

## **Never Forget** by Lexi E.

It was a dark and cold night on the Oregon Trail. A pitch dark world. I heard a high-pitched piercing scream, and even though papa told me to stay, I wanted to see mama and the baby. So, I rushed to the wagon and what I saw will haunt me forever. My mama lying there with her eyes closed. A baby in my papa's arms and my papa crying. His soft whisper told me that mama had died.

The next morning, we work up early. We decided to name the baby Cora. We buried alongside the trail but we both did not want to leave her. Who would make breakfast for us? Who would sing me a lullaby at night? I did not know what we were going to do without her. I dropped a piece of cloth that I signed in her grave and a diaper for baby Cora. My papa put a drawing of our family next to her body.

The next few days were really rough. My papa seemed to be working day and night. It was hard having a new baby and no mother. I had a ton of extra chores to do. We all were growing hungry and were always the last one to leave camp and get back on the trail. I had to take care of our baby, but little Cora ended up with a fever, which depressed us even more.

My father decided to try and find some help for us. No one was near us for miles, but one day we got a hold of a newspaper that told us what was going on around us.

Then my papa had an idea. "What if we put something in this newspaper that we need a new mama?" he said.

I just stared at him.

"But are we just going to forget about mama and pretend that the 'new one' is her? I asked. "No one is going to replace mama in my world. I won't pretend that everything is going to be alright, because it is not."

"Oh, Lilly, we will never forget mama," papa said. She will always be in our hearts and if we get a new mama, she will be with us just to help. I know everything is different. I am trying to make the best of it." It was settled. We were getting a new mama.

Early the next morning, my papa went out to find the people who wrote the newspaper. I had to take care of baby Cora. She was almost over the sickness and the fever was gone. I have her a bottle of milk and talked to her, even if she did not understand me.

"Oh Cora, I know it is hard for you because you don't have a mama right now but let us hope that papa can find a new mama for us."

Papa came back and told us what he found. "I located the men who wrote the newspaper and they did not want to put my request in there, but I argued with them until they finally gave in. Let's see what happens! They give out the newspaper every week!"

We continued down the trail. Days went by, and eventually someone brought us a copy of the newspaper. Sure enough, the request was printed in the edition. It read:

**Need A Mom**  
**George Donnelly's Wife Died From Birth**  
**And Needs a New Wife.**  
**He has Two Daughters – one is an Infant named Cora and one is Ten Years Old**  
**and Named Lilly.**  
**If You Can Come Help George Donnelly Write a Letter to Him**

We kept working day and night until we got a letter one morning. It said:

I would like to help you. I will come in a few days and tell you who I am and if I would like to go on the Oregon Trail with you.

My papa and I cleaned the wagon as best we could. We all took baths and cleaned until that afternoon. We saw a lady walk up to us. She was short and a little plump, and she looked happy.

She said, "My name is Laura Slay and it looks like you have a nice wagon there. I need to know a little more about you before I make a decision to be a part of this family."

My father heated up some tea and brought it to her. They talked until the only light left was the light of the moon.

"I have decided," said Laura. "I have decided to stay with you on the Oregon Trail."

I wasn't happy but I wasn't sad. I know it will be easier on the trail but harder for me because she is not my momma and it will be hard to let her into my heart.

We were the first ones to leave camp the next morning. With full bellies and a good night's sleep, we were off. The new mama was so kind to me and made my favorite breakfast. I finally had someone to sing me to sleep at night.

My heart was opening for her. Maybe my heart has more room than I thought. But I miss my mama and I am never going to let this lady make me forget that. But I know she is helping our family do better and get better. I am thankful for that. I know that my mother would be proud of me and I am proud of her.

Even though my life has changed a million miles an hour, I adjusted. My new mother is really nice and has a heart the size of the world. Even though I miss my mama I still love my sister Cora and my papa. I know my mama is waiting for me in heaven. But for now, my heart is opening for this new mama here on earth.