conscience... that same conscience that I intended to keep away from any type of compromise, in any situation I would find myself. But, instead, I had already sullied with my intention that would soon become reality.

After giving free vent to the anxiety built up in the previous days, as if in a break from the anxiety in my heart and mind, I started to cherish the idea of becoming a mother after nine months... It seemed to me an incredible, wonderful, extraordinary idea, and on the phone with my friend Liliana my tears had unexpectedly turned into a smile.

But the following day, *“that idea”* became more and more insistent and filled me with a terrible anxiety... The mechanism had gone off.

With the excuse of wanting to be informed about what would happen if I chose not to keep it, I set out for a journey with no return. But it was all my decision because until the last moment I could have turned away and stopped everything saying, “No, thank you. My child and I are leaving.” My life would be better at present, I have no doubt.

But it didn't end like this. From then on, everything happened so fast: the first meeting with Doctor X, the gynaecological visit in his study, the ultrasound scan that I didn't want to see at first, only afterwards, the blood test (obviously carried out in a private clinic). The “preparation” for what would turn out to be the most horrendous and terrible day of my life.

The words spoken by the doctor, but, above all, the unspoken ones still come back to my mind, leaving me as dumbfounded now as on that occasion. I remember that, after a short and detached explanation of the development of the operation, Doctor X added, “ If you go for it, go ahead and don’t turn back.” And then, turning towards me, “You only need to be patient”.

That was the only thing I needed. That was enough.

He never asked me, not even once, “What makes you do it?” or “Do you know what really happens?” or “Are you sure?” or “How are you?” He never tried to talk me out of it. He never mentioned the fact that motherhood could be wonderful, the miracle of life that it shelters. He didn’t help me to reflect, to think rationally (because a woman who thinks of having an abortion doesn’t have the lucidity to understand anything, being overwhelmed with panic and fear). As if killing or giving birth to a child were the same thing... as deciding to wear a pair of black or white trousers... as if it were natural and normal.

That coldness, which I perceived as dominant, isolated me and combined to increase my loneliness... I needed to talk, talk, talk... and to be listened to so as to be understood and helped.

### 3

At 9 o' clock of that morning I went through the doorway of the hospital. On reaching the ward, I found myself in a waiting room full of people. And yet the feeling of emptiness in my heart was huge and tasted bitter.

I was holding on tightly to Stefano, looking for protection, for a safe shelter from my fears. I remember looking at him when I asked him, "And if we kept it and went away, the three of us?" With a sweet smile, without taking his eyes off mine, he replied, "If you want to, you know, we can keep it."

My God! Instead of hearing again about my ("my", not "our") freedom of choice, I desperately would have wished him to hold my hand and drag me out of that place, far away, to hold me as tight as to make me breathless, and to tell me, "Together we can make it. I want this child... because I love you." But, unfortunately, my heart had not received any reply to what it was asking for, and, again, I felt LONELY.

In that moment Doctor X appeared in the corridor and, after giving me the first necessary instructions on what to do when I was in my bedroom, he invited Stefano to come back in the afternoon. This decision had to be made to protect my privacy and the other wretched women's.

I didn't want him to go away... I didn't want to be separated from him.

The last opportunity to save our child by talking and communicating to each other our emotions freely, without the conditioning of the unforgivable and stupid reasoning that was clawing us... had vanished. And then, how could I have faced it all on my own?

I went inside the room... a ghetto reserved for those who, like me, had to have an abortion on that day. One could breathe death inside that room. I could hardly walk. I felt my legs paralysed and unable to move.

I found only one available bed, near the window, certainly the most exposed to the wind, which was violently blowing through the window frame on that day. But that didn't matter... the cold that I felt in my heart was more overwhelming. I was ashamed of being there, I didn't have the courage to raise my eyes from the bed where I had put my few things, although I knew I would not be judged by "my mates".

Nearly in a daze, I made sure to take the antibiotic that I had previously obtained under the doctor's instructions, followed by a drink of water...water... the only sign of life inside that place. After taking off my clothes, I immediately put on my pyjamas and went to the bath to have a pee. Doctor X would arrive soon to insert a suppository inside the vagina necessary for expanding the uterus. We would have to wait for two hours for this to happen and make it *easier to tear... my child away from my womb.*

I am crying while I'm writing this... It is difficult to carry on telling this story... The pains became sharper and sharper: the vaginal suppository was working effectively... I felt an

unbearable pain in my back and legs: my ovaries were contracting, my blood had frozen, my bones had become numb. My teeth were chattering and I turned my eyes to the ceiling, looking for the face of God: but what right did I have?

