

Tanya E. E. E. Schmid (she/her)
Via Prà di Vizi 6
CH-6612 Ascona, Switzerland
+41-76-448-3822
tanya@sunrise.ch

500 words

Wait Three Minutes

by Tanya E. E. E. Schmid

“Go!” she called through the closed door. The toilet lid was cold.

Sitting there, she noticed how clean Jim’s bathroom was. No dust bunnies in the corners, shower doors sparkling, matching green towels hanging a bit haphazardly but – she grabbed one and put her nose into it – smelling fresh. She liked his apartment. He was a senior and had rented a place off-campus close to where he worked as a part-time lab assistant. The two rooms of his apartment were mostly filled with biology books.

He had bought the test right after she called him to tell him her period was late. But first they spent a week talking and researching, listing the pros and cons. They looked at all the options and reviewed those sections of his books about “the procedure.” She was a second-year psych major, so she knew there were emotional effects to consider as well. It was almost fun, like they were researching a thesis together. All in all, it looked like an abortion made sense. He had smiled and told her chances were that all this wasn’t necessary.

Their first time had actually been funny. Neither of them had loads of experience. After dating for weeks, their nervousness had finally melted into red-hot passion. But the moments afterward remained strongest in her memory: “Where’s the condom?” she asked. A quick search of the bed covers. “Oh, shit,” he answered with a smile. Both laughing, even when she said, “Don’t laugh, this is serious!” as they each attempted to recover the slippery white bag from inside her. By the time they did, the condom was empty. She had stopped smiling then.

She got up from the toilet, removed the key from the bathroom door and looked through the keyhole. It was just a slit, but she saw Jim sitting on the bed, his bangs falling over his glasses as he stared down at his watch. She looked at his dark blue, crisp jeans. The collar of his shirt was still up at the back – it had been windy when he met her at the bus stop. He had held her hand on the way to his apartment and said, “We don’t have to decide right away. There’s time.”

She looked at his strong wrists, the hair on his forearms. She remembered his subtle smell during the months they had spent together studying, talking, walking...waiting. In that instant, she realized she loved him.

“Time!” he called out.

She put the key back into the lock quietly, took the plastic stick from where she had set it on the edge of the sink, and stared down at the “+” sign.

A wave of warmth filled her chest, spreading outward, especially down to her belly. She rested her hands there, below the button on her jeans. *I am a woman.* She felt connected to all her female ancestors. She felt that spark of motherhood which – if left unquenched –

would grow into a strong, protective flame. The warmth filled the tiny spaces where fear had lodged in her body.

“I’m keeping it!” she heard herself call out. Then she opened the door.