

No Baby

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*A doctor's office
An examination room
Britney is on the examination table
Brandon sits nearby
A **Doctor** applies an ultrasound wand to Britney's stomach
A heartbeat becomes audible*

DOCTOR

And there it is. That's the heartbeat.

*Britney listens to the heartbeat
She looks away from the monitor*

BRANDON

Is it too early to tell the gender?

DOCTOR

Well today marks the official beginning of your second trimester. And while it is possible that I will be able to discern the sex of the baby this early, especially if it's a boy, I do however first require your verbal consent that you want to know the baby's gender at this time.

BRITNEY

NO.

No.

It's cool.

I'm cool.

DOCTOR

Now it is my understanding that you are considering terminating this pregnancy, is that correct?

BRITNEY

It is.

DOCTOR

Alright. In that case I would encourage you to make a final decision on that point soon. There's no telling how much longer that window will remain open for you. You're also going to want to—

BRITNEY

Wait a moment, I'm sorry. Did you just say *you don't know* how long I have to decide?

DOCTOR

I did.

BRITNEY

Right. Okay, but I looked it up and the state law says pretty plainly that I have until the 26 week mark to decide.

DOCTOR

Oh sure but who knows how long that'll last.
Aw look there you can see the head.

*They pause to examine the fetal head
In spite of themselves*

BRANDON

I'm sorry, but what exactly are you saying?

*The Doctor sighs and turns off the ultrasound
The heartbeat stops*

DOCTOR

Look, the fact of the matter is that there are quite a few forces at work actively trying to change those laws. Is it unlikely that you'll have the rug pulled out from under you on this one? Yes. But I, for one, no longer feel comfortable putting my faith in things just because they are "politically unlikely". In fact, I think it's safe to say that my trust in the ongoing successful operation of our civilized society as we know it has been shaken to its very core. Just putting that out there. Regardless, the sooner you can make this decision, the better. Do you have any more questions for me at this point?

BRITNEY

...

BRANDON

...

DOCTOR

Alright. Let me know when you've decided.

*Doctor exits
An awkward silence*

BRITNEY

So I did it Brandon. I did everything you asked. I waited through the whole first trimester. I dealt with the morning sickness, with the constant urge to pee, with all this... hormonal nonsense. I put up with all of it. For you. Because I love you, and because... I don't know, I

owed you that much I guess. But you said that if my feelings hadn't changed by this point that I was free and clear to go ahead with it. Without fear of negative repercussions and/or passive aggressive bullshit. Can I count on you to hold up your end of the bargain?

BRANDON

...

BRITNEY

Brandon?

BRANDON

...I don't know.

BRITNEY

You don't know?

BRANDON

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't pretty upset about this Britney. And if I may say so, I think I'm allowed to feel what I'm feeling. I think I'm allowed to be mad at you about this.

BRITNEY

You really thought I would come around. Didn't you?

*Eye contact
Brandon slowly nods*

We don't know each other as well as I thought we did. I don't want to invalidate your feelings. And I appreciate that you haven't tried to invalidate mine. That must have been hard for you.

BRANDON

...

BRITNEY

I don't know why we never talked about this. Through our whole engagement, it never even crossed my mind. That's pretty fucked up isn't it?

BRANDON

...

BRITNEY

Did it ever cross yours?

BRANDON

...
All the time.

BRITNEY

Huh.
Why didn't you say anything?

BRANDON

...
I think...
I was afraid...
Of the fight it would cause.

BRITNEY

How did you know I would be against it?

BRANDON

I don't know. It just started to feel like an elephant in the room. And usually when there's an elephant in a room, it's there for a reason.
In my experience.

BRITNEY

So all this time I've been sitting on top of a room elephant and I had no idea. Something must really be wrong with me huh?

Brandon shakes his head

BRANDON

The person riding the room elephant is always the last to notice it.

*Eye contact
The ghost of a smile on both their faces*

BRITNEY

Are you going to hate me forever for this?

BRANDON

...
Look, I talk a big game about rooms and elephants, but the truth is, if this had really been important to me, I would have said something, elephant or not. And I didn't. I didn't communicate with you like I should have. And I can own that.

Britney is suddenly emotional

BRITNEY
So I'm not losing you?

Brandon goes to Britney and embraces her

BRANDON
No. No you're not losing me.

BRITNEY
I'm sorry.

BRANDON
It's okay.

BRITNEY
I'm so sorry.

BRANDON
I know.

*A moment of them holding each other
The Doctor pokes her head into the room*

DOCTOR
Hi, just checking in, any updates?

BRITNEY
...
I'll take the earliest available appointment you have.

DOCTOR
Alrighty then. How does the... 26th sound?

Britney checks the calendar on her phone

BRITNEY
Sounds great.

