

## Hills Like White Elephants, Part 2

He thought I should take it “just in case.” I didn’t want to, but I also didn’t want to take the risk of having a child... I’d already taken that risk though, *we* had done that by having sex in the first place. And neither of us really wanted to own up to it.

It wasn’t uncommon at the time for my period to skip a couple months at a time, but I had to admit, I was worried too. Even though twenty-year-old me was certain that he and I would eventually get married, and even though we talked about all the *when*’s instead of the *if*’s, I was still worried that this might not be right.

And even if things played out differently, I was still right. Things didn’t work out between him and I. But I didn’t know that at the time. Even if I did, I probably would have refused to accept it.

The point is though, I never should have taken that pill.

I know too many women that have taken it before. A lot of them have taken it more than once. I didn’t think I would feel so... horrible, if that can even describe it. Everyone told me it was safe. I was told that nothing would happen. And sure, nothing major happened, but the feeling in my stomach was vaguely familiar. It felt like death. The pure nausea, guilt, depression, darkness— both physically and emotionally, it all felt like the smell of vomit and cow manure stirred into a half-empty pickle jar that’s been sitting in the sun at least two years past its *best if used by* date.

But we tried to make light of it once I hopped back into his truck and we drove over to Taco Bell for lunch.

It’s funny in a way. I never would’ve tried Taco Bell if it weren’t for him and now it’s honestly one of my favorite fast foods; I also never would have tried taking that pill, potentially killing someone (though that we’ll never really know) in the process just to ease his anxiety. But honestly, I hadn’t listened to my own until my stomach turned as my body broke down that capsule.

Knowing his heart, I don’t think he would have been ok with me taking that pill if he knew what it was really doing, or what it could do. But maybe I didn’t know his heart, and he knew exactly what that pill was doing, or what it was intended to do.

That pill was a death sentence... or at least it might have been. There was no way to know but my own intuition that told me there was nothing to worry about. For all I know I could have just been trying to make myself feel better about it though. It’s not like I haven’t done that before.

But part of what made the feeling so much worse was how it made me a hypocrite. *Personally*, I used to say, *I'm pro-life. Politically, I'm pro-choice.*

What. A. Lie.

I was afraid that he would leave me, so who knows, maybe I did kill my own child. Maybe I wasn't as much for life as I thought I was.

It felt like something out of *Hills Like White Elephants*. It felt eerily wrong, yet one tiny part of it felt comfortable, and that's what I clung on to— the part where I'd done as he'd asked me and that meant he would stay.

Again... What. A. Lie.

It took me months after our relationship ended for me to realize that I couldn't be as in the gray areas as I wanted to be, because the truth is there isn't one. Either you stand for and respect life, or you don't stand for life, regardless of whether or not you respect it. I remember spending time researching the kind of industry I'd just poured about fifty-six dollars into for one pill and being horrified. And then I looked into how it actually works and I understood why it make me feel the way it did.

I looked into more on the industry, even though most of it had no personal relevance to my life. The more severe side effects. The reliance that the sex trafficking industry has on this stuff. The types of health clinics that provide this stuff to poison the smallest of children that may not even be there. I looked into how easy it is to get the abortion pill online. I looked into what procedures look like. I looked into the side effects, physiological risks, and mental health risks. I looked into how these abortion clinics treat their patients.

It was much worse than Hemingway described.

If we were losing 2,363 children per day to gun violence then we would be absolutely livid— especially if no one is doing anything about it. But that's not the case. We're losing 2,363 children per day in the United States alone to abortion. Along with that, we're losing dozens upon dozens of would've-been mothers per year to legal abortion. Had my symptoms been worse, I could've been one of them for a child I wasn't even sure existed.

And that thought stopped me in my tracks.

I could've been one of them because I cared more for what I deemed to be success than what the Lord created me to be: a mother.

I may not be one yet as I'm writing this, but I'm writing this as someone who doesn't know because she was scared. I'm writing this as someone who has since realized that if he's not

ready and willing to be a husband and father and devote himself to you and your child, he's not worth giving your body to. I'm writing this as someone who didn't have that choice every time because there were other men before this one that took that choice from me.

Your wanted-ness doesn't determine your value. God knew you before he even knit you together in your mother's womb. The Lord saw you as valuable, and he sees every child like that too, before they're even conceived.

If there's one thing I could tell the child that might not have even been there, it's that. Even though I failed him or her, there's a God who never will. But if that child ever even existed, that child would already know that by now.

*If you or someone you know is dealing with trauma from an abortion, help and resources are available at [cantstaysilent.com/healing-resources](http://cantstaysilent.com/healing-resources)*