

Jenny Brown and Eric Monologues Script

Jenny Brown:

Hi, thanks for coming to talk to me. You probably heard what happened to me yesterday during my ultrasound. When I found out that the baby was a girl... I was so excited. Then they said that about her having a cleft lip and palate and I just 'lost it.' I can't believe they had to tie me down to the bed and give me an IV. My heart was just pounding in my chest, and I thought I was going to vomit. I feel so bad for my boyfriend, Eric.

I'm about four and a half months pregnant. We didn't plan this pregnancy, but we were both pretty excited when we found out. Well, we *were* excited until we heard the bad news.

I'm studying construction management at the university. The GI Bill benefits are a big help – they will pay for almost all my school costs. Most of the other students in my program are guys who aren't really into hanging out with one of the girls, so I don't have any girlfriends really. A few of the guys in my classes are vets but they probably don't even know I'm a vet... no one thinks of that if you're a girl.

About that thing that happened yesterday... you may not know it, but that happened to me once before, when I was out-processing. I was in such a hurry to get home that I wasn't really focused on what was happening. It was a really stormy day and there was lots of thunder and lightning. I heard this one loud bang and – BAM! I just hit the floor. I was just freaking out and could not stop crying. I was shaking so hard I couldn't even stand up. They took me to the infirmary and gave me some kind of pills that helped me to relax a little. I wasn't really okay until after the storm passed.

That kind of stuff never used to bother me, but over in Iraq, sometimes we'd hear these huge explosions and pretty soon we'd find out that a bunch of soldiers got killed from an IED [Improvised Explosive Device]. Sometimes the "booms" were really close. I never got used to it. It changes you to be over there, and people around here don't really get that. You hear about some of the stuff that happens over there, but the news makes it sound like it's only guys. I have these nightmares where I am trapped in a building, and I can't get out and there are these explosions all around me... and I just wake up in a cold sweat. Usually, I can't get back to sleep so I go out and jog or something. I don't really get enough sleep but sometimes it's better not to go to sleep so you don't wake up with nightmares. Eric thinks I drink too much, but I quit as soon as I found out I was pregnant. I have to admit I've been more emotional lately with the pregnancy, too. The least little thing makes me cry and I'm pretty edgy. Eric has learned to tune me out.

Eric:

Thanks for calling. I should have gone to the appointment with Jenny but I'm working on this new job and my boss said if I missed one more day of work, he'd fire me. We really need the money right now and I finally finished all the welder apprentice training so the pay's pretty good.

She's been wound real tight since she got back from Iraq. I wasn't all that excited about her joining the reserves in the first place. She figured she'd have a desk job, but she ended up in some pretty unsafe places out in the middle of nowhere. I know she saw some bad stuff over there.

Most mornings, even now that she's pregnant, I wake up and she's gone, even as early as 5:30. She has a lot of nightmares and wakes up screaming sometimes. She goes out for a run or gets in the shower and just stands there until the hot water runs out. It seems to be something that calms her down a little.

There are some programs at the VA Hospital she could go to, but she says that mostly it's all guys and they just drown her out. Sometimes I listen to those news shows about PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and I think, "That's Jenny." She's got every symptom: nightmares, and she totally avoids going to any crowded place like the mall. She freaks out if there are loud noises or people real close to her. She's real jumpy, irritable, and cranky even with our friends. We had a lot of fights at first but now I just lay low and try not to get her agitated. I keep hoping that with the baby coming, it will be better, but I worry a little about how it will go. Now that we know there's something wrong with the baby, I hope she can keep it together.