351c. not going to let my mother go anywhere with the baby. She just wanted to get her out of the room by sending her for a coffee and she suggested that she could get one of the nurses to take my mother to the kitchen to make her a cup of coffee. She told her that she would not even have to pay for it and that the nurse who was going to Great Ormond Street was having one before she went; but I need not have worried about my mother going with my baby because she definitely did not want to go. She was full of her own importance and she said "No, I can't go, I can only stay a minute because I've got baked potatoes in the oven for our dinner and they'll be overdone as it is". She went on to say that she had got her FAMILY to think of as if she was trying to paint a picture of a cosy kind of family home, and she asked the Sister what on earth she had sent for her for since she and the Doctor had let me sign some of the forms and they were not going to let my mother take the baby home just then. She told the Sister that she thought she had been called to the hospital to take care of the baby and she asked the Sister what it was that they wanted her for as if she was really puzzled about it. The Sister looked appalled and said very quietly "Isn't Anne your 'FAMILY'" as if she was repeating the word 'FAMILY' quietly but in the same excaggerated tone of voice that my mother had used. Then she stopped and seemed to realize what she had just said and she suddenly looked interested and asked my mother if I was her own daughter or not. She asked my mother if she fostered me, as if she suddenly doubted that I was my mothers daughter at all and she told my mother that it was no good asking her questions about her family history if I was not her

352c. own daughter. She said that it was blood ties that they were interested in and if I was not my mothers own child then they needed to get hold of my own mother or at least some case history and when my mother said that I was not fostered the Sister asked her if she had adopted me. My Mother spoke irately and said that she and my father had WANTED to adopt a baby but that they were not 'lucky'. My Mother said "It was just not meant to be, and ANNE came along instead." The Sister looked in disbelief at the way my mother could speak in front of me and she told my mother that usually it was the other way round and people who <u>couldn't</u> have a child of their own were lucky if they could adopt one. She spoke as if she was trying to save my feelings from the hurtful way that my Mother was speaking but my mother talked quite openly in front of me and as I was used to it, it did not hurt my feelings. My Mother said that she had two other lovely healthy children, who had never been any trouble to her, and that they were waiting outside in the corridor. She said that she was keeping them standing out there in the corridor waiting for her while she was in here and she asked the Sister if they could see the baby. The Sister asked me if I minded if she took the baby quickly along the corridor and back to let them peep at her through the glass window of the door. I said that I did not mind that but as the sister took the baby and went, my Mother complained that she had meant the Sister to let my brother and sister

353c. come in and not for the Sister to take the baby out there. She said that there was plenty of room around the incubator so my brother and sister could come in and sit down in comfort instead of standing out in the corridor but the Sister took no notice of her. While the Sister took the well wrapped up baby along the corridor my mother got a tin of tobacco out of her bag and started to roll herself a cigarette. We were in the Premature Baby Unit where everything was clean and sterile and I said to my mother "You can't do that in here", because I was a bit alarmed about it. She was furious and said "Don't you get all stuck up and snobbish with me young girl". So I kept quiet but when the Sister came straight back into the room with my baby to put her back in the incubator she saw what my mother was doing and she was furious. She told her off and said to my mother "Not in here you don't!" My mother just shrugged her shoulders and obligingly offered to stand outside the door to have her smoke but she was only offering to go to the corridor inside the Premature Baby Unit. The Sister told her that it was a hospital and that smoking was not allowed anywhere at all in the building because of the oxygen and the patients. She said to my mother that she could go right outside the hospital into the street and smoke there. Then she said to my mother "Is it YOU who smokes?", and she quickly asked me if I smoked and I said no. My mother confirmed that I did not smoke and she said that I was very naive, as if they had already spoken about that in the office, and my mother was confirming that too. She said that I had never really 'Grown up' and that she and my father had never been able to get me to smoke or try 'new' things. She said that

354c. I was very stubborn and that even my younger sister was more forward than I was. The Sister told my mother that she didn't think it was very grown up to smoke or to encourage young people to do it. She asked my mother again if she would like to go to the kitchen for one of the nurses to make her a cup of tea as if she was trying to get my mother to go so that she could talk to me on her own but my mother realized that and she would not go. She told the Sister that she only drank sugared water. The Sister said that she was sure that one of the nurses could get her what she wanted, and she called one of the Pupil Midwives to take my mother off to the kitchen but my mother would not go. She said that she only drank Brown sugar in water and that the Brown sugar had to be bought from a health food store which the hospital would not have. The sister suggested a few things to get her out of the unit and when my mother refused them all the Sister told her that she would have to go soon anyway. The Sister said that talking of food she would have to go and phone my ward to be sure that they saved me a dinner and when she said that my mother insisted that she tell them that I was a vegetarian and had been brought up on 'heath foods' which the Sister politely agreed to do.

While the Sister was gone my mother told me straight away to go over and get the baby out of the incubator as it was 'my baby' and as I could do what I liked with her She would like to hold her. I said that the baby could only come out of the incubator for short periods incase she got cold and I said that I was

355c. not going to do that sort of thing anyway because I would not be very popular with the sister and the nurses if I did. My mother said that if it was HER baby then SHE would do it because nobody would tell HER what to do with her OWN baby. I said that it would not be a very sensible thing to do and my mother sneered nastily and said that I was just like THEM, meaning the nurses and she commented "Cold and Clinical!" I took no notice of my mother but as well as not wanting to do anything stupid I did not want my mother to know that I was almost too weak to walk to the incubator without somebody being there and so I just sat where I was even though I might have liked to move over to the incubator to be closer to my baby and see her more clearly.

My mother would not push her luck with me and try to make me do it with other people about and so she sat quietly for a bit. Then my mother said to me "We will have to think of a name for her, we were trying to think of one on the bus and Stella suggested Susan." (Years later I remembered that Stella had called her first teddy bear and every one of her subsequent dolls 'Susan', but at the time I had absolutely no recollection of that). I said to her "She's Elizabeth Christiana" but my mother just laughed and and said "We will help you think of something a lot more suitable than that for her." I said "No, its Elizabeth Christiana, She's been Christened." My mother laughed again and said "When have you had her Christened?" as if she thought I told such fantastic stories that I was a huge joke. I said "This morning, the Priest came" and I showed her the card that Fr. Nolan had given me. My mother shouted "What!!!" and she was absolutely beside herself

356c. with fury and she told me that no Catholic Priest would come out to me and Christen my baby because they would ask her first, and she seemed more furious about that than that the baby had actually been christened. She seemed as if she did not want any priest to get near me and as she spoke it seemed to remind me of the answer that the Priest had been trying to find as to why I was a Catholic and went to mass but it was not in our local parish church but I still could not think what the reason was. When the Sister came back in, my Mother asked her furiously if it was true and when she said that my baby had been christened, my Mother burst into loud angry protests about it and said that the hospital had no right to have allowed me to ask for a Priest. The Sister said that she had done it and she was astounded that my Mother did not approve. At first she thought that we were not Christians and that the tablet which I had been given had made me so sleepy that I had agreed to a Christian baptism without knowing what I was doing but my Mother said that it was her who was a Catholic and not me even though she let me go to mass every week. She said that it was her who the Priests all knew and that if she had telephoned Fr. Lagan at St. Thomas Church then he would have contacted her first to know what name and which God-parents because I was not actually a Catholic and so they would not listen to me. The Sister said that Fr. Nolan was the hospital Chaplain for the Catholic Patients and so he was usually sent for and my Mother became furious that she had not

