

Being The OTHER Mother

Some people were born to be parents, I have always felt that I was one of those people. Being a lesbian, I did not know how that would ever happen. When I came out in 1978, people weren't talking about things like artificial insemination and second parent adoption. I thought that I would have to put parenthood away and be content being Aunt Carol. This worked for a while but I always had this yearning inside me to have my own child.

When I was thirty two, I started a relationship with a wonderful, beautiful, amazing woman. We had a commitment ceremony after two years and planned to start a family. My partner wanted to wait awhile to have kids because she was eight years younger than me and was not ready yet. Each year for ten years I asked her when we would have a child, I was crushed when she said she had realized she did not want to have children. What could I say or do? I felt as though my dream of being a mother was gone forever.

This turned out to be a fatal blow for our relationship. I left and moved to Syracuse.

I had planned on staying with a friend in Syracuse for a while until I could figure out what I was going to do with myself. I found Syracuse to be a city with many interesting facets. The people were friendly and I got work easily.

I decided to stay for a short time. Of course I met women and had a few short term relationships. They were fun but I was unsure of how long I would remain in town as I wanted to go live in the sun somewhere. I did however meet Laurie, my best friend for life during this time. It was she who changed my life in a very profound way.

I had made the decision not to get into any more relationships and make a plan to go some place warm to live, but Laurie the match-maker, kept telling me I should meet her friend, Jackie. I told her I really wanted time to be alone but every time I saw her she would repeat "You should meet my friend Jackie". After a while I told her to give me Jackie's number just to get her to stop saying this. Oh boy, a blind date, just what I don't need.

I called Jackie and arranged to meet for coffee, She seemed very sweet on the phone and thought to myself that she might be a good friend.

We met for coffee and talked. Then, Laurie showed up at the Pearl to ask us if we wanted to go to a party, so we did. It was this party that I saw something in Jackie's eyes that intrigued me so much. I knew I had to get to know her better. So, I called for another date.

It was on this date that I met my beautiful Orla (Jackie's daughter) for the first time. Each time we got together I became more curious about Jackie and eventually started having feelings for her and Orla. After nine months we decided to live together.

I moved in with Jackie and Orla and found myself starting to become the "other" mother. It was a little intimidating at first because Orla already had two mothers. Where would I fit in? How much input would I have into the raising of this child? How do I know what the boundaries are? Bottom line, would I ever be "Mom"?

At first, as in any relationship, we had bumps and times when things were unclear to me as to what role I played. As I got to understand the relationship more, I realized that there was room for another mother. I started to take Orla to school and go with Jackie to pick her from the after school program. I could feel myself becoming part of the routine. I was delighted.

It was not until I picked Orla up from school one day and I got there about 2 minutes late. She was already on the "Susan Bus", a good friend who picked up Orla when we could not. Orla saw my van as I pulled up and told Susan "I gotta go! My "MOM" is here!" When I saw Susan later that week, she told me what Orla had said. It touched me so deeply I almost cried. It was at that moment that I realized that my dreams had come true. I am a mother!

I have grown to love Jackie and Orla with a depth I have never experienced before. I am fulfilled in every way. I feel supported and loved by them. I also return that love and support to them. My life is complete.

Some people are born to be parents. I have always felt that I was one of those people. Now, I am a parent!

I am the other mother

