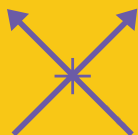


"WILDLY CREATIVE." —KIRKUS



THE FEMINIST UTOPIA PROJECT

FIFTY-SEVEN VISIONS OF A WILDLY BETTER FUTURE



EDITED BY ALEXANDRA BRODSKY AND RACHEL KAUDER NALEBUFF

Reproductive Supporters

JUSTINE WU

My name is Mei. I have been asked to tell you about my abortion. No one has ever asked me to write something for publication before. They said I would be good for this because I can be the “voice of an ordinary woman.” I’m not sure if I am supposed to be happy about that, but I guess being ordinary is good for once. They said my story will be put in a book with stories of other women, some from now and some from the past, way back before the Law.

Anyway, back to my abortion. It was pretty fast and a little bit easier than my first abortion because the second time I asked my RS (her name is Madison), “Can you please play that old song by Beyoncé so I don’t have to listen to the tree sound recordings?” I got up off the bed, but then the cramps sat me right back down. Madison gave me some tea and cookies and we listened to some more music and I felt better. I asked to borrow

Madison's new Beyoncé music and she said, "Sure, just don't lose it." Then she dropped me off at home. That is pretty much it. I am not sure what else I am supposed to say. Oh, and Madison said the reason I got pregnant this time may be because my Clock (V1.3) insert was off a little (maybe I forgot to charge it?), but she adjusted it and said it should be good for a lifetime now.

Madison has been my RS since I got my period. I was twelve years old and had just filled out my Reproductive Life Plan at the Community Health Office (CHO). Just a week before, Mama was looking at my chest and saw my T-shirt was getting tight. She sat me down and said, "Mei, now that you are getting to be a woman, are you ready to talk about your Life Plan? Your sister did so around the same age, and I think it would be good if you got ready to." I just nodded and said, "Okay, Mama, no biggie," even though inside I was nervous and excited at the same time.

It was all good timing. Right after my period, the CHO assigned Madison to me because she was my sister's RS and we all got along really good. Madison knew she wanted to be a Reproductive Supporter since she was a little girl. She finished school really fast and enrolled as a Life Navigator (LN) first, but then got bored of that. She then went off to work with older women who had been Reproductive Supporters. After some time she was ready to be an RS herself.

Madison helped me with my first Clock when I was eighteen years old, just before I had sex with Leon. Right



around that time, she asked, “This guy a good one?” and I said yes, and then we talked for a long time about Leon and me. She asked me if I wanted to be active with him, and I said probably and maybe we should get the Clock done. And so Madison came by the next day with the Clock (V1.2). It fit beautifully, and I sat around admiring it when nobody was looking. Like, all the time for two weeks straight. Speaking of time, the first Clock actually did show the time! I could also program in reminders for homework and stuff and download a whole mess of songs. But that was the problem—I crashed the Clock with all the data, and that is how I ended up pregnant the first time. The next Clock (V1.3) was simpler without all the extras though they are still working out the charging issues. Still, Madison thought it was good for me, and it is still working to this day.

When we were teens, Madison came by our house a lot because she was our Life Navigator too. My parents really needed the help—it was hard for them to take care of us with jobs in two different states. And they loved having Madison around to help us with English homework since they were still trying to figure out English themselves. But most of the time, we would sit around and finish English pretty quickly, and then Madison would have us teach her our language. Sometimes she would stay to cook dinner, and we would go to a movie after. We always had her over for the big holidays.

I am now twenty-nine. I never liked school and don't write that well, but Mama and Papa and Madison made

me finish this. I am really good at drawing and art. So that is what I do. I sell some pictures now and then and make enough for a few months at a time. I am no longer with Leon. Now I have Ken who *is* a writer, but I did not let him touch this story. We will probably marry soon, though that is kind of old-fashioned.

Growing up, I never thought about how old Madison was, and she never told us her age. But I guessed she was born way before my Mama and Papa because she remembers things from before the Law. It is hard to know if she is telling the truth or just trying to scare us. Back then, Madison said, nobody had an RS. You had to see a doctor to get pills (that you swallowed like food!) to stop your eggs, and you had to do it every day or else you could get pregnant. And if you did get pregnant, you had to see a doctor, usually a different doctor in a different place (sometimes you had to drive really far, like over a day) if you wanted an abortion. You had to pay for the abortion yourself or your job paid. (Very strange, why should your boss care?) Some women never could get the abortion and ended up just having babies they did not want. Again, sometimes I don't know if she made stuff up to scare me and my sister into getting our Clocks. It is hard to know, but I did read about it in history class, and her version seems to be about the same as what they said in books.

Exactly ten months ago, Madison came over to pause my Clock. She asked in her matter-of-fact voice after we had eaten chicken salad sandwiches and had our tea,



"This guy a good one?" I said, "Yes, absolutely yes. He is good and he is The One." Then I looked her straight in the eye (which is hard for anyone to do, but then she knows I am serious), "I think it is time to pause. I am ready." And so it was done the next day. Before she left, Madison kissed and hugged me.

Mama just came over and asked if I was ready to feed. She nicely reminds me to be done with this story because it is late and the story has to end at some point. I said, "Okay, this is a good place to stop." Then Mama puts my baby in my arms, and I bring her close to my breast and whisper, "Time to eat, little Madison."

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