

My Delivery Room Cuddle



Emma Allen

Illustrated by
Jason Ramasami

They say

from the first time you hold your baby,

you will never be the same,

your life changes, .

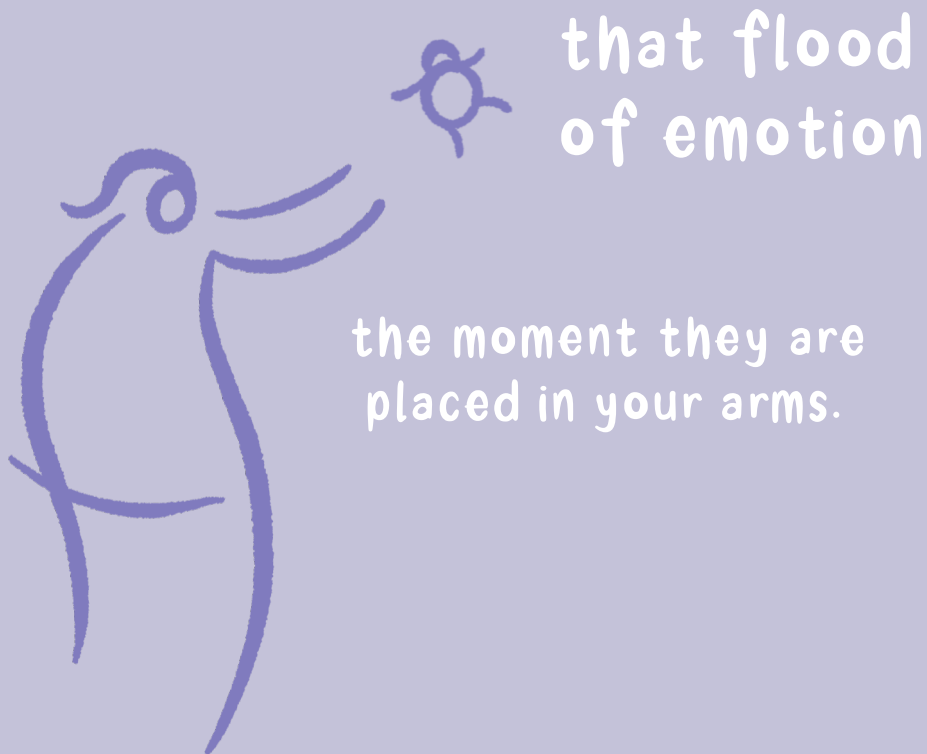
the love you feel,

and the emotion,

is overwhelming.



When you have an extremely premature baby,
you wish with all your heart that
you could experience



that flood
of emotion

the moment they are
placed in your arms.