"What am I doing?" I asked myself, in a loud voice.

I didn't know that the answer to that question would haunt me from that moment again and again on every new day of my wretched life.

I couldn't stand it any longer! I asked the nurse to give me something, anything, to relieve my growing pain.

It was necessary to give me a drip of a strong painkiller. They were unable to find a vein, and that caused further pain added to the pain I was already feeling, but I didn't mind: I only wanted those continuous and violent contractions to stop.

After a short while, I felt such a strong sense of nausea that I couldn't help vomiting up my gastric juice and... my soul.

With the eyes of someone who implores a single grain of compassion, I "stole" the nurse's hand and brought it to my face, holding it tight.

"What's your name?" I asked her.

"Liliana" she immediately replied, with such a gentle manner that I would never forget.

"Like my best friend," I told her with a feeble smile. "Thank you," I carried on. "Help me, it hurts so much. I beg you to help me."

"You must breathe slowly. It gets worse if you are restless. You'll see it will get better soon."

But the pain didn't go.

"I want my mum..." I told her, looking towards the door. "Why didn't she come?"

“Because she doesn’t know anything.”

And my mum would never have allowed me to be there. She wouldn’t have allowed me even to think about the solution I had chosen, not at all! With her “customary” love, she would have supported me and sacrificed herself to help me, in case of need. She would have been happy for that gift, like all the other people in my family. But I didn’t want to be a burden to anybody, not even to her.

My suffering reached its limit and I cried out with pain. Doctor X arrived again and sat on the edge of my bed, trying in his own way to comfort me.

“I told you that you had to be very patient,” he reminded me.

I threw up again.

A different side effect of the vaginal suppository was soon to appear: diarrhoea. The doctor invited us to go to the bathroom, one at the time, and not to hesitate to call the nurse in case of need.

When my turn arrived, I gathered all my strength. I couldn’t stand up, but I had to stand.

After I went back to bed, exhausted, I looked at my watch. I couldn’t wait for the end of that slow agony.

Later a man appeared at the door and asked us who wanted to go first for the operation. Hoping that the wait had ended, I gave myself up to tiredness. I was eventually feeling a little bit better.

They took the eldest of us three wretches. Before she came back, a nurse came to the bedroom to pick me up and asked me whether I could walk.

To reach the operating theatre, we walked through a long corridor, which seemed interminable to me. The nurse was holding me by the arm; my steps were slow and uncertain, my head was bent. I felt like an animal on its way to the slaughterhouse.

When we arrived, I saw the other girl, not yet fully conscious, lying on a stretcher. I caressed her face before they took her away. I waited in a room, bent over, nearly in a daze, with my eyes fixed on the floor. They took off my tights, my necklace and a ring from which I never parted. When they told me that everything was ready they led me to the operating theatre, they had me take off my pyjamas and knickers. They had me lie on my back on the bed, with my legs resting on the retractor and my pelvis pushed forward: that was the correct position to take.

I felt ashamed, like being raped, beaten up in my most intimate parts. Five people were around me...

Doctor X was ready. Before falling asleep, I begged the anaesthetist, who was a woman in her forties, with indifferent and cold eyes, or so it seemed to me, but who, instead, gave me a moment of humanity and protection. I begged her to tell me that everything would be over when I woke up, and she answered yes, it would be indeed, with a caress and a tender, compassionate look on her face.

Then... a sharp pain in my hand because of the injected substance and my last words, said through clenched teeth, before killing my child: "How painful it is..."

## 4

On my worn-out, weak awakening, I felt as if my bed was capsizing. A sheet was between my legs to absorb and stop my bleeding. I couldn't move well. I was still semi-paralysed.

I can still feel, more acute than ever, the torment I felt when I realised I was no longer a mum... because a woman becomes a mother on the very moment she finds out that she is no longer alone, but that a new part of herself is growing inside. It is a new life, it's her child...

I felt warm, silent tears running down my cheeks: my torment began on that precise moment. "It's no longer there... it's no longer there" I became desperate and agitated with that little strength that remained inside me.

The phone rang. I replied with an enormous effort. It was my friend Liliana, with whom I relieved my feelings, crying and repeating "It's no longer there, it's no longer there..."

A few minutes later the third girl came back from the horror room: and so the slaughter had come to an end! Our sobbing, isolated from the happiness of those who, in the nearby rooms, were getting ready to experience the most extraordinary event in one's lifetime, recalled the darkness we had shamefully fallen into.