357c thought that the hospital would have its own chaplains. My Mother said that she just had not realized that they would christen the baby so quickly and she said that they should have waited for her to come and that they had no right to have let me have my baby christened by my own arrangement. My Mother demanded to know who the Godparents were and she said that she, my sister and my brother had the right to be Godparents and I quietly felt so glad that they had not arrived in time because I did not want them to have anything to do with my baby and I felt sure that my baby's christening would not have been so special with them all there. My Mother quietened down a bit when she found out that there were no Godparents and she said that it was not a proper christening then. I said that it was and so did the sister and she said that the Priest had put it onto the Church Records at St. Saviours Church. My Mother was absolutely livid and she said that the names I had chosen were 'ridiculous'. She said that she was the next of kin as I was not married and so they had no right to have christened her until she was present because she would have made sure that the names were suitable. When I realized that my Mother did not approve of my babys christening out of sheer spitefulness her christening became twice as precious and the name 'Elizabeth Christiana' sounded even more beautiful than ever, but I saw the Sister look at my Mother with a look of sheer alarm and she said to her "We didn't mean that you were the next of kin for that sort of thing, those forms are to give consent for the babys operation, She's still ANNES baby." but my Mother just sneered at the

358c. Sister and I saw the Sister look alarmed about it. She also seemed concerned that my mother had just repeated what they must have said to her in the office infront of me when they had taken her to the office so that I would not know but what they were doing did not really dawn on me properly at the time because I was used to the odd things that my mother often said. The Sister told my mother that they had first telephoned our neighbour hours ago and that they had waited a long time for her but my mother retorted that she had had to take her dogs for a walk first and get her shopping in Lewisham first. The Sister listened and then she told her firmly that it really was time that she went and she tried to encourage my mother to go.

The telephone rang and the Sister went to answer it and when she came back she brought a pupil midwife with her and asked her if she could take some of my blood from me because Great Ormond Street had just telephoned to ask for it. She told me that it was incase my baby needed a blood transfusion but when she looked at my arm she decided to take the blood herself rather than let the pupil midwife do it. She put a band round my arm and asked the pupil midwife to hold my arm steady. As soon as my mother saw the needle she immediately started to make a fuss and to say "ugh" and "err" at the thought of blood. The three of us took no notice of her as if she was being stupid and so she boldly got up and bossily said to the Pupil midwife "Here let me help you. Annes such a baby when it comes to these things. I always have a struggle to hold her

359 c. down and she puts up such a terrible fight." She took hold of my right arm and held me down bodily as if she was ready for me to put up a terrible fight even though I had not moved an inch and I was not going to. The sister quickly told her that what she was doing was not necessary and to sit down, which she did. The sister was only putting a needle into my vein and taking out some blood and my arm was numb so I did not feel anything anyway and even if I had I would still have been perfectly calm. My mother looked at me with absolute hatred when she saw how calm and controlled I was because that always annoyed her and she told the sister that she had not expected me to feel anything. She told her nastily that I had always been a very 'cold' child with no feelings whatsoever and she said that I had never shown any sign of having any emotions at all. The sister took no notice of my mother and she was having difficulty getting any blood from me. She finally took it out of my hand and said that the Doctors were talking about giving me a blood transfusion after last night. My mother spoke up and said to the sister "No transfusions, thank you! You CAN refuse you know!" as if she was going to stop them giving me one. I had not heard anything about having a blood transfusion because I had been told that I could go straight home but apparently the Houseman had suggested that I needed one before I was sent home and the sister seemed to think that I needed one. She was really annoyed at my mothers selfishness and she asked her if she would really refuse me something that would do me good. She told my mother to look at me and she asked her if she wouldn't like to see me well again. My mother said

360c. nothing but she gave her one of her resentful looks that I knew meant that she would get that Sister back if she ever got the chance to.

The Sister looked at my arm and pointed out the bruises on my arm and told me that they were from the drip that they had given me the night before. The Sister finally managed to get two tiny Phials of dark mauve blood out of me and she gave them to the Pupil Midwife to put with the X-rays and notes that were in her office to go to Great Ormond Street and she joked with me that I must have hardly any blood left in me after 'last night'. My Mother tried to talk to the pupil midwife saying that it was a shame that the baby was premature and had to go in an incubator because she was dropping hints for the baby to come out of the incubator but the pupil midwife said that some babies were better out of the womb than in it. She meant that it was better for a sick baby to be born early and to be able to be treated rather than to be born later and be stillborn. She said that when a baby was out of the womb it was easier to see what was going on and treat something like the blockage but my mother did not take it that way. She wanted to believe that at that moment the pupil midwife had made a statement to her that the baby was better taken away from me than left with me and she repeated that phrase again and again over the next two years tormenting me with it whenever I was at my lowest ebb.

The Sister checked her watch and said that there was an ambulance 'go-slow' and that the ambulance

361.c. service was keeping them waiting. my mother said that they had no right to do that as it was an emergency but the sister said that it was not an emergency because there was no sudden thing that their doctors could not deal with, it was just that the case was 'difficult' and then she looked at my mother and said politely but sarcastically to her that she was right though that it was something that deserved prompt attention, as if she was referring to the fact that my mother had not come straight to the hospital and she told her that the midwives on the labour ward had said that she should come straight to the hospital but all my mother said to that was that she had visitors in the house and that she could not leave her 'children'. The Sister asked her if the visitors could not have looked after the children but my mother just glared at her. The Sister asked my mother if she really could go now as it was parents visiting only but my mother did not seem to take the hint at all and she seemed to think that the sister was afraid that she would get into trouble with the Hospital Authorities or the senior staff if they found that she had let my mother onto the ward. My mother just laughed at the sister and insisted proudly "I <u>am</u> a parent". as if she did not know what the Sister was talking about. The Sister corrected her and said that she meant the <u>babys</u> mother and that was me. My mother knew that she would have to go but the Sister told me that it was my mother who had got to go and that I could stay right up to the last minute and watch the ambulancemen take the baby away. I felt awful when she said that they were coming to take my baby away because I could

362c not bear to see her go. I had an awful feeling that if I said goodbye to her then I would never see her again. The Sister said that I could not go to the hospital with the baby because I was too ill now that I had been given that tablet, which made me feel a terrible regret that I had taken it to be co-operative with the nurses but I had not known what was going to happen and it was so unfair. My Mother became suddenly afraid that I might be allowed to go with my baby after all and she insisted that I must go back to the ward now. The Sister looked alarmed and she wanted me to stay but she knew that my mother would not go without me and I was too tired and upset to argue. My Mother almost shouted at me "Get up, you're going back to the ward now!" and she got hold of my arm and pulled me up to a standing position to go with her out of the Unit. The Sister looked alarmed and she could see how weak I was. She did not want an arguement but she asked me if I wanted to go with my mother. I said that I would go rather than cause a fuss because I was so tired that I could not stand it and the sister told me that if I changed my mind I could come back and She said that she would come and see me on the ward later. My mother looked alarmed at that because she did not want the Sister to have the opportunity to talk to me and after I had had a last look in the direction of the incubator at my baby she hustled me out of the Unit.

