



With Alex, my tiny miracle, two days after he was born

And then, out of the blue, Nick told me that every night since I'd given birth, he's lain awake thinking of me dying and him raising our son alone. "Your sisters even start encouraging me to date," he said, revealing just how detailed his imaginings had become. My stomach knotted up. I asked him how old Alex is in his scenario. "Young," he said, and turned his head away. "Don't be crazy," I told him, wiping tears from my face, trying, as always, to be strong, positive and upbeat. "I'm not going anywhere." But the truth is, I've been thinking about the same thing.

So happy and so scared

In some ways, it's still hard to believe Alexander James Ruddy is here (that's partly because I've blocked out the 12 hours of labor and delivery). Even as I watched my belly grow, I refused to acknowledge that I'd risked my life to get pregnant. Since Gleevec enabled me to live like a normal person, I focused on that, rather than fretting about what could happen. These days, though, I *am* worrying about myself and letting my mind go to dark places. I can't help it. I'm a cancer patient and a mother—two identities that don't mix very well. Doctors don't know for sure how long Gleevec will keep me in remission. What would happen if it quit working? How could I ever leave Alex without a mommy?

These thoughts haunt me when I'm rocking Alex in his chair, giving him Eskimo kisses and humming lullabies I can't remember the words to. I stare down at him and want to say a million things—that he is worth every ache and worry, that I promise I will never leave him—but as soon as I start talking, I cry. I just can't get the words out. The most I can whisper is "I love you" before my tears start dripping onto his chubby little cheeks. Sometimes, they're tears of joy; sometimes, they're tears of fear. I've cried more since having Alex than I ever did in my entire life.

Of course, I don't want Alex to think his mommy is a freak, so we do other things besides crying. We watch *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, go for long walks along the Hudson River and make up silly songs; my current favorite is the one about Alex peeing in his own face, which I let him do once (rookie error). I'm trying hard to focus on how beautiful he is—and how lucky I am. Six years ago I didn't know if I would live to see my next birthday. Next month I turn 30, and Nick and I have a healthy baby boy. Someday, I hope, I'll be able to get the words out to tell Alex just what he means to us. ©

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SUZANNE DONALDSON LAIRD (2); RABBANI SOLIMENE PHOTOGRAPHY

"I have to live for him"

Leukemia patient and *Glamour* editor Erin Zammatt Ruddy is ecstatic to be a mom—and determined to always be there for her son.

In 2001 Erin Zammatt Ruddy, now 29, was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a cancer that until recently proved fatal for many patients. For almost six years she's been taking a lifesaving drug called Gleevec and chronicling her experiences in these pages. Last December Erin went off it to get pregnant; fortunately, the disease stayed at bay. Now she's back on her meds and trying to enjoy her baby as she struggles with her uncertainty over the future.

Late the other night, Nick and I were sitting in bed and obsessing over Alex, our three-month-old: Was he eating enough, sleeping enough, you-know-what-ing enough?



He's already a ham! Left, getting ready for baby; Nick's trying to act as excited over the clothes as I am.

Go to glamour.com/health to see Erin's baby-photo album.