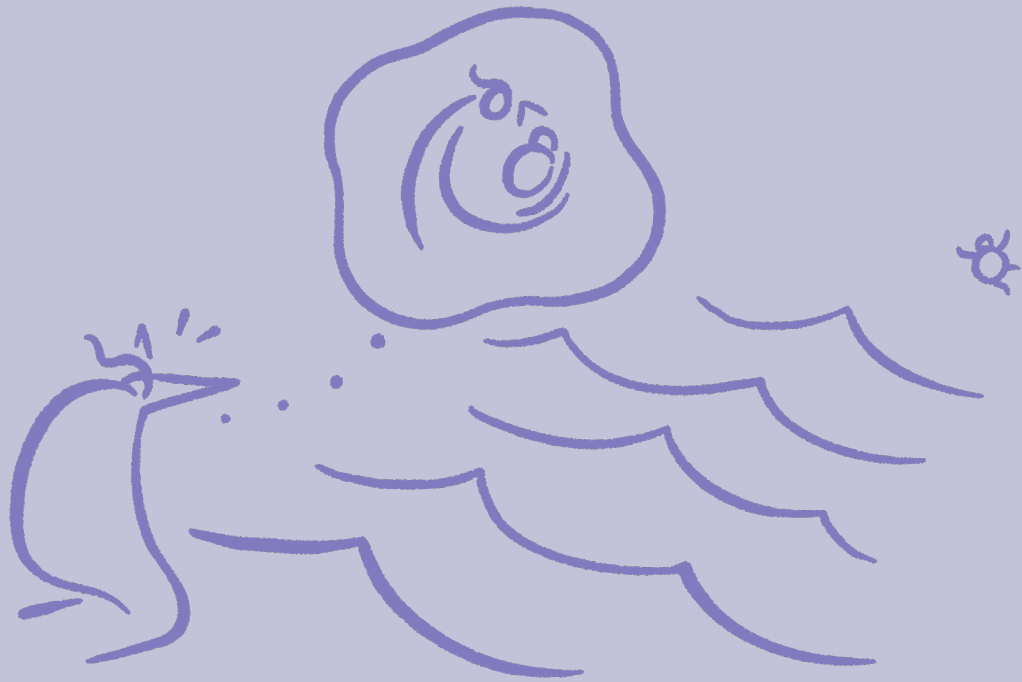
You would give anything

to hold
them,



the way you have dreamt.

Most mums of premature babies
don't have the opportunity



they may have to wait **weeks, months,**
or may **never** get to hold their baby
while they are still alive.

At 23 weeks pregnant



I was expecting twins.

Charlie was
shown to me



and taken away
to the neonatal unit



as I was still in labour
with his brother Jack.

Jack had a more
difficult birth



it took some time
to intubate him

this was extremely
distressing for us.



Once Jack had been stabilised,

the consultant
asked me
if I would
like to
hold him



before they took him
to the unit.

I instinctively knew



this wouldn't be something that
I'd get to do again any time soon.

Holding my baby
in my arms



was one of the most
special moments in my life.

He was so tiny

so perfect
in every way



never in my life have I been
so proud and felt so much love.

I was completely overwhelmed with emotion.

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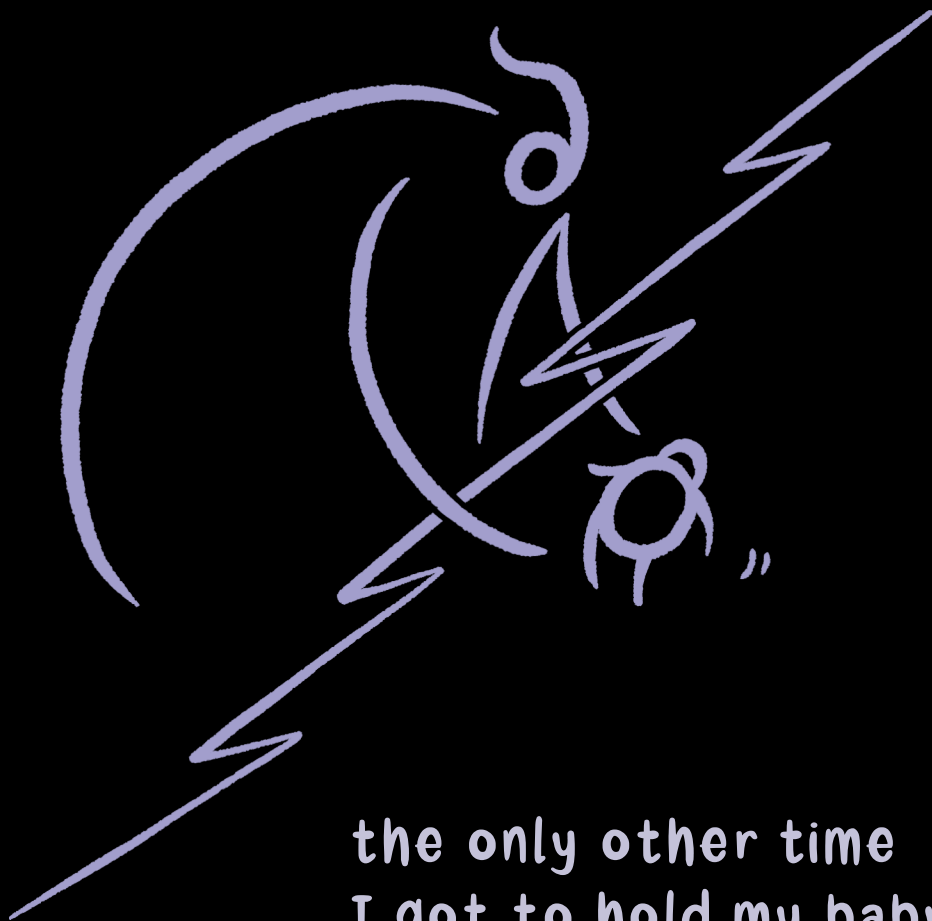