In the corridor my mother noticed that I was not walking properly and she asked me what was the matter

with my legs. I told her that nothing was wrong and she told me that I looked very much shorter than usual, so I made a mental note to walk more uprightly. My brother and sister were waiting in the corridor outside the door with the notice that said that parents were the only people that were allowed to visit the babies, and they stood back to let me pass out of the door and carried on looking behind me into the corridor as if they were waiting for someone else. It was as if they had just not seen me and I stood there infront of them and said hello to them. They just did not recognise me at all and when my mother followed me out of the door they asked her if I was coming and my mother indicated her hand towards me. My brother and sister had thought I was just another patient and it was not until my mother pointed at me and they looked at me properly that they recognised that it was actually me. My sister went visibly white and tears came into her eyes and my brother said to my mother incredulously "IS that HER?". My mother quietly and dramatically said "YES SON" and neither my brother or my sister had recognised me. My sister was visibly shaken and she said to me, "Your legs!, your ankles have gone so THIN!" and both my brother and sister asked what had happened to my face. They thought that I had been beaten up on the way to the hospital and my brother was indignant that the ambulancemen had let me out of their sight for it to happen, but my mother explained to them that I had simply had a baby and that my face was bruised where the midwives had to keep hitting me round the face when I must have kept screaming in labour. My sister looked horrified and my mother said that she knew what it was like from having had her own children and she pointed to me as an example and said to my sister "Thats what it means to have a baby!"

My mother told my brother and sister that the sister had asked her to take me

364C. back to the ward, which in a way she had because when the Sister had seen that I was going back to the ward she had told my mother to see me right back to the ward if she was going to take me incase I passed out on the way. My brother said that he would get the lift and my mother became slightly dramatic and said that she could not possibly go in a lift. She clasped her hands to her chest as if she was the heroine in a drama and she turned to me and asked me if I could go down the stairs. I did not want to and I said so. I said that I did not think that I could make it as I was still a bit weak and the stairs looked so steep and I did not think I could get down each step. "Yes you can" said my mother "We will help you." She told my sister to take the other side of me while she took hold of my right arm. They got me to the very edge of the steps and the Sister came bursting out of the Premature Baby Unit and said very loudly to my mother "What do you think you are doing?, Shes just had a BABY!" My mother said "Oh, I can't go in lifts, Im terrified of them." So the Sister replied to her "Well then, YOU go down the stairs because if she goes down that flight of stairs she will have a haemorrage!" I felt as if I was in total despair and my brother quickly saw that I was and before there was a scene with my mother he told the Sister that he would look after me and see me downstairs in the lift and he went and pressed for the lift. Then he took me downstairs in the lift and my Mother went down the stairs and when we met her at the bottom my mother gave me a bottle of blackcurrant juice that she got out of her bag. She apologized that she had already opened it to give Stella some and she gave me a

365c. brown paper bag with a few apples in it and said that she had not got any money to buy me anything else. She said that she was 'hard up' and I told her that she was not because now was the time to use the housekeeping money that I had left for her. She looked at me peculiarly and full of hatred and said nothing about the money, she said that they had got to go or their dinner would be ruined and they went off home and I walked into the ward. I was walking easier than I had been and the ward did not seem half so long but when I got to my bed, I got into it with difficulty and I just lay there too exhausted to move.

As I lay there absolutely exhausted a strange thought struck me that although the memory of Elizabeths birth was all too vividly clear in my mind and I was positive that I had given birth the night before, I also had a strange feeling that I was still pregnant and that the baby boy that I had been expecting was still inside me and that I was still in labour. I felt so ridiculous that I just could not tell anyone and I was sure that they would think that I had gone completely mental and had invented a pretend baby that had not been born yet because I could not face up to what was happening to my own baby, and that she had been taken away from me. I lay there and thought about my little girl and my heart ached for her. I thought about her lovely christening and her beautiful name Elizabeth Christiana. As I thought about her name I shortened it to Lizzy and then I thought that 'Bizzy Lizzy' was a lovely name for a cheeky little toddler who kept herself busy with mud pies and so on in the garden and then I remembered the Bizzy Lizzie plant that Mrs. Scott had given me the day before and although the day before

366c. suddenly seemed like years ago because so much had happened since then, I thought that it was a strange coincidence about that name and I had not thought of it at the time of my babys christening.
A nurse came up to my bed with a couple of yellow tablets that she told me to take and some other nurses came along soon afterwards and asked me if I knew where my wheelchair was. They had been looking for it while I was up in the Premature Baby Unit and they were concerned that the hospital had lost it. They said that I was down on my notes as having arrived at the labour ward in a wheelchair and they wanted to know if it had been my own private one that I used at home. I told them that I did not use one and that the ambulance-men had asked me to sit in one in casualty. One of the nurses turned to the others and said that it must have been one of the wheelchairs from casualty and one of the other nurses asked me if I used crutches. I got a bit annoyed and said no. She asked me if I would use some if they got them for me and I got rather indignant and said that I did not need them. I knew that I was very weak after just having had a baby but so were the other mothers and they were not being offered crutches. One of the nurses said to the two others that if I did have crutches then I would cert-ainly not be able to manage a baby and as I listened to them I became terribly determined to be as capable as I could and to get back on my feet to let them see that I was very capable of managing my baby incase they took her away from me even when she came back from

367c. Great Ormond Street. I could not understand why I was being treated so differently from the other Mothers because I had heard how tired and weak a mother would be after she had given birth and I was exactly as I expected to be, what I did not realize was that the hospital thought that I had always been like that and that I was normally unable to walk. They did not realize that I had arrived at the hospital perfectly alright. They went off to the office and after some time another nurse came up to me and said that the Doctors had left a message to say that I could go home as soon as I liked. I was tired and I struggled to tell her that I wanted to stay in hospital ready incase my baby came back from Great Ormond Street. The nurse listened to me and then turned and spoke to another nurse who had come over to listen. She told her that the Doctors must be joking because I was too weak to sit up properly let alone walk out of there, and she went off back to the office to tell whoever was in charge. Another very kind nurse came up and asked me if I would like my dinner. She said that they had saved it for me and had forgotten about giving it to me, She gently reproached me as to why I had not asked for it, and as she went off to get it I thought to myself that they could have left me lying there for a week without food and I would still never have dreamed of asking for anything, I would just have laid there and waited and hoped but I would never even have thought of asking. She returned with a tray that she put on my locker and I balanced myself up to eat what I could of a meal of Spaghetti, tomatoes, and meat which I dubifully left.

