



**222 MARTLING AVENUE
TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK 10591**

CHAPTER SIX

We found this apartment, called Castle Heights, in The New York Times, just like the ad says!

It was a sub-let. Steve decided he wanted to live in Tarrytown, as his poker game began there. It was a half-hour commute on the Hudson Line of the railroad; just enough time to have a good game. If the train were ever delayed, Steve loved it even more: more time to make money.

We took a second floor, two bedroom apartment with a balcony overlooking the parking lot and the front. Compared to our previous apartment, this was so spacious. I can't remember the rent exactly; I think it was in the mid \$300's a month. We had two years left on the lease. We bought a new car when we moved: a 1969 navy blue Buick LeSabre convertible, with air-conditioning. I was very visibly pregnant, and soon we were welcomed by lots of the people who lived at Castle Heights. We made many friends there.

We decided to take a short vacation right after we moved in. After all, soon we would be having a baby, and there would be no more time or freedom for such things. We decided to visit our friends, Suzanne and Harold Mellin in Baltimore, and then go to The Tides Inn in Irvington, VA, and stop at Williamsburg as well.

While we were away, at The Tides Inn, Neil Armstrong became the first astronaut to land on the moon. It was an exciting time! We all watched the event on TV in the lodge. I had to go to the bathroom all night long. The next day we left the inn and drove to the Mellins'. We stayed overnight there. Harold was doing his medical military duty at the National Institute of Health. He remarked that he'd never seen a woman as pregnant as I was in such good shape. I did feel terrific. The pregnancy had been off to a rocky start, but now everything seemed to be just fine. I was anxious to get back to our new home and get ready for the baby.

Soon after we returned from our trip to Williamsburg, we were having coffee with two other couples in the apartment house, both of whose wives were expecting babies the same time I was.

We women were comparing notes on the states of our pregnancies, all our firsts. We all felt wonderful, but the two other women were complaining about the babies kicking a lot and keeping them up at night. Suddenly, I realized, I hadn't felt my baby kick in quite some time – not since we returned from our trip. I tapped on my bulging belly, fully expecting a thump in return. I didn't receive one. I tapped again, and again, no response. My heart started racing, and I excused myself and ran to our apartment to consult my pregnancy bible, a book by the esteemed Dr. Guttmacher.

I looked in the index under "Stillbirth." It was August and the baby was due in September. I read that stillbirth was very rare and often unexplainable. I called my obstetrician and he seemed unconcerned. He advised me to come back into the City the next day, Saturday, and get a fetal heartbeat at the hospital.

Steve and I drove in the following morning, me tapping my rock-hard belly frequently, to no avail. I knew in my bones that something was drastically wrong, even though I felt no pain.

A resident was waiting for us in a room. I could tell just by looking at the young man's face, and by his constant moving the stethoscope to different parts of my abdomen that the news would be bad.

He refused to give us any definitive answer, only saying that Dr. Diamond would be in later to examine me, and meanwhile, we should kill some time, by perhaps going to a movie.

When we returned to the hospital at the appointed time, Dr. Diamond was waiting for us. He put his stethoscope to my belly and looked at me with moist eyes.

"I'm so sorry, Susan, the baby is dead. Sometimes these things happen, but you should go into spontaneous labor over the weekend. If you don't, come back Monday and I will induce you. It will not hurt."

We were all devastated.

222 Martling Avenue was the scene of my biggest heartbreak of my life thus far, but then also of my biggest joy. Eighteen months later, the longest eighteen months I had ever endured, our first baby, Sunny Leigh, was born. She was so much joy and so easy, that fifteen months later, our second daughter, Serena Jane, was born. By that time, we decided we were ready to buy a house. So, six weeks after Serena was born, we moved again.

