



# **The Journey for Mama's Babies: A Long Island couple's journey to adopt four biological siblings from Russia**

*Melissa R. Pandolf*

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Melissa Pandolf has never been one to let a few rules stand in her way. So when she and her husband, Doug, began the adoption process, the hopeful mother-to-be had her sights set on quickly welcoming two beaming babies to make the Pandolf house a family home. However, after three years; four trips to Russia; one trip to Washington, DC; and two plane crashes that threatened to bring their dream down around them, she came to realize that a bigger destiny awaited them on the other side of the world. As the adoptive parents of four Russian siblings, the young couple from Long Island learned the true meaning of family, and what it means to go the extra mile to give your children what they need. Beginning with the first meeting with an adoption agency, *The Journey for Mama's Babies* chronicles the Pandolfs' three-year odyssey to bring their babies home. From her naïve initial assumptions about the process to her ultimate hard-won savvy and resolve, Pandolf shares every key aspect of the experience, including the unexpected depression that can be companion to this emotionally wrenching process. With clear-eyed candor, the author recounts the ups and downs, the unexpected twists, and the backward loops that frequently punctuated their mission. Along the way, she and her husband were also faced with heartbreaking decisions that neither had anticipated, as their dream of two children quickly grew when a larger group of siblings presented itself. At the same time, the couple also confronted the demand for an ironclad resiliency due to countless setbacks, never-ending red tape, and a constantly shifting perspective on what it truly means to be a family. Still, their challenges only began when they finally were joined together in the United States, as the Pandolfs scrambled to help their children make the transition from speaking Russian to speaking English and help them adjust to their new surroundings. Enlightening, easy to read, and arrestingly honest, *The Journey for Mama's Babies* will captivate anyone who has ever navigated the intricacies of the adoption process or who cares about someone who has. Both inspiring and open-eyed, this tender, telling story of a family built across oceans, languages, and every imaginable obstacle will take hold of your heart, and make you hold your loved ones closer still.

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