When the nurse came back to collect the tray I asked if I could visit the loo and she indicated a door at the end of the ward and she said that I could get up

368c. and go I had difficulty getting out of the very high bed and in walking so it took me ages to get there and back and it was in there that I had the shock of my life. As I went to wash my hands I looked for a long time at a woman staring at me from the mirror. I did not know her and I thought that it was a window in the wall and she was someone looking in at me for a moment. I wondered what an old woman like her was doing on a maternity ward with pretty young mothers and babies as she was old, haggard and frail. Her eyes were bloodshot and sunk right into her head and they were surrounded by two huge circles that almost looked like black eyes. Her face had almost no flesh on it and her cheeks were deeply patterned with blue veins and all that could be seen of her mouth was just two thin dark mauve lines. She was so thin and her clothes did not fit her so that she looked a very odd character and as if she did not know quite what she was doing although she was very alert. I expected a nurse to come along and ask her to leave as she was not the sort of person to be hanging around a maternity ward but she seemed harmless enough just old, about eighty or ninety years old, very frail and ill. She did not look ill in the sense of being 'germy' but she just looked as if she had literally 'just got out of her grave' and she looked just like a ghost. I smiled at her to be kind to her and she smiled back at me at the same time and when I saw her straight, white, even teeth I recognized them and nearly passed out as I realized that it was me looking at myself in a mirror. One thing that struck me

369 c. about my teeth was that they had become full of nasty white marks where the calcium had been lost from them and they had not been like that the day before. There was no way at all that I could have recognized myself except by my teeth, but as shocked as I was I just seemed to accept it and carry on as normal for my babys sake.

On the way back to my bed I saw that the babies were being fed and changed and I paused to talk to one mother who was bottle feeding her baby boy. She and several other mothers asked me what I had had and I told them about my little girl and where she was. They were all under the impression that I had had a caesarean section from the way I walked but I told them that I had not. When I got back to my bed I found the bed very high and difficult to get into but once I was in it one of the other mothers got me a booklet about 'after you have had your baby' which was given to all the mothers. She had to ask one of the nurses for it and when the nurse realized that it was for me and not for the other mother she turned quite nasty and asked me if I really wanted it. I said yes and I was so pleased to have the booklet. I found a page in the booklet where it mentioned babies who needed special care and I read what it said. I found that I could read quite easily again especially since I was alone lying in bed relaxing, and because someone had just given me something for my baby rather than taking her away and that made me feel less shocked about it all and it lessened the feeling that I had been through so much and had got nothing at the end of it all. The article about babies who needed special care was useless because it gave no information at all. The most it said was to tell the mother not to make

370c. a fuss and I needed a thick medical text book to answer my questions, but I looked through the booklet at the pictures and other articles and when I saw a picture of a mother holding her tiny newborn baby my heart ached and I wished that I could have been so lucky, and I hoped and prayed that my little girl was alright.

Three nurses came round tidying up the ward ready for visiting and they came across to sit me up. They told me to stay sitting up because my chest was 'bad' and one of them fetched me an extra pillow which gave me two pillows on my bed. One of the nurses said that I could do with an extra pillow still, to make three pillows but they had not got any more to spare. They pulled my back-rest out and I noticed that I was in bed number eight. Everything happened to me when it was the eighth and I was not surprised to be in bed number eight. One of the nurses said to me for a joke "No smoking" because of my chest and I calmly answered her that I was glad that I had never smoked and that I was the only one in my family who did not smoke. They just looked at me and said nothing and told me that they were going to sit me right up. Two of the nurses got each side of me and crooked their arms under mine to lift me up and they told me to push down with my ankles as they lifted me. Then they got annoyed when I pushed down with my elbows rather than my ankles because they had got hold of my elbows and when I tried to push it was my elbows that moved because it just happened that way. It seemed as if the message to move my ankles

371c. did not go far enough down my body and because the nurses had hold of my elbows it was them that pushed down because I still did not have enough control over my body and the fact that I was lying in bed made it more difficult to feel my body which had not properly regained the feeling it should have had. One of the nurses tapped my feet and said "Push down here!" but after another unsuccessful attempt the nurse on my left gave up and said to the other nurses "leave her!, Im not breaking my back on her!" The nurse on my right told her that there was nothing of me to break her back on and she suggested that they should try an Australian lift but the other nurse refused to do it and said that if the nurses did it for one then they had to do it for all the patients. She said that maternity patients were too heavy to lift and that I ought to be on a medical ward anyway. The other nurse replied that I had still had a baby and then the other nurse quickly replied back again that I should not have had a baby in the first place. She turned to me and asked me nastily how on earth I was going to look after a baby and I said that I was going to look after my baby well. I said that I was used to looking after children and that it did not matter that I was not married because I could cope better on my own. The nurse on my right told the other one that perhaps I was used to looking after children and she said that plenty of people like me did get involved in looking after children. The nurse on my left said that just because I was used to looking after children it did not mean that I should have any children of my own. She sneered and said that she liked the way I had said that it did not matter that I was not married. Then she asked me if I had

372c. been told not to get married and when I said that I had not been told not to but I just had not wanted to, she told me that IF I HAD been told not to marry that was not what it meant. She told me that people like me could marry and with proper use of contraceptives they could have a full married life but it was children they should not have. She said that I had done it the wrong way round and that I should have got married but not had a baby. I said that I did not believe in using contraceptives because I was a Roman Catholic, and I said that I would be exactly the same as a married woman with my baby. She sneered "What at your age?" and added sarcastically that "that was why my baby was in a cot beside my bed wasn't it?" I felt as if it was too much for me to bear and while I was trying to control the tears that were begining to brim in my eyes I explained why my baby had been taken to Great Ormond Street. The nurse on my right said to the other nurse that the baby DID have a blockage, and at that moment if I had not been able to bring into my mind a picture of that awful blue veined swelling on my babys abdomen I would have thought that they were playing some awfully cruel game with my emotions and had just taken my baby away because they simply did not want me to have her. The nurse on my left looked at me as if she was a police interrogator from a Saturday night film or something and she said to me "and WHY has she GOT a blockage!" and she gave me a nasty look and walked off leaving me to think about it. The other nurses

373c. went with her and the nurse who had been on my right said to her "That wasn't necessary" I lay there crying after they had gone and thinking that everything was always blamed on me. I wished that they could understand how much I loved and wanted my baby and I lay there desperately praying that she would live. A nurse brought me two yellow tablets in a small plastic cup and watched me take them and after that I lay there and had a strange feeling that every germ in the hospital was slowly advancing towards me and invading my body and that a kind of flu was breaking out in me, possibly because I was so fresh to the germs and had never been in a hospital before. I began to feel really weak and tired and I must have fallen asleep. When I woke up about an hour had passed and most of the other beds had a couple of visitors sitting beside them and chatting quietly. The ward was peaceful and I lay there not really minding that I had no one to visit me but feeling a bit self conscious. I was so weak that I could not move enough to turn over while I was lying down. It took me ages and a determined effort to move my arms so that they were higher up the counterpane and more comfortable. I lay there and wondered how my poor baby was and I hoped and prayed that the doctors at Great Ormond Street were passing the blockage through sucessfully and that she would be coming back and that everything would be alright. I looked along the ward and saw my mother and brother coming along the ward towards my bed. I did not want them coming to see me because I really wanted to be quiet and private until I was better and got up and got dressed, but I felt the drugs

374c. taking away my inhibitions and although I did not really want to see them I seemed to be lulled into a false sense of acceptance and to give in and accept them in a sort of dopey friendliness.

