

SPECKS OF LIFE?

The Petri dish holds the answer to all Amanda's dreams...

The story so far

Unable to conceive naturally, Amanda and her hubby Paul decide on IVF. But then Paul is diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly the couple are fighting a far bigger battle — just to keep him alive. Now, with Paul having had the all-clear, the couple restart the IVF process. This week, Amanda and Paul find out if her eggs have been fertilised... (To read last week's story in full, go to www.thatslife.co.uk.)

When the phone rings at 9.15am, my heart is beating faster than a drum machine on high speed.

Will there now be three embryos bobbing around in a Petri dish? *Thump, thump...*

Or none at all? *Thump, thump...*

It's been 13 days now since I started injecting the drugs to boost my egg production.

And yesterday, three eggs were surgically removed from my ovaries, then 'introduced' to Paul's sperm in the Petri dish.

All last night, we prayed that at least one will be fertilised, so the doctors can then implant the tiny embryo — or embryos — into my womb tomorrow.

And now, the voice on the phone says: 'Hello, Amanda, it's the

embryologist from the clinic. You'll be pleased to hear that *all three* of your eggs have been fertilised!

'That's brilliant!' I reply, and feel like I temporarily stop breathing through the sheer euphoria.

She then explains that as *all three* have been fertilised, they'll give them an extra day in the Petri dish. This is because they only implant a maximum of two embryos, and they need to see which ones mature the most — and if the third will be good enough to freeze.

'Only 37 per cent of embryos are ever good enough to freeze,'

she adds, but I'm not really paying any attention.

'Mmm, yes, fine! Thanks!' I say, before hanging up.

Then I race to the garage, where Paul's working on his car.

'They're fertilised!' I tell him excitedly. 'All three of them!'

A big smile spreads across his face and he wraps his arms round me and says he loves me.

I just burst into tears — and cry and cry. When I calm down, I'm left with this lovely feeling.

A part of me has joined with a part of Paul and become one. I'm so incredibly happy. I feel as if I'm floating. I do everything with a silly smile painted on my face.

Then it's time for Paul and me to go back to the clinic to get the two best embryos implanted in my womb.

As I enter the little room at the clinic again, with the stretcher-with-the-stirrups and the 'dinner hatch' where the eggs were delivered to, I feel so excited.

'Don't you want Paul to come in?' the doctor asks. Apparently lots of couples like to be together for the implantation.

Not me. The thought of Paul seeing me, legs wide open, with various gynaecological utensils in or around me, isn't pleasant. I want to retain *some* feminine allure!

'No, thanks,' I tell her.

My fairy-godmother nurse, Bridget, is here in the room with

'We pray that at least one will be fertilised'



The eggs and sperm being 'introduced'

Would part of each of us become one?

sports. I'm also to have showers instead of baths. Time for Paul to fix our shower head!

Then she hands a pregnancy kit to me, telling me the date when I'm to do 'The Test'. It's in exactly two weeks!

When I leave, Bridget squeezes my hand and says: 'We're all rooting for you, and keeping our fingers crossed, Amanda.'

Waiting in reception, Paul's gobsmacked I've been so quick. 'It's like you've just been to the toilet and back!' he says.

I save showing him the photo until we're having a cuppa in a roadside café on the way home.

'There they are!' I say, pointing where the doctor showed me.

'Mmm,' Paul replies, 'I think I can see them.'

It's not until we get home, and I really scrutinise the photo, that I see them for the first time.

My heart soars. Two little white specks! Two incredible, amazing, little white specks! But, most of all, they're *our* little white specks.

Now we have to wait two weeks to see if one — or both — nestles in and becomes a proper pregnancy. At the moment, though, I don't care. I have a part of me and Paul inside me.

And I couldn't be happier!

AMANDA REVELL WALTON, 40, HIGHWORTH, WILTSHIRE

NEXT WEEK... Amanda and Paul do the pregnancy test together.