

Plan B

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The plastic bowl on the counter is filled with neon-colored condoms; a handwritten sign taped to the front reads, *Take What You Need*. You grab two fistfuls and shove them into your pockets. Your temples feel like they're in some kind of vicious torture device, something metal and searingly hot that makes your stomach do flips like a show dog, but that's what you get for drinking two days straight.

Emergency contraceptive, you tell the nurse, that'll be it for me today.

She gives a smile. It drips with pity. You've come right in time, darlin', the new law goes into effect next week, she says. As if any of this is a good thing.

You nod to her. You already know. How could you not know? Your palms are sweating, your leg is bouncing.

She pulls out a clipboard and dives into your life. What's your age? Do you have insurance?

When was your last menstrual cycle? How long have you been taking testosterone? How long has it been since you had unprotected intercourse?

26. No. Two weeks ago. 5 years. 60 hours.

On birth control?

Obviously not, you don't tell her. Instead, you just shake your head.

She marks her paper with x's and checks. She says, We're closed on Sundays. Monday is a holiday. Want a spare just in case?

Your bank account, like yourself, is aching and hollowed out after your sad partying spree. In your morning-after panic, you spent too much time online instead of taking any real action. You

learned that the fallopian tube isn't connected to the ovaries—that ovaries float. During a period, the egg splits from the ovary and gets caught by the tube's tiny feelers, which pulls it into the tunnel.

To you, it looks like a lamprey.

Sometimes, the egg drifts off into space flying in a vat of nothingness and meat and blood instead of the comfort of the cushioned temple of the uterus that it was promised. When someone gets creampie'd that sperm will spill throughout the body because, that tube? It's open, and at the end of the day, sperm are desperate to make something that's not theirs their own.

They'll crawl throughout the body to find it and root into whatever they make contact with, like that poor free floating egg—even though it isn't safe and it's forced to become a human when it's not ready to be a real human—

The fetus dies, and now you have this bigger parasite where it's not supposed to be, and that corpse can kill you and then all you are is a dead person with a parasite that became a bigger, more dead parasite all because some guy from Grindr decided to empty his load into you when you were both too drunk to remember each other's names and because some politician believed he had some right over uteruses so this is your last chance to get this pill legally—

Instead you say, I won't be making this mistake again, so, no, I don't need a spare.

She hands you a bag to take the pill home. It's a simple brown paper bag, the kind you used to decorate and leave on your table at school for Valentine's Day. You peer inside and might as well have seen a plethora of gaudy pink and red cards—it's filled with even more neon condoms, some banana-flavored dental dams, and a small box with one pill.

You don't want to waste any time. You pull the box out and plop the tablet into your mouth.

You swallow, like a good boy. The nurse practically pushes you out of the door and flips the

‘Open’ sign to ‘Closed’ so she can get on with her long weekend.

The air is cold, chilled. You wish it was summer. You wish there were cicadas to fill the silence, longing for their screams, for the love they, too, search for each year.

Now you have to start your own long weekend. You have to take your Mom to the Ocean, all the way across the state. Over the mountain, through fields and cities, and finally to the water.

That’s why you fucked that random man after all, you couldn’t deal with the fact you had read your Mother’s eulogy that morning.

You don’t want to go to the ocean. The pill settling into your gut might spark a heavier period and you’re due this week anyways so maybe you’ll be stuck waist deep in the ocean spreading your mom’s ashes when a shark comes and eats you because all they smell is your meat and blood and its all because that damn tube isn’t closed and you just had to be born with a fucking uterus. So what would be worse, getting pregnant, or getting eaten by a shark?

Deep breath. The pill has been taken. No going back.

In the car, you check that Mom, in her silver urn, is still buckled in tight. The yellow light of the Waffle House across the street makes the air look nicotine-stained in the evening dusk.

A stranger knocks on your window. Another on the passenger side. They hold pamphlets and banners and tiny squishy fetuses. Their signs read, *Repent!*

You roll down the window.

A man who believes he has a right to your uterus says, You’re a murderer.

Your stomach twists into a knot. You’re still hungover. There’s no stopping it. You duck your head outside the window and upchuck onto the evangelist’s shoes. He screams and gags. His friends scream and gag. The barely-dissolved pill is mixed in with the bile on the asphalt.

You should have gotten the spare.