My mother and brother got themselves chairs and sat next to my bed and my mother began to apologize that they were so late and she said that they had been all that time in the Sisters office outside. Two Sisters had asked her a lot of questions about me and she told me that she had had to tell them all about the 'episodes' with me at school. She looked very pleased with herself and panic rose inside me as to what packet of fiction she had told them. She told me that they had asked her if I used a wheelchair at home and then she feebly told me that she had told them that I did not use one but that if they sent me home in one she would not mind. I was furious and said that I did not need one, she said that it was only because having the baby had weakened me and they wanted to get me home. She said that she had told them that she would look after me at home and that they had agreed to arrange an early discharge for me. I thought "oh no," because I wanted to be with my baby and my mother asked me if I could get up and go home with her there and then. She said that she and my brother could help me on the bus and as my clothes were in the locker, that was what the nurses wanted me to do. I firmly said no and that I was staying in for my baby to come back. I could not have got out of there and home

375c. on a bus if I had wanted to because I was too weak to do it but I did not tell my mother that. My mother said that if I went home she could come back and collect my baby for me and as I knew that was what she was after I was not going to let her push me out of the way and take over my baby. She wanted me at home so that she could control the situation and she went on to say that they needed me at home. She said that it was a shame for my brother and sister because the place was filthy and she did not know how it had got like it so quickly after I had left home. She said that there was no food in the cupboard and that she had spent every penny that I had given her for house-keeping money on shopping and there still was not enough food. I felt as if I was going mad because there was just no rest for me as I had worked so hard to leave the place spotlessly clean and there should have been very little for my mother to do. I had left the cupboard packed full of food that I had bought at my own expense that should have been more than enough to last for the ten days while I was having the baby as well as all over christmas. They could not possibly have eaten their way through that whole cupboard full of food in that little time and I wondered what on earth my mother had done with it all. My mother had her own housekeeping money from my father and as I had given her several weeks of my allowance money to pay her for my ten days off the housework she had over and above what she needed and she had spent it in less than a day. It had taken weeks of self sacrifice to save all that money and bagfulls of shopping that had been too heavy for me to carry to fill that cupboard so full, and right at that moment I could not cope with knowing that the efforts of my hard work were all gone just like that.

376c. I felt as if I had wasted weeks of hard work and that my Mother had wasted it all just like that because she either couldn't or wouldn't cope on her own even when everything had been done for her. On top of all the worries that I had of my own, my Mother was coming to me with worries that I should never have had to deal with because I had alread forseen them and already dealt with them. My Mother was doing it at a time when I was worried todeath about my newborn baby and because she was worrying me at a time when I should have been resting, I felt that it was more than I could cope with but my Mother took no notice and just carried on. She said that she had spent a couple of pounds pouring money into the telephone box because the pips had kept going again and again. She said that she had telephoned my Grandmother and told her about the baby and my Grandmother had not been surprised that a baby had been born into the family. She had not known anything about my pregnancy but she had dreamed during the night and when she had woken up that morning she had known that a baby girl had been born into the family. The only thing that she was surprised about was that it was me who was the Mother because she had seen me only a few weeks before and there had been no sign that I was expecting a baby, which was true. My Mother had suffered from a very large and distended stomach for years and if my Mother had been expecting another baby and she and my father had kept the forthcoming event a secret then my Grandmother said that would not have surprised her, because even at 47 years old my Mother was

377c. generally expected to be the only person in the family to have children. My Mother was not known as 'The Mother' for nothing because she made so much of the fact that she had got children and my Grandmother had not thought that one of her grandchildren could have had a baby.

My Mother said that the whole family was interested that there had been a comet appear in the sky the night before although no one had actually seen it. They were now doubly interested in it now that they knew of the birth of a baby girl because it could mean that one of the prophesied girls had been born. My mother had explained that the baby was not due until Christmas and my Grandmother had explained that neither was the comet, so my mother said that they had both appeared early. I was too ill to be bothered with all that superstition and all I could think of as my mother talked on and on was that I just wanted my baby to live. I said that it was just a coincidence about the comet and I changed the subject. My Mother asked me if the babys hair had glowed so that it lit the room when she was born and she said that that was why she should have been born at home as ordinary doctors and nurses did not understand that sort of thing and they might try to get in on things that did not concern them and that were not to be seen by people outside the family. I said that the baby had blonde hair like Mrs. Clarke but that when she was born the room went darker. She was almost black when she was born and that there was no light from her hair. My mother looked extremely alarmed and said that the baby should have been the same as me when I was born and have lit the room and then she accused me of not having seen it properly. She said

378c. that I had probably missed it when they were holding me down and she said that she noticed that they had had to keep hitting me round the face when I kept screaming by the bruises on my face. I calmly answered her that no one had had to hold me down nor had I uttered a sound. She looked at me so full of absolute hatred and she became a bit agitated. She started to question me directly about my labour and against my will I found myself answering all her questions and telling her freely about my labour and delivery despite the fact that my smutty little brother was listening in to what I said which I would not normally have stood for. All the time I was talking I knew that my mother was begining to get the upper hand over me while I was defenceless against her because I could not seem to stop talking. I dopily kept trying to bring into my mind the fact that I did not really want to talk so freely and to stop it but I just could not seem to fight the loss of my inhibitions which I knew was the effect of the tablets the nurses had given me. When I told my mother that my breathing had stopped she became livid and she said "so you DID die, but you're still alright!" as if she could not believe it and she seemed frightened of me as if she thought I was something to be afraid of because I always seemed to defy death. She seemed as if she suddenly realized that I was not going to die and leave her the baby and she became quite desperate and asked me where the nightdress was that I had given birth in and she said "the one with your blood on it." I very kindly said

379c. that I had worn a hospital one and the nurses had taken it. She said that they had no right to put me in a hospital nightdress and that I had my own things and should have worn one of them so that she could have taken it home to wash it. She said that the blood from birth was 'special blood' and she went quietly berserk and asked me furiously where the linnen bins were as she would actually have gone down the bins and searched for it. I did not want a scene with my mother searching through the linnen bins incase they threw me out of the hospital and I told her firmly that the nightdress with loads of other's from other patients had been taken away very early that morning. She asked me where they took them to and she would actually have gone looking for where they put the dirty linnen if I had not put her off and told her for a joke that she would never find it amongst hundreds of others. I knew that she wanted it for her black magic incantations as she could get a power over me if she could get her hands on that nightdress and I was not going to let her get it. She said that she had expected me to die the night before and she was surprised to arrive at the hospital and find that it was the baby that they were taking off to another hospital.

My mother was talking as if she was absolutely demented and she told me that she had been late coming to the hospital that morning because when she had got the first telephone message she had thought that it really meant that I had died and that the hospital was telephoning her to come and collect the baby. She said that she had sorted the house out and got herself busy preparing for the baby to come home to her. She had taken the dogs for a long

380c. walk because she thought that she would be too busy when she got the baby home later on to take them out. She said that she had 'sorted my room out' and had taken what was left of my few clothes to a lady who collected jumble so that there was nothing of mine left in the house and she could bring the baby home to a clean start with nothing to remind the child of a 'dead' mother, but she told me rather doubtfully that she would have to go and get what she could back from the woman or I would have nothing to wear. My mother said that she had also slept in my bed in the night in order to feel 'close to me' and I felt sickened at what she said but I was used to her and so I ignored her and I said nothing. She seemed to know everything that I was afraid of and there was nothing about me that I thought or felt that was any secret to her. I knew that she had found out what was in my mind before by sleeping in my bed because all my mothers family were psychic enough to dream what was in another persons mind by sleeping in the same place as they had slept but this time my mother seemed absolutely sinister about it and she was prepared to use it.

