

HELD

*A Guided Journal for the Waiting, the Grieving,
and Whatever Comes After*

THE EMPTY CRIB

Before You Begin

This journal doesn't assume you're in one place. It's built for the in-between — for the two-week wait, for the day the test came back the way you didn't want it to, for the strange, unmarked territory of figuring out what comes next.

There are three sections here: *While You're Waiting*, for the trying and the treatment; *What Grief Doesn't Say*, for loss, in whatever form it took; and *Moving Forward*, for the process of building a life — with a baby or without one — that still feels like yours.

You don't have to do this in order. You don't have to do all of it. Skip around. Come back. Write one line or write for an hour. There's no version of this you can get wrong.

Find a quiet ten minutes, and start wherever you are today.

PART ONE

While You're Waiting

*For the cycles, the appointments, the hormones,
and the waiting that has no clear end date.*

PROMPT 1

Not the protocol. Not the numbers. Just what would feel kind today.

Right now, in this cycle, what does your body need from you that has nothing to do with the outcome?

PROMPT 2

Hope can feel dangerous when you've been disappointed before. Write it down anyway.

What are you afraid to hope for — and what happens if you let yourself hope for it anyway, just for the length of this page?

PROMPT 3

Sometimes the people who'd help most simply don't know how.

Who in your life makes this easier to carry, and have they been told what you actually need from them?

The sleep, the plans on hold, the version of yourself you've put away for now.

What does the waiting cost you that no one else can see?

PROMPT 5

A reminder that you are a whole person, not only a person who is trying.

If today were just an ordinary day — not a cycle day, not a countdown — what would you want to do with it?

PART TWO

What Grief Doesn't Say

*For loss in any of its forms — spoken or unspoken,
recent or long carried.*

PROMPT 1

Grief like this is often carried quietly. This page doesn't have to be.

What do you wish people understood about this loss that you've never said out loud?

PROMPT 2

There is no script for this. Write whatever comes.

What would you want to say to the child you lost, if there were no wrong way to say it?

PROMPT 3

Grief rarely follows the shape people expect it to.

What has surprised you about your own grief — a feeling you didn't expect, or one that hasn't come at all?

PROMPT 4

Anniversaries and small reminders can arrive without warning.

**Is there a date, an object, or a moment that still catches you off guard?
What would help you move through it when it comes again?**

Give yourself that permission here, in writing.

PART THREE

Moving Forward

*For life after — however it takes shape,
with a baby or without one.*

PROMPT 1

These are not the same thing, and you're allowed to reject the second one.

What does 'moving forward' mean to you right now — and how is that different from 'moving on'?

PROMPT 2

You can release a plan without releasing the hope underneath it.

What parts of the life you imagined are you letting go of, and what parts are you still holding onto?

PROMPT 3

This isn't a consolation question — it's an honest one, worth sitting with.

If your path forward doesn't include a biological child, what else might a full, meaningful life look like for you?

PROMPT 4

Survival and effort deserve their own recognition, separate from results.

What would it look like to feel proud of yourself for how far you've come, even if the outcome isn't what you wanted?

PROMPT 5

Write to the version of you who's already on the other side of today.

A year from now, what do you hope you'll be able to say about this chapter — not how it ended, but how you carried it?

You are not required to have this figured out.

*Whatever page you're on today — waiting, grieving, or finding your footing again —
you are allowed to still be in it.*

You are not walking this path alone.

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