

Allyson Bevins (Grade 8, Berne Union High School, Sugar Grove, OH)

Level II Honorable Finalist

Letter to author Eric Wilson concerning his book, *October Baby*

Dear Eric Wilson:

A few years back, I read your book *October Baby*, and it changed my life and the way I have viewed the past. I was adopted when I was about a year old and since I turned 14, my life has never been easy.

As I was only a one-year-old, I do not remember the many times in which I was in-and-out of foster homes. At the time, my brother had not yet been born and my sisters were around the age of four. My birth mom started taking drugs and she had eleven kids with many different guys. Five guys have been DNA tested, but none have proven to be *my* father. My mom had a choice: to either give up drugs or give up her children. Since she chose to take drugs, I have always felt like no one loved or appreciated me, and that I'm not worth anything. I have been only able to see two of my sisters, and I do not know all of my other siblings. I always felt like my mom never deserved to be my mom, and she should be ashamed of what she has done.

Going to a new school last year, I was bullied and it made me feel really upset about myself and reminded me of my life. I came home countless times crying and wondering if anyone would ever miss me if I died. Suicide crossed my mind, but I was always too scared of the pain involved. Many people in school found out about my past and would tell me that my mom gave me up because I was ugly and she did not want to have such an ugly child. I was told I was not worth anything and many people did not like me and give me mean looks. They would talk behind my back and they left me out.

I eventually made true friends who really cared about me and told me not to listen to all the mean comments. It was hard. One of my friends would speak to me about my personal life, and we found out that she had adopted my sister and was fostering my brother. I met my sister and she was the cutest thing, and I felt happy again. I met the boy and he was just a baby. This year, he was taken away from my girlfriend by his grandparents and my friend was devastated. My mom later got the phone call asking if she would take him: she couldn't. Who knows if I will ever see him again? I am grateful that I at least had an opportunity to meet him.

My mom exposed my brother to drugs and over the years, he has become much worse, becoming more violent and making death threats at home and school. He is only twelve, but we do not know what to do. We are all scared for our lives as well as his. I blame my mom for all the pain she has caused me and for making my life a lot harder than it should have been. It seems like everyone around me has such a perfect life, and I do envy those who have never experienced anything close to the pain that I suffer.

After reading your book, *October Baby*, I felt like I should not be so angry at my mom for all she has done. I prayed and prayed for her, and I forgave her for what she has done. If it was not for her, I would not have such a loving family today who loves me with a love beyond what my birth mother could give. Your book proved to me that God has made this happen in my life for a reason—to make me and those who love me stronger. I used to cry alone in my bedroom all the time about how much I hated my mom and why she caused so much pain in my life. Now, I accept who I am and stand up a bit straighter with more confidence than I could ever have mustered before.

My life has been wonderful ever since. The bullying has stopped this year and I have forgiven them. One of my best friends used to be someone who had bullied me last year. I still cry, but I am reminded that I can be so much more. I plan on adopting when I get older and to treat people with kindness in my heart that my mom never gave me. My foster parents are more like parents to me than my mom could ever have been. I forgive her and am looking forward to what life throws my way next so I can overcome it! Thank you for your beautiful book with the life changing lesson!

Sincerely,

Allyson Bevins