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The Bloody Truth

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Elizabeth Fulkerson

The Bloody Truth

ENCW 490

Professor Rebecca Wee

Spring 2020

Personal/Reflective Prose.

The Bloody Truth

My friends and I were talking avidly on the car trip when suddenly sweet Stormy asked quietly, "Should we be talking about this when your dad's in the car?"

I scoffed with all the sass of the teenager I was soon to be. "It's *just* my dad."

And, in my defense, it was. My father lived in our house with my mom, my sis and I, and our female dog. Certainly, he knew what a period was.

Periods weren't taboo in my household. My mother and older sister both had told me in advance what they were, and what I would have to do about it. I read from an *American Girl* book how I would put in a tampon, though the concept scared me so much I was determined to use pads forever. When I eventually got my period, it wasn't a big deal. I sat in the Krogers bathroom and announced to my sister, "We're going to have to buy pads." I think she was more excited than I was. Though, truthfully, it wasn't that exciting. The thing I looked to the most was a tradition my mother had started for my sister and her friends. To celebrate my new womanhood, we all went out to Alexander's Steakhouse, my favorite place to eat because I could cook over the giant grill and make my special garlic toast. It was a fun party to make four hundred and fifty periods or thirty-seven and half sucky years more bearable.

On another drive, while I was in maybe 6th grade, Heidi, a family friend, took me and Ling Hui, a little boy about my age, to the Children's Museum in her van with many crooks and crannies to explore on a long car ride. Ling Hui found, pinned in the crack between the wall and the long back seat, a medium sized, green wrapped pad. He looked at it in confusion and asked, "What is it?"

When I saw it, I lit up, excited to have knowledge I could share. "It's a pad. Girls put them in their underwear--"

"ELIZABETH!" Heidi snapped.

I froze, unsure why I was being yelled at for trying to teach him. It was a natural process after all, and he'd have a girlfriend or wife one day. He'd have to learn eventually! I was

outraged, but remained silent as I didn't want to be yelled at again or possibly be made to stay in the car while they went to the museum.

The pad was confiscated and the conversation was forgotten and the talk on the ride home was all about the floor length piano and how we started a farming enterprise with a bunch of other children on the third floor.

On, yet another ride, this time on a middle school field trip to someplace forgettable, Caitlin, the most obnoxious girl in our grade, was chatting to Kari, my seat buddy and a quiet, innocent girl.

“Yeah, on a period, you pee blood.”

I was offended. I, sure as hell, knew better. On a period, you didn't just pee blood. That implied it was a conscious decision and therefore no reason for pads. Whereas I knew, a period was a constant oozing that if you weren't careful could lead to you sitting in a pool of blood because you didn't realize you had to change your pad yet. So, I corrected her.

This led to a heated debate of whether girls had two holes or three holes. She maintained that girls had the pee hole and the poop, while I added the third, the sex hole where blood came from. Eventually the argument ended, and Caitlin went on to describe to Kari in impressive detail what a blow job was.

It was only last week I went to see a movie with my dear friend and now grown up Kari. As we walked to the bathroom, I couldn't help but complain.

“I woke up yesterday morning and there was no blood. I ended up not wearing a heavy pad that day and I bled through. I was so mad!”

Kari covered her mouth and laughed, looking at a man we passed. “Liz, he probably heard you!”

“Good. I'm a menstruating woman. Fear me.”