

Pursuing the Avenue not taken

By Esther Baird

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Well, fellow Beverlians, this is my last column for a month or two. Most of you know by this point that I'm pregnant and due right about when this column is scheduled to be published. What you don't know is that at the point of this publication — barring a very early delivery — we probably won't have a name picked out for this child. They tell us the baby is another girl. And of course we already have our first daughter who is 2-1/2.

The issue is that we already chose a girl name — and gave it to our first daughter. We're more than ready should this baby come out a surprise boy, but if the baby is a girl then we are not ready at all. Matters have not been helped by the fact that somewhere along the way our daughter decided that she wanted to name her new baby sister, "Avenue." She is adamant about this. She seems to get that Avenue is not a standard name for a person — but it's the name she wants. And of course it's very cute when people ask her what the baby's name will be and she replies, "baby Avenue."

Soooo cute. Little baby Avenue Baird. Our family can't get enough of it. At Christmas time we received presents to "baby Avenue" reinforcing the actual reality of this name.

My parents said, "It has a certain ring to it, an almost French sounding lilt."

My in-laws said, "We think it's a wonderful name, and certainly nobody else will have it."

Guess what?

We are *not* naming our second daughter, a real child who would have to really raise her hand in class when called, "Avenue." It's not happening people. It is not happening.

That said, not much else is happening either.

Our conversations go like this. "How about Callie?" my husband asks.

"No, sounds like calico, reminds me of Laura Ingalls and cows."

"Ellie?"

"As in, 'Ellie-phant'?"

"Ok, do you have some none-grazing animal names in mind then?"

"Yes, I like Olivia."

"No."

"Why?"

"Baird is a Scottish name, not Italian."

"So no Annabelle or Isabelle then?"

"No belles of any sort."

I looked up Scottish names and suggested a few.

"How does Fearcharia sound? Or, oh, maybe Raognhailt"

All the while, in every email or phone chat, the baby is referred to as Avenue reinforcing and dulling our senses to the bizarre nature of a naming a baby after a type of street.

As I write, we are down to two possible names. We don't agree on either of them. My husband keeps saying, "We'll know the name when we see her." But I don't buy that.

I know how I'm wired and I always mutter back, "Look, I love my daughter, and I love this yet-to-be-born daughter, but I'm sorry, when they are born they all look like little raisins. I need to have a name ready to go, not the other way around."

But we just don't have one.

We've looked at all the online name lists. We own the "Greatest Baby Name Book" with thousands of options. We've searched through both of our family trees as well as the Bible. And we've certainly eavesdropped at the playground and mall to see what other parents are calling their little girls.

Last week it became apparent that we are desperate.

I was channel surfing late at night when nothing but bad reality television was on. I stumbled across a show featuring a houseful of cranky, backstabbing models who seemed quite hungry. I watched it for a few minutes, but felt my brain drying up and went to turn it off.

My husband, who can generally tolerate reality television in durations limited to less than a nanosecond, stopped me as the model montage ran across the screen.

"Wait!" he exclaimed.
I raised an eyebrow.

"You want me to keep this show — about models who live together — on??"

He waved at me impatiently.

"It's a source for names. Maybe we'll like one of the model's names."

So we sat and read the bios as they scrolled across the screen. It was a new low. I guess we'll find our name one way or the other. It won't be Avenue, and we now know it won't be the name of a reality TV model. How hard can it be with those options off the table?

I guess I'll let you know in a few months when I return.

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