

Ashleigh Pryde

Thirteen Minutes with Me

Some embrace you more willingly than others. I could not live without you. Whether you're lurking in the shadows of my subconsciousness or embracing me with warm breath comforting my every fear. How many times have you whispered to yourself that it won't happen to you?

When my thoughts dare to consider the next horror life will power throw at me, I ask, "What's next? What could possibly be next?" Nothing can compete with having a mother openly, yet not brokenheartedly, state that she had never formed a bond with her daughter and therefore could not and does not love her like her siblings. Of course I am always wrong. There is always something else. It is often what's next that I fear.

When the fear surfaces and I can barely breathe, it is you that I run to. I am most vulnerable when I turn to you in such a condition, and I do this infrequently, as though our visits are limited like the years we live. Yet you insist on furthering my vulnerability in refusing to accept me being in your presence with clothing—even if I do appreciate alcohol being permitted. Regardless, I would surrender everything for the next thirteen minutes. I believe one day I may do exactly that and surrender my very essence to you.

Your touch removes any remains of feelings that one may consider to be content. Only then am I able to let go of the hurt from my soul as you encase me, the way a coffin encases a body when its fate is met. I have nothing. No-one. But it is OK because you let it be. After minutes of feeling nothing and letting go of the suffering that has been inflicted upon me, you set me free. You set me free and give me the greatest gift.

Now that you have left me, so empty and numb, leaving me feeling like a hollow log, I can feel again. I can pick up the pieces and rebuild my life. Rebuilding has proven to be much easier than making good of bad. It simply doesn't work. From a blank page I can create a story, though I cannot fix it once it has been written.

Your gentle touch is more intimate than that of any lover I've had. Your caressing is a thousand times more relaxing. Your scent intoxicates me into thinking I'm at peace. Your vivacity takes me to a place like no other—my own wonderland. The small space in which you hold me ensures my safety. You put a veil over me and I think nothing can hurt me. Nothing can hurt me.

You dissolve my tears with your willingness to listen, be that wall that we need sometimes. How can some people refuse you? Because they don't want to conform to society's expectations? Human regulations? You will be there long after we've left, though I doubt you'll be bonded to them too. You are mine and what we've shared will take years to replace with another, if replaceable at all. No one appreciates the small things in life anymore. Though my dear, you are not small.

You tried to kill my mother once. She does not blame you; however the fear will never be forgiven or forgotten. Such feelings must be respected. Do not let it escape you that you did render her unconscious that day. She doesn't understand that you also saved her. You could have easily taken her life. She seems ungrateful for that.

Regardless. From the bottom of my heart, which you've helped build strong, I thank you for the sanity and the insanity. I thank you for the peace and for the torment. I thank you for the shelter and comfort. Most of all, I thank you for the thirteen minutes a day where I can be me and think the thoughts that need to be thought.