

Titillation

Ten months to Mars. 150 to 300 days depending on the angle you take. It's all about trajectory, space travel, family life, getting fucked or just fucked up. Sometimes it all seems like flying off on a tangent around an eclipse.

That's how long it might take to get there. And presumably you would want to come back. So at best, that could be another ten months unless gravity helped. More than a year for a round trip. Hope the food is good. A lot changes in twelve months.

The football hit him square on the side of his head. He loved football. Could take all sorts of knocks and falls. But when his sister hit him with the ball he really freaked out. She didn't even like the game. He flushed red, bull nosed, rushed her into the wall. She was older but she really should recognize his strength. Psychologically, she could bully, confuse, frighten him in so many ways but when he lost it he punched her and she ended up drunk, bloody, crying for her parents.

And her parents were never there. That was the thing about being abandoned. Tears were always washed away in streams that had no ending. But every child has it's own little lake of frustrations trying to break out and reach the sea.

After she'd hit him with the football he broke her tooth in a serious fit of anger. You put up with shit but eventually even a younger sibling can lose it. There are times when an older sister's attention just isn't worth it. It wasn't easy or cheap to fix, the fucking tooth. The scare remained throughout her adult life, the fear the implant would crack and fall out again, the numbing reminder, that throbbing sense of being more fragile than you thought, that it was easier cross a line than you had imagined, that signposts can be twisted in the wind, or deviated by a devious pair of hands with nothing better to do.

There is something about having tits that makes you feel different. Boys don't understand, it just grows and sags, pointlessly, occasionally all out there but mainly crouching and hiding behind the tall grass afraid it might be caught in the open. Breasts are up front. In your face. They don't hide, can't be packed up and hid between your legs. There are part of who you are, who you become to be. She could spot her brother noticing them. So, they were big. She liked them. Awkward at times, but they don't disappear. That's what boys never seemed to understand. Girls are different. They live with bodies that don't fade away, don't hide behind two shriveled nuts and a flaccid flagpole blowing helplessly once the damage has been done, shamed into hibernation. Your tits hang there, proudly or defiantly; you can't avoid their gaze or the annoying habit of men staring at them rather than into your eyes.

Ten months to Mars but in fact it only takes nine to have a kid and Mars is not necessarily more imposing. Presumably you wouldn't stay forever on Mars but if you are a man you mightn't hang around with a kid either. Back to tits. You just can't abandon them. Or maybe you can if you are rich enough for plastic surgery but that is the same as being able to afford to hire a nanny. In the end the man walks, you stay or pay.

The ball smacked him. Right over the jaw. It was an accident, maybe. Instinctively she ran forward to catch him and let her hand soothe his face. He pounded her one. She forgot the broken tooth and hugged him tight. He bent into her arms unaware of how much it hurt her, how solitary they both really were. Just occasionally she wished he wasn't there, that her own struggles were enough.

She looked at brother Johnny and wondered if he would turn out like his father, a hazy recollection she remembered from sulking underneath the kitchen table. Her father thumping overhead, imposing his vision of life on them all, her mother humming, biting back blood when the fists flung. The table would shudder; she would just lie quiet. Safer that way.

Boys and mothers are weird. And when your mother fades an older sister will do: any old dishcloth in a damp kitchen. Little Johnny wouldn't leave her arms. She didn't want him to. They were all they had. Father had run off; their mother hadn't been able to cope. Sometimes she wondered what they had done to make their parents go, if they had really been such shitty little kids. It didn't really matter any more. Maybe when he hit her, his sister, he was hitting out at that mother, his mother who had run away, chased out by a father who had never come back.

Taking care of a little brother was a giant pain, but it was easier than looking after a mother. Of course, now she had followed her down the same hole: pregnant at sixteen would solve all her problems. Their mother had fucked off. Now her daughter too had fucked up. Little Johnny hadn't noticed yet, too engrossed in himself to see his sister's predicament. But then again he didn't observe much; or tried not to. Social services had him down as lacking, or whatever fancy word they choose. They didn't know about the missing mother yet. His sister could keep them at bay a little longer. With a little luck.

Don't let them take me he whimpered at night, curled up beneath the blanket beside her.

Social services kept wanting to interview her. And the bump was expanding. She couldn't hide that either. She held him and pretended nothing was happening.

He wasn't that unobservant. He watched everything from behind her shadow. Little Johnny had seen them do it. She spotted him in the mirror watching them slip through clothes, tear away underway in a fetish of insane desire, the necessity of banging away with a club at a wall you just needed to destroy without any idea of what lay beyond. She wondered if it was his first time or if he made a habit of spying on them. He could wait. She wouldn't be doing it again for a while. She could see how the boys ran scared from a growing stomach. That was a condom you couldn't forget.

Her brother smiled up at her. Little Johnny knew how to manipulate. The joys of being a spoilt brat. Younger siblings have all the tricks necessary to keep the older ones engaged: and big brother or sister fall for the tricks because much as they would like to kill the little shit they needed the admiration, the comfort. Not easy being the oldest, an endless round of feigned confidence, a mask confronting desperate shyness, the fear of responsibility which never seemed to let go.

She would only have to concentrate on him now. The ball to the head had been a godsend. He could milk it for years. He knew how to keep her attention, kick up a fuss, make her all tearful and kind. He couldn't afford to lose another mother. He'd make her forget that tooth. He'd never be angry again. She was getting fat.

She put a finger down to stroke his face like a hunted dog. Another handful she thought. He had no idea. But for the moment he was resting peacefully under the table and her tooth had stopped hurting.

Mars didn't seem that far away after all. A couple of months more and she'd be finishing the trip. Not one way unfortunately. Very round. Even Little Johnny was beginning to realize and prepare for the landing. Interplanetary flight forces people to grow up. A baby on the way was a challenge for all, competition for them both. In theory that was good for economies, helped them develop. Little Johnny needed that. She wasn't sure what she wanted. There was no space for her. She might as well be on Mars. They were all on other planets. Orbiting without gravity, space cadets looking for a parachute. She wondered if it would be a boy or girl. If it mattered.

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