My mother said that when Janet our neighbour had come in with the second message to go to the hospital she had been anxious that my mother should go to the hospital right away. My mother said that she had reassured Janet that she knew already what the hospital wanted. She told Janet that they must have discovered that I was incapable of looking after the baby and that they had called her in to bring the baby home. She asked

381c. Janet if she could borrow her carry cot to put the baby in herself when she got her home. Janet had looked a bit alarmed and had said that the nurses would not expect me to be able to look after the baby straight away and she had said that they would show me how bath her and so on as they had shown her how to do so when her son Iain was born. She had told my mother that it seemed from the hospital message that it was the baby that was in danger but my mother had told her that if I was still alive, which she doubted because I could never stand pain, it would be me that the baby was in danger from as I had probably gone mental with the pain. Janet had told my mother that having a baby these days was not like the old days because these days they could give you something for the pain. My mother said that she had laughed and told Janet that it was the injection that I was allergic to. Janet had asked her if I knew that I was allergic to anything and my mother told me that she had said that she had not liked to worry me with things like that. My mother sounded as if she was half apologizing to me for the state that I was in and I struggled with vague recollections that there was something that I was allergic to. My mother said that Janet had said that if she had known that I was allergic to anything she should have told the doctors at the hospital because it could be dangerous and she had urged her to get to the hospital as soon as she could and sort things out as it was obvious that something was very wrong.

My mother said to me that after she had put the dinner in the oven she had got my brother and sister ready to come with her on the bus to the

382 c. hospital and they had stopped to get some shopping in Lewisham. When they had got to the hospital ready to collect the baby my mother had a shock to see me sitting there holding the baby although she was not surprised to see the state I was in but she said that she had been put out that it was the baby that was being taken off to another hospital. She told me that the sister up there had been a bit of a 'bitch' which was what she called anyone who would not give her what she wanted but she said that she had sorted it out though as she had been in the office and spoken to the sisters on this ward. My mother said that she had told the sisters how much help I would need from her because I was so young and incapable and that they had assured her that if the baby did come back from Great Ormond Street then my mother could most definitely come in and be shown how to bath the baby. My mother said that she had told them that even after bringing up three children herself she had not bathed tiny babies for such a long time that she would have to learn all over again. They had chatted for a long time about it and the two sisters had been very pleased to see how much concern and interest my mother was showing that the baby be well looked after and they encouraged her. My mother said that she had gone on to tell them that she was used to having to take care of the little packets of 'trouble' that I had so often brought home to 'mummy'. She had told them about the rabbits and guinea pigs that

383c. She had had to look after once the novelty had worn off but as she was talking I found myself realizing that my mother had told the sisters all that without telling them how long ago it had been or that they had been HER animals. Something about the whole of what my mother was saying that she had said to the sisters about me sounded more like she was talking about herself when she was a child to me, but I could not understand why and it worried me that the sisters had listened to her so readily. My mother went on to say that she had told the sisters that she had expected this to be her special baby and the sisters had understood and encouraged her. They had agreed that as soon as the baby came back they would telephone for my mother and have her on the ward with me and show us both how to care for the baby together under the circumstances. I listened to what my mother was saying but I had seen the sister in the special care unit tell my mother that she could not hold the baby and I knew that my baby would go back there if everything went alright and that my mother would not be allowed in there so I felt alright but I felt panic rising inside me at the thought that my mother had already been in the office while I was asleep and had got in with her version of what she wanted so quickly. I firmly told my mother that I would be the one that they would show how to bath the baby and as I was going to feed her myself I told my mother that she would not be needed under any circumstances.

My mother looked at me and gave me such a hateful look about that but she did not carry on the arguement as she knew that I had the upper hand over the

384c. baby. She changed the subject and told me that when she had got back from visiting me that morning she had found that she had trouble with my father. Apparently after my Mother and brother and sister had left for the hospital, Janet from next door had called again with a further message for my Mother to go to the hospital and she had found that only my father was in. He hadn't known that I had had the baby at all as he lived up-stairs on his own and as he had been out when the ambulance had come he had just not known about it. The next day my Mother had decided that she hated him so much that she was going to leave him to find out about the baby. My Mother had been annoyed to find that Janet had gone and 'spilt the beans' and told him that I had had a baby girl and that something must be wrong as the hospital kept phoning for someone from the family to go and sign some forms. When my Mother, brother and sister had got back from the hospital they had found my father getting himself ready to go to the hospital to see what was going on. When my Mother said that I felt sickened that my father might have turned up and been allowed near me but my Mother carried on to say that my father had picked a row with her and told her that he did not like finding out family business second hand from the neibours. He had wanted my Mother to go back to the hospital and take him with her because if there were any forms to sign it was his right to do it because he was the father of the family. My Mother had told him nastily that the forms

385c. had been signed and that the baby had gone off to Great Ormond street and then she told him that he was too late which annoyed him. An awful feeling of panic came over me that if my Mother had been spiteful to my father then it was only a matter of time before he would be spiteful back and for my brother and sisters sake I did not want any rows or fights at home while I was away and unable to pacify my parents.

My mother went on to ask me if I was sure that the baby had a blockage at all and she said that it was strange that the baby had the same thing that her brother Alfred had died of. She asked me if I was sure that the Doctors at the hospital had not taken the baby away to experiment on her because I was an unmarried mother and I had no one to stand up for me. She told me that they might be experimenting on my baby because she knew that they did do vivisection in hospitals. I was used to the way my mother talked and I just reassured her that the baby really did have a blockage and that she really did need to go to Great Ormond Street for urgent medical attention. My mother became a bit agitated and she said that she wished that she had gone with the baby to Great Ormond street. She said that if she went and asked the two nice sisters in the office they might send for an ambulance to take her to Great Ormond Street after all and I had to tell my mother very firmly that she could not go. I told my mother that I was the one who would see to that sort of thing but I began to worry that while I was so helpless in that hospital bed my

386c mother was making things so much worse than they should have been. My mother should never have been given the opportunity to speak to the sisters in the office and while I was so helpless everyone was doing all the things that I would quickly have put a stop to if I had been in full control of everything. I wished so much that I had said no to that one injection of Pethedine the night before as everything had just snow-balled after that and it would not have happened if I had been fully conscious. Apart from the worry of my baby being ill and whether she would even survive or not my head ached with all the worry I had and as my mother sat beside me quietly talking on and on and agitating at me that one thing after another was wrong that she wanted me to see to, I felt as if my mind was being pushed far too far beyond what it could take. I felt too ill even to get up and too dopey to try to tell a nurse or someone that I wanted my mother to go because I needed to be alone and quiet or my head would burst with worry. Visiting time seemed to drag on and long past what I could take, and I still had to stay there, put on a brave face and be polite. I was so glad when the bell went for the end of visiting and they went home. They left me with the daunting promise that they would soon be back for the evening visiting even though I particularly asked them not to come because I was tired and I wanted to sleep. My mother just told me cheerfully that I could sleep when she came if I wanted to and she would sit and watch me. I would

387c. never have wanted my mother to sit watching me while I was asleep and when my mother told me that it did not matter if I was asleep when she came anyway because the family were coming to find out about the baby, I knew that there was going to be no rest for me because if I wanted to keep my place as my own babys parent I was going to have to stay awake to keep control of what my mother was doing.

