

LEVEL II

Honorable Finalist

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

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 my past. I was adopted when I was about a year old and at the age of 14, my life has never been easy.

Being only one, I do not remember being in and out of foster homes so many times. My brother at the time was not born and my sisters were around the age of 4. My birth mom started taking drugs and she had 11 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 give up her children or take drugs. Since she chose to take drugs, I have always felt like no one wants or appreciates me, and I'm not worth anything. I have only been 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 for 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 all the pain it would be. Many people in school found out about my past and would tell me my mom gave me up because I was ugly and she did not want to have such an ugly child. I was also told I was not worth anything and many people did not like me and would 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 just 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 them by his grandparents and my friend was devastated. My mom later got the phone call asking if we would take him. I told my friend and she was completely torn after we said no. She

could not take him either. Who knows if I will ever see him again, but it was nice to at least meet him.

My mom took drugs with my brother and as the years go by, he is getting worse and worse, getting violent and making death threats at home and school. He is only 12, but we do not know what to do. We are all scared for our lives and his. I blame my mom for all the pain she has caused me and for making my life a lot harder than it should be. It seems like everyone around me has such a perfect life, and I do envy how no one can feel my pain.

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 so much more than she ever could. Your book just proved to me that God has made this happen in my life for a reason and to make me grow stronger through this with those around me who love me. 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 had before.

My life has been wonderful ever since then. The bullying has stopped this year and I have forgiven them. One of my best friends today was someone who 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 treating people with a kindness in my heart that my mom never gave me. My parents today are more of parents to me than my mom will have ever 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