

# Time Bomb

Category: The Waiting Room

written by Cate Buley | May 2, 2016

A lot of waiting goes on in hospitals, and not just in the so-called “waiting rooms.”

I lie in bed waiting for the next day to arrive. It is a small room with an eraser board where, on the next day, I can mark the estimated gestational age at twenty-four weeks and two days, far short of a normal forty-week pregnancy. The bleeding that brought me here has stopped, and now I’ve started my “count up” ritual toward the day of delivery.

I start the next few days with a good attitude. I plan to use this forced bed rest to study for my board recertification and to catch up on friendships. It is hard to understand why each day ends with tears, feeling crazy and watching QVC, thinking that makeup is the thing I need to survive this maternity ward.

Twenty-five weeks and three days. The bed shakes like crazy, waking me up in the middle of the night. I hear the nurse running down the hallway, with her southern drawl yelling “I didn’t sign up for this!” I sigh as I realize that it is another Anchorage earthquake, and not yet time for this child to be born.

Twenty-six weeks and five days. I chat with the nurse who has empathy in her eyes and doesn’t harass me about the espresso my friends brought me. “It’s a stress test in a cup,” I tell her. A cup of Joe feels like a luxury in this small room. She accidentally leaves her To Do list next to the fetal heart monitor. I glance at it and pick it up as the most curious thing in the small room. Next to my name, in large, underlined letters, it says TIME BOMB.

Twenty-seven weeks and three days. The young, resident physician reluctantly enters and asks yet again if I would like to have a c-section performed that day to prevent a possible emergency delivery. I say that I have met with the neonatologist and decided to embrace my new nickname. I will keep that big, IV needle in my arm and wait for the Time Bomb to arrive at the latest date possible.

I wait two more weeks until my delivery day finally arrives.

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