DOCTOR
Great. You are officially booked.

BRITNEY

Thank you.

BRANDON

Yeah thanks.

DOCTOR

The pleasure is mine.
But I do actually need the room now.
If you two don't mind.

*Britney and Brandon snap out of it
They begin pulling themselves together*

BRANDON

Right of course.

BRITNEY

Sorry about that.

DOCTOR

Not a problem at all.

*Britney and Brandon exit one way
While the Doctor ushers Karen and Luke on from the other side
Karen takes Britney's place on the table
The ultrasound is set up
A similar heartbeat sound resumes*

DOCTOR

And there it is. That's the heartbeat.

Karen basks in the sound of the heartbeat

LUKE

Is it too early to tell the gender?

DOCTOR

Well today marks the official beginning of your second trimester. And while it is possible that I will be able to discern the sex of the baby this early, especially if it's a boy, I do however first require your verbal consent that you want to know the baby's gender at this time.

LUKE

Karen? What do you think?

*Karen slowly opens her eyes
She is in a Zen-like state*

KAREN

Yes. I do. I want to know.

DOCTOR

Alrighty then. Let's see.

*She adjusts the angle of the ultrasound
The heartbeat becomes louder
Karen is practically in a trance*

Hmmm.

I'm sorry I don't think I can definitively tell you the gender of your child at this time.

LUKE

I guess we can stand to wait a little longer.

KAREN

I bet it's a girl. I bet that's why you can't tell. She's playing it close to the vest.

DOCTOR

I can neither confirm nor deny that.

We should be able to say for certain at your next appointment.

LUKE

Oh man, this is happening. This is happening. This is happening!

DOCTOR

It certainly is.

So. Here is my list of official advice for women entering their second trimester:

Now would be an excellent time to:

Find a prenatal exercise class if you haven't already

Start shopping for maternity clothes

Think about whether you want to hire a professional labor coach

Start moisturizing your belly

Budget some "adult time" into your schedule while you still can

Narrow your baby names list

Begin documenting your crazy pregnancy dreams

Look into childbirth classes

Do some financial planning

Prepare any children you may already have for the cataclysmic change in their lives headed their way

Same goes for your pets
Start your childcare search
Get your teeth cleaned
Start sleeping on your side
Start doing Kegel exercises
Create a baby registry
Remove any jewelry including wedding rings that are starting to feel a bit snug
Write a letter to your baby
And lastly, just try to enjoy this brief window of time after the nausea and fatigue of the first trimester has passed, but before the renewed fatigue and general emotional rollercoaster that is your third trimester has begun.

Beat

KAREN

(genuine) Wow. That was some comprehensive and thorough advice. Thank you so much doctor. I feel lucky to be in such capable hands.

DOCTOR

The pleasure is mine.
Do you have any more questions for me at this point?

Karen and Luke look at each other

LUKE

I think we're set.

DOCTOR

Alrighty then. See you next month!

*A transition during which Karen remains onstage
The heartbeat becomes all encompassing
Karen is cradled by the sound, enveloped
She almost looks fetal herself
The transition ends
Karen and Luke are back home
For the first time we can really see Karen's baby bump
She holds her belly
Sings to it:*

KAREN

Some day, when I'm awfully low
When the world is cold
I will feel a glow just thinking of you

And the way you look tonight

*Luke comes up behind her
Putting his arms around her*

LUKE
You are adorable.

KAREN
I am already in love with this baby.

LUKE
Should I be jealous?

KAREN
And I am in love with you. I am in love with this baby because I am in love with you.

LUKE
Well that is good. Because I am also in love with you. And I am also already in love with this baby.

KAREN
I can't lie. I hate that we are technically having this baby out of wedlock.

LUKE
It's progressive. It's modern.

KAREN
Woo hoo.

LUKE
Hey I am marrying you as fast as I can alright.

KAREN
I know. I just don't want her. Him? Her. To grow up thinking she wasn't wanted, wasn't planned for. That we rushed anything.

LUKE
This baby is going to be so loved. This baby is already loved. That is what...they... will know. The rest doesn't matter. Right?

KAREN
Right.

They kiss

LUKE

I'm going to run to the store. Have you updated your weird cravings list?

KAREN

Yup! It should be in your inbox.

LUKE

Don't say a word, I want to be surprised.

KAREN

You're so weird.

LUKE

Right. Me. I'm the weird one.

They kiss

Be back soon.

Luke exits

Karen is positively glowing

She resumes singing:

KAREN

Yes, you're lovely, with your smile so warm
And your cheeks so soft
There is nothing for me but to love you
And the way you—

She winces

Something is wrong

Pain

She reaches underneath herself

She pulls back her hand and sees the blood

Panic

She struggles to stand

She exits after Luke

Luke.

Luke.

Help.