Would any mother turn down the chance
to hold their baby for the first time?

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Jack died from an infection
after only eleven days of life,



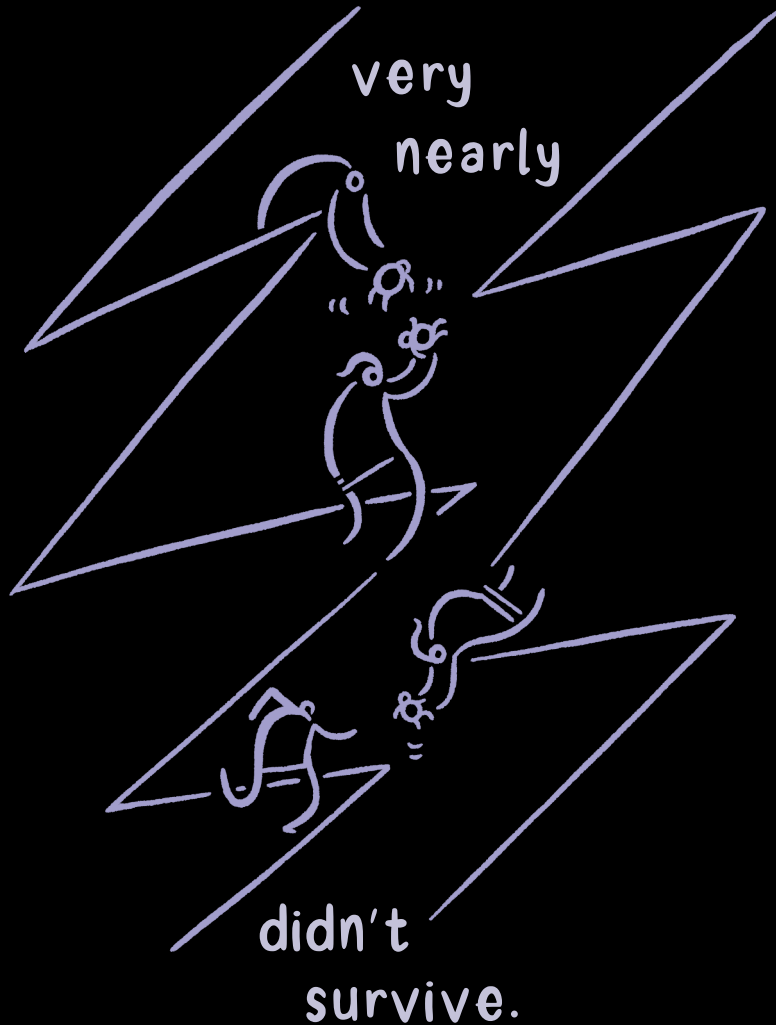
the only other time
I got to hold my baby
was as he died in my arms.



I still find it difficult
to speak about to this day.

