

Reading 2 — A Special Birthday

“Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you!” my friends and relatives sang in chorus as I stood proudly in front of my birthday cake. It was my tenth birthday and it was the first time I had invited my friends to my house. I beamed with pride as my friends clapped and cheered for me. Cameras flashed as I blew out the candles and cut the cake.

Everyone was enjoying the cake when I heard my mother shout from the kitchen. Rushing inside, I found her sitting on the floor groaning in pain. Her face was pale and she gripped the sides of her dress so hard that her knuckles had turned white. My mother, who was already nine months pregnant, was going to deliver my baby brother soon! My relatives rushed to her aid. They helped her to the car and my father sped off. Although the party continued, the mood had changed. There was excitement in the air. I could not believe that I was going to be able to see what my baby brother looked like soon. We did not receive any news from my father the whole afternoon. Even after the party had ended, we were still waiting for my father’s news. An hour later, my father called to say that my mother had given birth. I was ecstatic. I immediately left for the hospital with my grandparents.

Once I arrived there, I went to see how my mother was doing. She looked tired but happy. She told me to go and have a look at my baby brother, Samuel. My father took me to the nursery to see Samuel. Pressing my face against the glass, I saw a tiny baby lying on his back. He was wrapped in a blue cloth and his eyes were shut. I wanted to carry him but my father said that the baby had to stay in the nursery for the time being as he had just been fed. He would be taken out a few hours later for his next feed.

My mother was sitting up in bed when I went back to the ward.

“Happy birthday!” she whispered to me. Then she smiled at me and said, “Do you realize that your baby brother shares the same birth date as you?”

My eyes widened as it suddenly dawned on me that Samuel and I would be celebrating our birthdays on the same day from now on. I was bursting with excitement. That night, I bought a small silver balloon with the words ‘Happy Birthday’ for my baby brother and tied it to his cot.