

Teenage Pregnancy



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Introduction

What is the law on abortion in your country?

Do you know anyone who has had an abortion?

What do you think about it?

Reading

Marcie is 24-years-old. She had an abortion earlier in her life.

How did this happen and why did she go through with it?

“I live in a country where sex education is not really taught in schools,” she says. “We have biology classes and we kind of understand about the birds and the bees. But in terms of sex between two adults, we know very little.”

Marcie had her abortion when she was nineteen.

“I had just started university, and I met this boy who I fell in love with,” she explains. “We didn’t know what we were doing, although I think he knew a lot more than I did. We spent the night together, and I was so naïve, I just thought that babies only happen when people are married.”

So what happened?

“I started to have morning sickness, and I spoke to a woman at my university, a teacher, and she said I should go to see a doctor.”

Marcie takes a deep breath and continues.

“The doctor took a urine and blood sample and a few days later I received a phone call telling me I was pregnant. I was so

shocked. I walked around in a daze all day.”

Because of Marcie’s very traditional culture, she could not turn to her mother for help. And she certainly could not tell her father.

“I spoke to the teacher again,” she continues. “She told me that I could have a termination. I had no idea what this meant so she had to explain it to me. I asked her about it and when she described it I was horrified.”

But Marcie did go through the ordeal. And all alone.

“I told the boy about it, but he refused to believe me. He said that he was too young to be a father, and he had to concentrate on his studies. I said I should be doing exactly the same thing. He was so irresponsible.”

In the end, she had to borrow money from a loan shark to pay for the termination.

“And the hospital where I had it done was so awful. It was a very low-level place and I don’t think the hygiene standards were very high at all.”

The entire procedure took less than one day.

“The nurse said because I had only paid for the basic service, I could not stay the night. I had the operation, they gave me some

painkillers and then told me to go home and rest. I got on the bus on my way back to my university dormitory and cried all the way.”

Did she say anything to the boy later?

“No. What would be the point? And besides, I just wanted to forget the whole ordeal. He found another girlfriend. I did think about advising her about him, but I just wanted to remove myself from him completely.”

Since then Marcie has found a new boyfriend and someone a lot more mature.

She smiles as she talks about him.

“We sleep together, but he always uses protection. We are very careful.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

Is there sex education in Marcie's school?

What did Marcie study at school in terms of sex?

How old was she when she had the termination?

What was she doing at this time of her life?

Describe the time that she met the first boy.

What was the first indication that Marcie knew something was wrong?

Who advised her?

What did she do next?

Did she talk to anyone about it?

Did the boy help her? Why/why not?

How did she pay for the hospital?

Was the hospital good quality?

How long was Marcie in hospital?

What did she do after?

Did she say anything to the boy? Why/why not?

Does Marcie have a new boyfriend? How is he different from the first one?

Essential Vocabulary

abortion	sex education
biology	the birds and the bees
naive	morning sickness
takes a deep breath	urine
blood sample	pregnant
shocked	in a daze
traditional culture	turn to
termination	no idea
explain	described
horrified	ordeal
refused	concentrate
irresponsible	borrow
loan shark	awful
low-level	hygiene standards
entire procedure	basic service
operation	painkillers
dormitory	ordeal
advising	mature
sleep together	protection

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary

and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

The Birds and The Bees

You have been asked to teach some school students about safe sex.

You must be very responsible while at the same time educational.

In a small group, do a presentation about safe sex. Advise the boys what they need to do to be careful. And give advice to the girls too to make sure they do not get into trouble.

Discussion Questions

What do you think of Marcie's story?

Do these kinds of stories happen in your country? What do you think about this?

What is your opinion of the first boy in the story?

Could Marcie say something to her parents? Why/why not?

Is there sex education in your country?

Who should teach sex education classes? Should it be a teacher, a nurse or a parent?

At what age should they teach sex education classes?

What is safe sex? Talk about this in class.

In some countries, terminating a child's birth is illegal. What do you think of this?

How was sex regarded in your parents' generation? Is it very different from your generation?

What is a one-night-stand? What do you think about this?

Who wants to have one-night-stands most of the time? Male or female? Why do you think this?

Writing

You are Marcie.

You have decided to write an anonymous letter to the girlfriend of the first boy in the story. You want to advise her about the boy and what kind of character he is.

You must be polite in your letter to her while at the same time giving her a stern warning about the boy.

Credits

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