When they had gone I slept for a bit and when I woke up I found that I was hot and sweaty. I got up and went to the loo and washed myself and changed my nightdress and I felt cooler after that but my whole body seemed so weak and useless. Everyone had kept telling me that I would be tired after having my baby but I was a lot worse than I had expected to be. After the long wait to see my baby that morning I was determined to be ready to see her the very moment she came back from Great Ormond Street and so I carried on as if nothing was wrong. I was determined to stay in control and so I managed to do things without telling anyone that I needed any help. I kept well out of the nurses sight so that they could not see what a struggle I had to get changed nor that I could not bend my back properly because it had become so rigid. I did not want the nurses to think that I should not be allowed to look after my own baby just because my body seemed to have become rather awkward since having been on that delivery table. I thought to myself that if death was merciful enough to spare my precious baby then I was not going to let the opinions of the nurses or my mother snatch her

388c. away from me. When I reappeared in a fresh nightdress feeling and looking much better, one nurse remarked to the others that I had "managed that alright" as if they had not expected me to. There was no hint of friendliness in her voice and a faint feeling of frustration crossed my mind as to why they were picking on me as being somehow incapable and and unacceptable. They did not seem to be looking to the other mothers at all to see if they managed or not and their attitude towards me was almost hostile. It was as if they really did not want me on the ward at all and if they caught me not managing to look after myself then I was strictly to be sent off their ward as they were making it obvious that they had no intention of lifting a finger to help me at all. They only seemed to be assessing what I could do and so I was determined not to let them see that there was anything I could not do for myself for my baby's sake as I knew how important it was for my baby's future mental health that she should have as early contact as possible with her mother, but really I could have done with someone to help me a bit because I had lost the physical energy that I needed in order to look after myself especially when it came to climbing back onto the huge bed that I was in. Looking after myself was putting a strain on me that I was really too weak to bear and the attitude of the nurses seemed to be making me more ill than ever. One nurse who came over to help me get my slippers off was quickly called away by a staff nurse and told to leave me alone. The staff nurse told her that she had seen my sort come in before

389c. and that the best way to stop girls like me coming in year after year to have a line of babies that the State had to keep and that ended up in care was to teach me that I just could not do it. She said to the nurse that after all it was their taxes that went to pay for it all and she told her that as this was my first time of having a baby, now was the time to catch me and that if they gave me a rough time this time then it was the best way to put me off having any more babies, now, while I was young. I could not believe my ears at what they were saying or where they had got that idea from because I knew that I would never ever have another baby as this was the only baby I ever wanted and so much more than that my baby was all I had to live for. Those nurses should never have said what they did to anyone at all but although I did not realize it at the time they should have been telling me very positively that I COULD have another baby so that if my baby did die then I would not have lost hope so completely. I tried to take no notice of what they said and I was lucky enough to have enough common sense to rely on my own judgement.

When I had got myself into bed I slept for about an hour and I was woken up very kindly by the Pupil midwife from the Special Care Unit who had taken my baby to Great Ormond Street. She told me that my baby had arrived safely at Great Ormond Street and that they were going to do some tests on her. She gave me an outpatient appointment card for the baby that the hospital had given her to give to me for future clinics and it seemed to me that it was a bit superfluous for them to have given me an appointment

390c. card for an outpatient clinic when such a big question mark hung over whether or not my baby would even live or not, but it was a relief to think that Great Ormond Street had a positive attitude about my daughters recovery and it set me thinking about the future. There were so many spaces for future appointments on the card that I realized just how many clinic appointments we would be expected to attend if my baby did survive. It matched the insight into the future that I had seen moments after my baby was born and I realized again that somehow I really did have a handicapped baby to look after. I did not mind because I knew that with perseverance any handicap could be overcome but a feeling that it must be impossible that it could have happened in the first place came over me. It was so unfair and it seemed to me that my whole past was one long wreck of failures, I was lying in that bed a helpless physical wreck who had been unable to help my baby at the moment when she had most needed me to protect her and now the whole of our future lay wrecked at our feet before we had even started. It seemed as if yet another thing had gone wrong in my life and that because I had seen so much go wrong for my baby it felt as if I had not only had a baby but I had passed my persistant bad luck onto her as well. I felt cheated that no one had told me what would happen to me when I had been given that Pethedine injection and so sorry for what had happened to my baby. I knew that I could help my baby

391c. with whatever was wrong with her if only she would live but in that moment I knew and accepted that I would never have another child, partly because I knew it would be physically impossible for me to survive another labour but much more than that because I knew that I could never bring myself to take the chance with another babys life incase the child was born handicapped. Since I realized that this really was the only baby that I would ever have it became even more important that she should survive at all costs. My baby was the only baby I was ever likely to hold and love and she seemed so immeasurably precious that I knew that if I lost her I would loose everything and die too.

I wished that I could be with my baby as a parents place was right beside their child when the child was sick or in trouble and that was where I wanted to be. I wouldn't have been upset by the tests the Doctors were going to do as I only wanted to see my baby and just to be in the same room would have been enough, even if I couldn't have held or touched her. We were missing such precious time together and it seemed so wrong that we had been separated. Even if my baby needed an operation it should have been possible to keep us together as there should have been special priority for a special care unit where even a baby in an incubator could have been beside its mother's bed. It was one thing to say that a mother would be in the way in a special care unit but if the baby needed special care then the mother needed the same special care for psychological reasons. Just the fact that anything was wrong seemed to

392c. increase the need for us to be together and after we had spent every day and night together for the past eight months ever since my baby had existed and then the long ordeal of labour, it was just too much to bear the trauma of separation as well. I should have been able to go with my newborn baby as a patient myself, so that we could be treated individually but together, and if I had been so ill that I really could not be moved then I wished that someone could have taken one of those instant flash photographs for the nurse to bring me to show me my precious baby, the room that she was in and the people looking after her so that I could see what everything looked like and share what was happening to her better because I wanted to be with her, and it would have helped to ease the agony of mind that I was in if I could have pictured my baby and the place that she was in, in my mind. Taking such photographs would have been something that Elizabeths father could have done if he had been married to me and had stayed to support me, as it wasn't really the hospitals job to do things like that but I had no one to do that sort of thing for me and somehow because I had no proper family I needed that contact with my baby even more because she was the total sum of all the real family that I had. My heart actually ached with an awful pain for my baby and I hoped and hoped that whatever the cost my baby would survive and that I could show her how much I loved her.