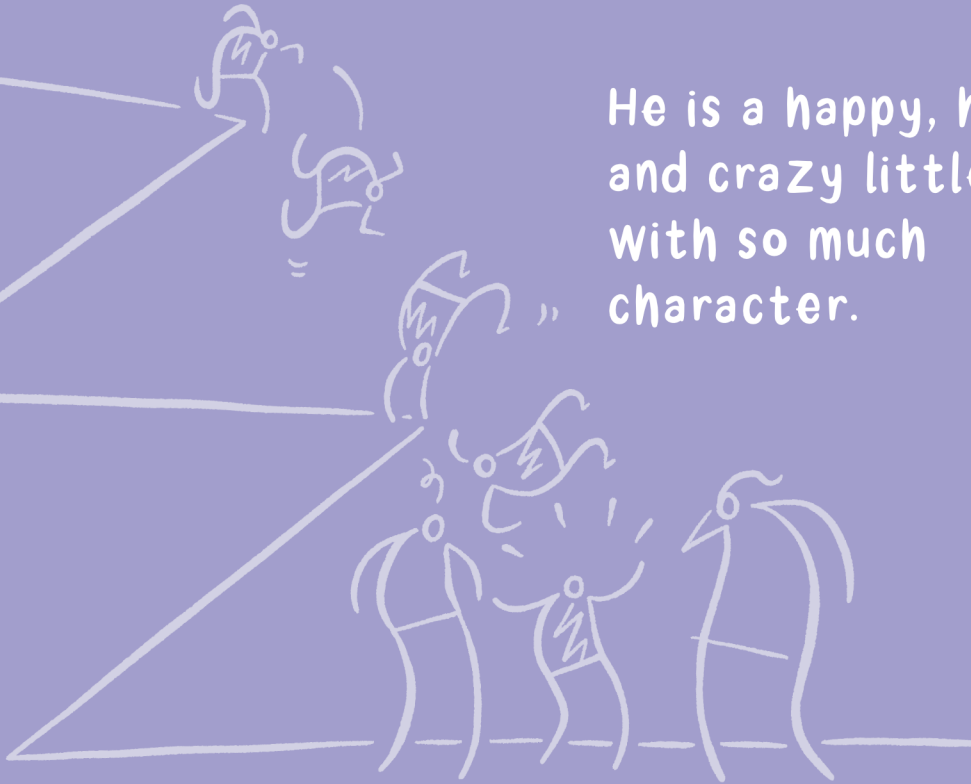
The cuddle I had when he was born
is something I will treasure forever.

Jack's twin brother Charlie



It's been a long journey to
get him where he is today.

He is a happy, healthy
and crazy little boy,
with so much
character.



He is now fourteen years old.

Since the birth of my sons,

I have been told that being able to hold
your premature baby isn't something
that every consultant offers.



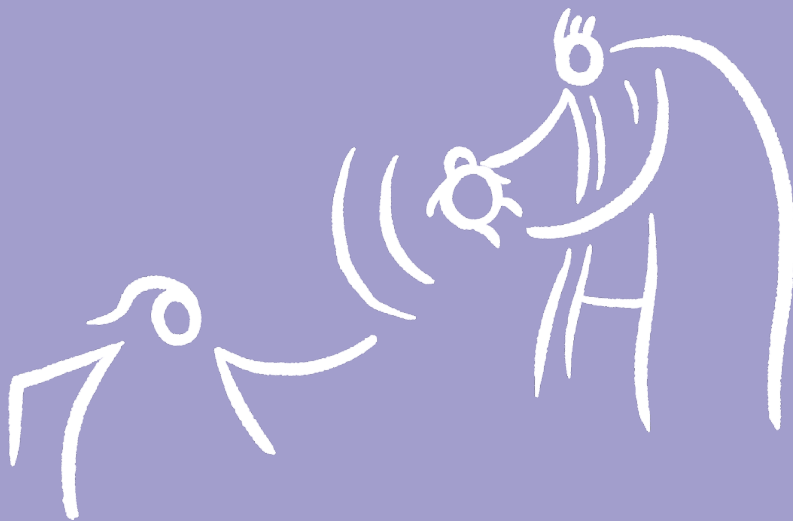
To be honest,
this surprises me.





I needed to tell my story
to raise awareness about
just how much that first
cuddle means as a mum.

Fourteen years later



and this still isn't
common practice.

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Find out more:



My story in more detail

www.bit.ly/3cFDs4u



Research report by Emma Allen,
Sheila Atuona, Paul Cawley, Paul Clarke

www.bit.ly/2YCl2ta