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Grow

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Author Bio

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Sticky, I guess. Sticky is an appropriate word for it. Then again, appropriate isn't exactly a word for it at all. Splendid and dirty and sick and fun we could say, but appropriate we couldn't. We enjoyed it too much for it to be the same as we'd always been. Appropriate.

No, it wasn't a proper thing or the right thing. It was a quiet revolution thing, a four-point-oh "Fuck You" to the moms and dads and teachers we'd obeyed since birth. A, "Without further ado I present to you, world, me, fully erect and standing, too," kind of a thing that makes you queasy and crazy and new. It stuck in our minds like glue.

You saw it on faces in high school hallways. Deep smile lines, gorges of experience, baby wrinkles of wisdom and age would appear overnight. Like a revelation, like a miracle, adults replaced children in a few shallow breaths.

It was our adulthood one-on-one class we took behind the scenes, under the tables and covers of darkness, a hands-on guide to growing up. It was our final exam, the one we'd been studying for since we'd figured out the meaning behind the purpose. We'd thoroughly read and listened, made jokes, and sat up late practicing with magazines, videos, fantasies shrouded in skin, rubbing and pulling our secret until we could taste heaven in every nerve.

It was everything we'd hoped for, and everything we'd feared.

When her time came, She was ready. She sat in classes, she lay in bed, dreaming of romance and love, her thoughts wrapped in red and diamonds. But She was just like the rest of us, the same head on a different body. She had the same eyes that sang, hands that played, the same all-knowing all-wanting attitude a blind man could recognize. She walked with her feet, talked with her mouth, and dreamed her dreams with a Hollywood passion.

He was ready, too. Raised in the concentration camps called elementary school, the prisons called day care, He too walked and talked with the same wanting knowing smile, practicing daily to achieve sweet release when the time was right.

Their lives crossed on the First, and as She walked past his stomach cramped, his heart became uncomfortable. She saw him seated, smiling, and her knees began to bump, and soon she felt faint as she boiled from the inside. They caught glimpses, and warm feelings flew, crept from toes, up legs, to softest spots of skin they felt with fingers.

When She went back to him, She found it fit, her smile with his, and they saw in each other themselves and their own smiles. Wrinkles grew deeper as He went back for more, and fit his lips with hers. Soon they found their bodies also fit, his strong arm beneath her shoulders, her light curves around his waist, like puzzle pieces. And when She showed herself, and He himself, so nothing could be hidden between them, He bent down and pushed the last piece into place.

It is here, at their last moments of childhood, when infancy returned in fullest form. In those seventy-eight seconds he laughed, she groaned, he moaned, she moaned, she held her breath, he let his go, and they both finished crying. Naked together, a part of each other, wet, tired, reborn into a grown-up world, they lay. Sticky.

And a grown up world it was, when She found white underwear still three weeks later. She walked to the pharmacy, and her face flushed at the register. A man scanned the package, and She avoided his twisted glance. Back home now, She ran to the bathroom and lifted the seat. Red she had looked for, but her Yellow brought Blue, and she dropped

the stick like an anvil, and still fell under its weight.

When She began to breathe again, they came in choked sobs She muffled with a towel. When her legs could function and her balance returned, She stumbled down the hallway to drop the phone, the numbers too blurry to read. With shaky fingers, She pushed numbers, and her knees gave out to the sound of his voice, ignorant and innocent for the last time.

Twenty minutes later He was there, walking stiffly and looking lost. He reached for her and She fell, again, and they crawled their way to the bathroom. She saw the stick and sobbed harder, as he grabbed the box. He reached for the stick lightly, and held it like a breast, gently, as if it would shatter or break under his strong grip.

They were together now, He still awestruck, and She crying again, her chest bouncing with each short breath she forced. They crouched together, holding each other, trying to find the ways their bodies had fit so perfectly before. No ideas came to mind, yet thoughts and nightmares of conversations and lab coats circled the room like vultures.

After what seemed like hours on the tiled floor, they made their way downstairs to the sofa, where they began to sort things out. Mouths remained closed for longer, and when lips finally parted, oceans of questions flowed into the quiet room:

How did this happen?

Why us?

Why now?

Most importantly, What do we do?

As they both sank deeper into confusion, a key slid into the front door lock as her mother came home. Announcing herself, the mother noticed two somber adults motionless on the couch, reflecting a transition she long ago went through herself. The air lay so thick with deep thought that when she opened her mouth, no words could be heard.

They remained silent even after her mother left. Thoughts still flew through each of their heads like bees, hard to follow and painful if caught. When finally they began to think clearly, She inquired what He had been thinking.

Abortion?

The word stuck in her mouth like peanut butter, and made him wince. Abortion. Death and Doctors and Parents and Embarrassment. Abortion. To kill a child before he was even born. Purposely. Never.

But She was all for it. Quick, painless, a fix-it-all solution to their one big problem. Professional doctors, paid to help mothers end unwanted pregnancies. Oh God. Pregnancy. Mother.

She could not be a mother. He could not be a killer.

Nothing could change either mind. They sat, silent again, but this time with a hint of anger, of a lost understanding, a fading fit. Her curves no longer fit his hips. His clothes felt uncomfortable on her skin. Their neutral faces each sang a different sorrow.

He left soon after, their puzzle pieces now too different to ever fit again. He left the stick on the bathroom floor, tread marks in the driveway, a fragment of life in her stomach, and didn't look back. When She dried her damp face with tissues, and could control her quavering voice She opened the phone book, and pushed buttons like she had before, this time in an unfamiliar order. A friendly, tired voice answered the phone, and within minutes She had a time, a place, and a new knot in her stomach.

The walk to the clinic was cold and lonely, the grass beneath her feet flattening under each step. Arriving, She entered and gave a name to the friendly, tired voice She had spoken to the day before. She read wrinkled magazines in an uncomfortable chair in a poorly lit room, waiting. When the man came in and read the name off the chart, She stood, and bit her lip. He invited her in and, glancing back at the door, She hesitated, then followed him straight into an uncertain future.