Short Story Group Outputs

Month	**October**
Assignment Theme	**Waiting**
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Waiting

Ramblings of the Mind

So here I am lying here waiting for so many things but mainly for time to pass and wondering where all this is leading, my mind starts to wander, and I start thinking of all the times this waiting has impacted my life and those around me. Such an inoffensive word but impacts our lives from the day we are born. It can be the start of so many things, both good and bad. People say I overthink things, and this is true, words can drive me to distraction from trying to figure out where they came from to who decided that this was a good word for its' accepted meaning? And along those lines there's 'dreading'. Similar to waiting as it is something we either know or fear is going to happen, so we are waiting for it. To my mind it's 'waiting with threats'. Hopefully, it doesn't impact our lives as much as waiting does and has only appeared in my life a few times. It comes to mind with the words 'just wait til your mother/father gets home', waiting for exam results and health investigations. At this time in my life though it's not something I am going to dwell on however never forget it's there lurking behind the waiting.

But I digress, as I said we are waiting our whole lives for something. There are many times in our lives when we are waiting for something, waiting at the doctors, waiting at hospitals, waiting for buses, waiting for deliveries, waiting for phone calls and my favourite waiting for people. Looking forward to family or friends visiting and making sure everything is ready for them. Rushing around at the last minute making sure you have everything covered, is the house clean and tidy and have dietary requirements been met so that they feel welcome and comfortable. I have to say to my shame I'm one of those people who leaves everything to the last minute because if I start too early, I only have to do it again. As you can guess I'm not the tidiest of people and I don't see the point in doing things twice. After all the waiting for their arrival the frustration when they are running late or cancel at the last minute through no fault of their own and you end up wandering how the waiting changed from excitement to disappointment.

However, I'm going to concentrate on the important times when I played the waiting game. From waiting to start school to waiting to leave school. The time in-between and how I managed it. Probably not as well as I should have, as the phrase 'lacks concentration' comes to mind as I would stare out of the window, my mind wandering off into some far away place where life was much simpler. So having survived school I ventured out into the world determined to make my life not only happy but also to a certain degree successful. I have never been an overachiever and mostly dealt with things as they arose. I was happy enough in my chosen job roles, but I never felt as if I had found my niche until much later in life. Can this be classed as waiting, are we actually waiting and don't realise it. Oh, dear Lord this could open up a whole new chapter, but my time is running out, and I think I need this time for me.

I met my future husband at an early age and was engaged at 21 a period in my life I found quite stressful. The waiting to get married seemed to add pressure and stress to our relationship not only in my life but also to those around me. Do we ever consider how this affects other people? Two so called adults waiting for something life changing to happen and this waiting impacts so many more people. Here's a thought, when two people are waiting for the same thing does it have a double impact making it much more intense? I'll leave that one for you to think about. Eventually the day arrives and you think the waiting is over and everything is as it should be, or is it, because we have now created new waiting lists. Waiting to create your new home and then there's the inevitable question 'when are you going to start a family'. So, you start the waiting game of 'trying for a baby' which hopefully turns into the waiting game of the birth of this new person who, from the moment is born, is stuck in their own wating game, totally dependent on when their needs will be met. Are we sensing a never-ending circle here?

At this point in life, it seems the waiting is endless. Waiting for the sleepless nights to end, waiting for the terrible twos to pass, waiting for them to start school, waiting for them to leave home, at last the waiting is over and you ask yourself where all the years went whilst you were waiting. That's when the new list sneaks in unnoticed amidst the worry of your child being able to cope on their own and questioning whether you gave them the right tools to live independently. But we have to keep in mind that this waiting game never really ends as it morphs into grandchildren and great grandchildren if you're lucky, and the waiting takes on new lives.

I have to say I never realised how overwhelming the word 'waiting' was. Do any of us ever give it the magnificent acknowledgement it truly deserves. We take it for granted and it slips from our lips without any further thought about the significance it has. It's just a given that we can use it daily for one thing or another without realising that everything sometimes depends on it. I have truly shocked myself and will try not to let it interfere with my thinking as I'm sure this could make me quite grumpy once the realisation hits you that this is my life.

We really only have one more life changing wait and hopefully that's retirement. We can't wait to give up work, but retiring can also terrify us. Those busy lives we have led, 50% of which we now know was waiting, is suddenly gone. They tell us it's the time in your life that you can concentrate on doing what makes you happy. The trouble is we've spent so much time raising a family, working and maybe caring for our older relatives that we have to wait until we can 'rediscover' the person we once were before we can make those choices. Now this can be challenging, depressing and just downright hard work. And do you know why, you've got it, we're waiting for our brain to kick in, get over its' panic attack, and find it's way into the light. Well, it's not easy to hear your kids telling you that you need to get your act together and get out there and find something for yourself. But after my sulking I finally relented and guess what, they were right. Who knew that maybe you did give them the tools they needed to become independent.

Suddenly I'm not waiting for anything major but I'm wondering if we're so used to playing the waiting game whether the daily waits start to play a bigger part in our lives. The waiting time spent in doctors/hospitals has increased due to getting older. Waiting for deliveries, as we have far too much time on our hands to order all those things we definitely need from the internet. So yes, realisation has dawned on me that I'm waiting for something every day of my life.

On reflection my life has been one of achievement, dramas, sadness and happiness. I hope I have treated it with the respect it deserves. I have loved, lived, laughed and cried and it has been some journey of which there is very little I would change.

Our time on this earth, I believe, is predetermined and as I lie here in this hospital bed, listening to my family around me, their bickering, laughter and sadness I think to myself that I didn't do that bad a job. I gave it my best and yes, there are things I would change in retrospect, but where my family is concerned, I have no doubts that they are content with their lives. They know how to survive the turmoils and tribulations that can come their way, and they are with me in this, my last waiting game. The one to end all waiting games. I have accepted that it is time to stop waiting and will take with me the knowledge that, in spite of everything, I played the game to the best of my ability.