

# Just Some Respect

Lia Figurelli



And then she says  
that if a guy doesn't clean you up afterwards,  
then he doesn't care.  
He told her this.  
But what we know now is that  
although he told us he was a senior in college,  
he graduated two years ago and is actually twenty-four.  
If Emma had been only a year younger,  
it would have been different.

But not illegal.

*According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, in New York, individuals who are sixteen years old or younger are unable to give consent to sexual activity ("Consent Laws New York"). Thus, when a person over the age of twenty-one has sex with a person under the age of seventeen, it is considered rape in the third degree and is a class E felony ("Sex Crimes: Definitions and Penalties New York").*

For Allie, it was.  
Hands restrained behind her back,  
and she didn't like it.  
College dorms, small cars, fraternity houses,  
dark spaces, and older guys who don't want the manacles of a relationship,  
who don't want to engage in conversation,  
who don't want girls like her coming up to them at parties because she is  
too young.  
too young.  
too young.  
she's still too young.

*According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in three women in the U.S. have "experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime" and "one in five women will be*

*raped at some point in their lives” (“Sexual Assault Statistics”). Fifty-one percent of female rape victims report being raped by an intimate partner and almost forty-one percent report being raped by an acquaintance (“Sexual Assault Statistics”).*

*C’mon, love, he says  
hushed in the dark, light like feathers.  
But he wants you to bend over for him,  
do things you don’t want to do,  
and not use a condom.*

*Hungry for virginity,  
as if it is a prize to be won.  
He wants to win, as if to feel  
like he has a part of you,  
like you’re one of his possessions,  
and yet, after, he complains about the blood.*

*He wants to leave a mark,  
he wants to feel something.  
But through the grabbing,  
and choking,  
and slapping,  
and biting,  
you wonder if he has forgotten that there’s a person,  
a beautiful mind inside the body that he’s using.*

*A part of you wants to understand him,  
understand the science behind the evil.  
Maybe it’s gender formation,  
how our culture promotes aggression in boys and submission in girls,  
the violence our children see in the media.*

*But the other part of you doesn’t want to understand.*

*He lost his mother at a very young age.  
He’s never had a female figure in his life.  
There’s nothing wrong with calling other people ugly; it’s just an opinion.  
You’re the one who dresses like a slut, you ask for it.  
He can grab whatever he wants; he doesn’t need your permission.*

You wonder about these boys,  
the ones other people make excuses for.  
The boys that grab your ass at parties and call you a tease,  
the ones whose hands you can feel creeping up under your skirt,  
like spiders,  
while every muscle in your body tightens.  
These boys who rate the appearances of women,  
who aren't afraid to call them ugly,  
are ignorant of how that might make these women feel.

Tucker, Taylor, Tommy, and Dylín.  
Will, Jacob, Mohammed,  
Matt, Brad, and Brandon.  
Nick, Nate, Carl, Achilles, and Adam,  
where did we go wrong?

All the names are blending together,  
adding up,  
but the feeling never leaves and you're only seventeen.

*It's in psychology that you learn reaction formation. "A boy will sometimes react against the strong sexual attraction that he feels toward girls by becoming a confirmed 'woman hater'" (Kellog).*

How ironic,  
but it's not.

You're a junior in high school and you don't like the way this boy from school is talking to you,  
so you stop talking to him.  
But months later, he messages you,  
telling you how his father is verbally abusive.  
You almost forget about all the things he has said to you,  
because of this one moment.

This moment where he wants to open up to you,  
says he wants a relationship with you.

You ask if he's okay,  
he's not.

*Can I help you with something?*

*You could send some pics of your tits, ass, pussy.*

Despite this, you don't cut him off completely.  
This isn't the first time a guy has wanted something from you,

and usually it's worse.

You do cut him off when you realize that the messages he has been sending to you, he has also been sending to two other girls you know.

You ask yourself how stupid could you be, why you still feel bad about a guy who you don't like that much.

Later, you learn that he has been bad-mouthing you to other guys, telling them what a

“bitch”

you are.

*Can you help me with something?* the message reads, sent over Snapchat from a boy you don't know well.

*Yâ, what's up?*

A photo of his genitals.

*In a nationally representative poll of 1,000 children and adolescents conducted by Plan International USA (The State of Gender Equality for U.S. Adolescents), 81 percent of girls ages 14 to 19 reported having at least one friend who had been asked for a sexy or nude photo (Miller).*

*Dance for me.*

*Sit on my face.*

*Don't wear panties and flash me in public.*

No, I will fucking not.

*Women just take and take, man,  
they always want something from you.*

Just some respect.



#### Works Cited

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