Who would save me, giving me back to the light of Divine Grace? Who would return the dignity that, as a woman, I had suffocated with my own hands? But, above all, who would give me back my child, or rather, my little girl? Yes, because I was sure the child would be a little girl.

The remorse that immediately knocked on my heart was excruciating. From then on, I have never had a single moment of peace. I will never forgive myself for deciding to cause the death of the person that was supposed to be the most important person in my existence.

And now, my friend, you know my story and have read about my sorrow, as far as I could explain it.

I cannot still explain to you what really pushed me to become the person that I am not. It was probably the fear of growing up, of being abandoned, of being no longer loved, or of keeping beside me a person who I thought could feel trapped, or, simply, the fear of not being able to cope, of failing to be a good mother and a fine woman.

I don't know, I don't know, I don't know...

The human mind is complicated and tortuous and, we, ourselves, are often unaware of all the labyrinths in our unconscious.

What is sure is that it was a *rash gesture, the outcome of my most despicable selfishness and that I wouldn't do it again, never and never again, if only I could go back.*

I know that you feel lonely, too, and you can't see a way out of your anxiety. You feel ill at ease about a situation you don't know how to handle and that doesn't seem to belong to you because it is new, bigger than yourself, than the world where you have lived until now. You are afraid of being judged for what you really feel, afraid that nobody can understand you and you are convinced that having an abortion is the best thing to do. You are sure that a few minutes of your time will be enough to secure a painless and definite answer to your anguish. However, it will unfortunately be only a definite answer, because you will never be able to efface the remorse of having been impatient and having agreed to your child's death.

Don't feel you are on your own.

Closer than you think there is somebody willing to help you, to give you a hand not to let you fall, to be your friend, a friend who is sincerely sorry for what you're going through and who wants to help.

You need to talk. Get it out of your chest, do whatever you feel necessary to save yourself and your child, you have the right and also the duty to do so. Protect yourself from yourself, protect the love that already lives inside you.

I understand how difficult everything seems to be now, and impossible to overcome, however, gather all the strength that you have inside, because I am sure you have a lot of it.

We women, we are special: frail creatures, but who can also be solid rocks...

It is true, the unknown is scaring, paralysing, but just think that it can turn out to be a wonderful surprise. Life amazes you especially when you are convinced that there is no longer light for you, and moves you as deeply as the unexpected hug of a child.

God has chosen you to be the mother of your child: he believes in you.

You have chosen your child and he has wanted you and not another mother!! Take courage!! I am sure that it will be enough to look in its eyes, to hold its tender hand in yours, to hold it close to you and smell its perfume to efface all bad thoughts, anguish and uncertainty. It will be your strength and you will be its light, always shining.

If someone had decided to make us die, we wouldn't have been able to find out how beautiful it is to sing, have friends, fall in love, be astonished before the beauty of the sea... be what we are...

How many times have we been overwhelmed by anger because we have not been let free to choose? Let's not then arrogate ourselves the right to decide whether to let a human being live or die, that is, the flesh of our flesh.

Don't deny yourself the love of your child, as I have done.

In the presence of every pregnant woman you will ask yourself "Why not me?" and it won't be possible to reproach anybody except yourself.

You cannot even imagine the excruciating pain inside you every time you see a happy mother with her child, because you could have enjoyed the same happiness which you have rejected. You will start counting the months and then the years that your child would have been if you hadn't made him die. You will try to imagine its face, the expression of its eyes, its smile and you will see them in every child you will come across in the street.

You must not think that this is just words. Who can understand you better than me? I have been to hell and I don't want you to be there, too. I beg you. Listen only to your heart and, if people try to push you into believing that having an abortion is for your own sake, turn them away because they don't know what they are saying, and they don't really love you.

If you decide to have an abortion, remember that you won't be able to go back. It will always remain an open wound, always bleeding. Don't feel mortified... I beg you as if you were my sister...

I'm leaving you now, with a message that I wrote the day after my abortion. Somehow, I had to free the pain that was consuming me to the point of choking me.

*"I feel so bad, very bad... I wish I could die and only God, who sees everything, knows why...Yesterday was the worst day of my life... hell on earth... Now, I am looking for forgiveness, but I haven't even the courage to ask for it. I only hope that God, in his infinite mercy, will have mercy on me, the least of human beings, and that he will change my heart, that same heart I believed to be better but which, instead, made me betray life..."*

I strongly wish that tomorrow morning, when you wake up, you will smile because you will have decided to start a new, extraordinary adventure...

... with YOUR CHILD.

## NOTE

We wish to remind you that you are welcome to send us your comment through this webpage:

<http://www.adorto.com/comment.htm>

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