I listened to everything the midwife

393c. said but I was in tears and I could not talk about it. The Midwife was very sweet and kind and she told me not to worry. She told me that although she couldn't tell me that everything would be alright she could only say that she hoped from the bottom of her heart that it would all be alright, and I could see from the look on her face that she really meant it. Her kindness meant so much to me and since she had sincerely stuck to the truth in what she said I could respect her for that. She told me that she knew that I was a Roman Catholic and she reminded me that she had been present at my babys christening. She told me that my religious beliefs were the best support that I could look to at this time and she said that if it would be of any help to me she would add her prayers to mine and would pray for me and my baby. She mentioned another nurse from the Special care unit who was a Catholic as well and she said that if she got off duty quickly they might both be able to get to mass at St. Saviours Church to pray for me. Then she looked at her watch and said doubtfully that she did not know if she had time to make it or not, and then added very hopefully that <u>If</u> she did not get to church for me tonight then she would definately pray hard for us that evening and she could be sure of going to mass the next day when she would definately pray for us then. I could hear her thinking that she was worried that tomorrow would be too late perhaps but I thanked her so gratefully that she stood there grinning at me as if we were complete strangers but at the

395c. hospital strike or not and the thought of them showing that kindness to her seemed to warm my heart and make me feel that it was not such a strange cold world that I was in and that it was kindness like that that kept the world turning round despite all the bitter pain in it. I thanked her for the appointment card that she had brought me from Great Ormond Street and when she had gone I put the yellow card with the pink card from the Special Care Baby Unit that the Sister had given to me and the white card from Father Nolan and I clung to them in my hand like a drowning man clutches at straws. They seemed very small receipt for having handed over a baby and it did not seem like much proof that I could somehow produce them and lay claim to my baby as being mine and with the overwhelming ache as to whether or not I would get her back I felt the total disbelief that anyone could have taken her away at all and I clung to the cards because they were the only precious connections that I had with my baby. I neither had her nor anything of hers and even her beautiful baby clothes that I had made for her with my own hands could not lay claim to being hers as she had never even worn them. All that I had was the pink card that had been attatched to her incubator, the white card that Fr. Nolan had given to me at her christening and the yellow card that had just come from the hospital that she had gone to and I clung to them in my hand and read them over and over again until I knew every mark on the paper and I cried for a very long time.

All the time I lay in bed crying, I felt hot and sweaty again and as if I was becoming really ill. I had so much worry about my baby but as well as that I had the strangest and most irrational

396c. notion that I was still pregnant and I felt as if my abdominal muscles were very weakly moving backwards and forwards as if I had retained a ghost of labour. Then I must have slept again for a while but it wasn't proper sleep because it was an after math of the drugs that I had been given which I was still dopey from and I woke up feeling ill and very heavy headed. In the ward the usual routines went on and the babies were fed and changed which made me feel that I would have given anything to have my own baby beside my bed in one of those beautiful transparent cots that the other babies were in. I wanted to love and care for her and as I thought of my baby in Great Ormond Street my heart ached and hoped that she was alright.

After a while a Sister who I had not seen before came up to my bed and told me that my baby had been taken to Great Ormond Street and that my baby had a blockage and that the Doctors at Great Ormond Street were going to try to pass it through without operating on her but she spoke to me as if she thought I knew nothing about it and that she was telling me for the first time where my baby was. I already knew where she was and I was glad that other people had told me before that Sister got to me and that I had actually seen Elizabeth before she had gone off to Great Ormond Street because I thought how awful it would be for someone to wake up out of a drugged sleep nearly nineteen hours after they had had their baby to the terrible shock of finding out in such an offhand way that so much

had happened and that already their baby was miles away in another hospital and dangerously ill. It could have driven someone as insecure as me mental but luckily although things had not gone smoothly I had been more fortunate than that and as I already knew, the sisters words were like water running off a ducks back. Although I was slow and weak I mustered all the dignity that I had to answer her clearly and politely and I thanked her and told her politely that I already knew. For some unknown reason it must have been the worst thing that I could have said to her because somehow she suddenly seemed annoyed about the fact that I could remember what had happened rather than that I already knew. I told her very politely that I had been in the Special Care Unit to have my baby christened and that I knew all about her going to Great Ormond Street. I showed her all the little cards that I was holding in my hand and when she looked at them she wanted to let me have the yellow card that Great Ormond Street had sent me but she wanted to take the other two cards away from me and throw them away. The pink card had the times of my babys birth and her admittance to the Special Care Unit on it as well as her birth weight and the sister told me that she wanted me to give them to her so that she could tear them up and throw them away because they were finished with now but I would not part with them. I told the sister that I wanted to keep them and she was annoyed about it. I told her very politely that the white card had the priests name and address on it incase I wanted to find him later on and the sister asked me anxiously if the priest had seen me

398c. or my baby in the Special Care Unit and when I said yes she tut-tutted about it all. She asked me if any of my relatives had seen me yet and when I told her quite clearly, who had come and what had happened she stormed off furiously down to the office at the end of the ward in the corridor. After a few moments a nurse brought me two more yellow tablets that she said I must take and when I had taken them they made me very sleepy. After some time I opened my eyes to find two nurses trying to ease the little cards out of my clutched fist as I lay asleep. I sleepily asked them to leave the cards because they were mine and one of the nurses told me soothingly that I did not need them anymore as she tried to take them away from me but I held onto them tightly and told the nurses very firmly that I wanted to keep them. One of the nurses gave up and told the other nurse that she was not going to try to take them away from me; she said it was wrong to do it and the other nurse agreed with her. She said that if "they had not wanted me to have them then they should not have given them to me". She said that I just might want to keep them and that this was a serious matter that she did not want to be involved in. I sat up and carefully put the cards away and although I felt shattered and as if I should have been asleep, I felt determined to stay awake because everyone was getting ready for visiting time and I knew that I had to stay awake to see what my mother was doing. The nurses apologized for waking me up and they offered to make me

399c. comfortable so that I could go back to sleep but I could see that it was nearly visiting time and I said so. The nurses looked as if they did not know what to do and the sister came up the ward to my bed. She completely ignored me and asked the nurses if they had got the cards from me and they told her that they had not because I wanted to keep them. The sister told them quietly but furiously that she had told them to take the cards, not to wake me up and ask me for them, and the two nurses told her quietly that I had woken up while they were trying to get them and that I had put them away in my locker. The sister tried to encourage me to go back to sleep but I was wide awake and waiting for my visitors even though it took such an extreme effort to remain alert because I was so weak and dopey. The sister obviously wanted me to be asleep when my visitors came and I wondered if she wanted them to see me asleep so that she could tell them that I had not come round from having had the baby yet but it was too late because my mother and brother and sister had already seen me and I had no intention of going to sleep anyway. The sister told the nurses that the drugs I had been given should have knocked me right out but I was so determined that they were having hardly any effect. She said to the nurses that she could not give me anything else because I should not really have had the last two tablets so soon after the others. She said that she had got to let the visitors in and she seemed most agitated about me having the opportunity to talk to my relatives.

When the visitors came in there was a much larger crowd of visitors than there had been in the afternoon and

400c. when the doors were opened to let them all in, my mother and father had pushed their way to the front of it to be first down the ward. I took one look at them and from the determined look on their faces I knew that they were not going to let me have any peace. I had particularly asked them not to come and I felt so helpless that there was never anything that I could do to stop them treading all over my feelings at every opportunity that presented itself to them. My father was wearing his scouts uniform and he looked ridiculous. He was full of himself and he stood to attention in the middle of the ward where everyone could see him and a man visiting a patient in a bed on the other side of the ward was in fits of giggles and saying 'Baden Powell' to everyone else about my father. My father was in his element with so much attention but I was not amused at all and that kind of behaviour was the last thing I wanted the nurses to see since their attitude towards me was so hostile. They seemed to think that I had no sense of the responsibility that bringing up my baby would need, which was a total misjudgement of my character because I was a very serious and responsible sort of person, but what my father was doing would have made anyone like the nurses turn right against us. My father could never see that I hated that sort of foolish behaviour, and I very sweetly and gently asked him why he could not have put on a nice suit to visit his daughter in hospital. I told him that he had so many nice suits that I would not have minded if