



Welcome to Holland

by Emily Perl Kingsley

When you're going to have a baby, it's like you're planning a vacation to Italy. You're all excited. You get a whole bunch of guidebooks, you learn a few phrases so you can get around, and then it comes time to pack your bags and head for the airport.

Only when you land, the stewardess says, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND."

You look at one another in disbelief and shock, saying, "HOLLAND? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY."

But they explain that there's been a change of plan, that you've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

"BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HOLLAND!" you say. "I DON'T WANT TO STAY!"

But stay you do. You go out and buy some new guidebooks, you learn some new phrases, and you meet people you never knew existed. The important thing is that you are not in a bad place filled with despair. You're simply in a different place than you had planned. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy, but after you've been there a little while and you have a chance to catch your breath, you begin to discover that Holland has windmills. Holland has tulips. Holland has Rembrandts.

But everyone else you know is busy coming and going from Italy. They're all bragging about what a great time they had there, and for the rest of your life, you'll say, "YES, THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

The pain of that will never go away. You have to accept that pain, because the loss of that dream, the loss of that plan, is a very, very significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to go to Italy, you will never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

Texas Parent to Parent

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