

Safe Haven
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Since I was young, I've heard stories of babies, usually newborns, being abandoned. Abandoned on the steps of churches, by the front doors of hospitals, at orphanages. Why, even Harry Potter was abandoned – on the stoop of a very unpleasant family of relatives.

In the news story versions, there is usually a concluding comment to the effect that the authorities are searching for the despicable, irresponsible mother who would do such a thing.

I never heard concern about the mother, though my mind always turned to questions about her: What sort of desperation led her to leave her own child? She must have been alone and frightened and confused. Did she believe that the child would get better care if given anonymously to a church or hospital, places that have the duty, if not the reputation these days, to take care of humans? Had she been rejected by her family and the father of her child? Had she hidden her pregnancy and hoped to continue her life untouched by it? Was she young or mentally unstable or handicapped, and therefore, ignorant of what had happened to her? Was she homeless? Married to a man not the father? Had she been raped? What was *her* story?

And why was it assumed that what she did was bad for the child? It seems fair to assume that if someone abandons a baby, then it is probably better for that child. The mother very likely can't take proper care of it. Frankly, my reaction has always been strong concern for the mother and relief for the child.

Today I saw a blue and white international symbol sign. It showed two hands holding a baby as if offering it carefully to someone else to hold. Underneath it said, "Safe Haven." It was at a fire station and indicated that it was a safe location to leave a baby in safe hands, no questions asked.

Of course, it's a shame that such things happen. It's terrible that some women become biological mothers who are in no position to care for a child. And it's wonderful that California (and some other places in the US and around the world) has offered an option for helping the baby rather than looking for "justice."