

to be a girl

Tell me that I'm not enough

Tell me that I'm not a daughter, a sister, or a mother

Tell me to cover up because I'm too distracting

Tell me that I am less than men

Tell me that my body is what defines me and not my mind

Tell me that I am not a girl

Not a woman

But just a toy for men to use, play with, and abuse.

And when that's over, show me the rules.

"Rule #1," you say. "You are distraction and temptation, nothing else and nothing more."

"Rule #2: cover up your shoulders, ankles, hair, face, legs, and stomach because men told you so."

"Rule #3: these same men will expect you to show them all the above as well as your whole body one day because that's what they want to keep for themselves."

"Rule #4: your emotions are too volatile and don't matter because your hormones influence them too much. After all, men know more about your menstrual cycle and your anatomy more than you do yourself so listen to them."

"Rule #5: you will never earn the same as men because...well you won't. That's all you need to know."

"Rule #6: you must have a good body. If you don't you don't matter. If you do, you're perfect. However if you show it off to men who don't want you, you're a slut. If you have the slightest bit of confidence, it will be stamped out. And of course (this one's quite obvious), your worth and beauty is decided by men and men only."

"Rule #7: in the men's world, no means yes."

"Rule #8: when you're raped, don't cry. Don't go for help. Because it was your fault, I mean, just look at what you were wearing."

"Rule #9: boys will be boys."

"Rule #10: boys will be boys."

“Rule #11: I’m sorry, did you not hear me? Maybe I didn’t make myself clear. What I’ve been meaning to say is that boys will be boys. This applies for men as well, apparently.”

“Rule #12: when famous people get involved with rape, don’t expect justice. Expect a suicide in a jail cell.”

“And finally Rule #13: you are nothing without men. You have never been and you never will be.”

And once you’re done speaking,
Once you’re done telling *me*,
And once you’ve finally shut up,
Let me tell you something

I am a girl
I am a daughter, a sister, and someday if I want to, I will be a mother
And I am proud.

I am not a slut if I want to wear what I want
I am not a whore if I want to be with who I want
And I am certainly not a prize if I say no.

When I look at a girl, I see a girl.
I see a human
I see a living breathing person
And yet you see her as an animal, an object,
a thing.

And while we’re at it, let’s talk about a girl’s worth.
Let’s talk about rape and sexual assault because that’s a game
That you are so eager to cheat in, aren’t you?

Let’s talk about how Disney Princess pajamas can lead to the same result as a crop top can.
Let’s talk about how girls from six to sixteen can be stripped of their innocence just because men are men and boys are boys.
Let’s talk and talk and talk because my mouth can do a lot more than you think it can.

Because I refuse to be silent

For
I am a woman
An equal to man
And I will never be told any less.

to the adults

To the adults,

I have a question. Do I need to raise my hand?

It's been a question of mine for a while and no one I've ever met, trusted or looked up to can explain this to me.

And before you tell me to shut up and stop looking at my phone and actually do something in my life, can you please just listen?

For the love of humanity, God, Allah, and everyone else you all so easily place your trust and excuses in, can you just listen? Can you just listen to me? Please? Am I being too quiet?

I'm screaming now, can you hear me?

And with all that is left of my limp shredded bloodied throat I want to ask: why?

Why do innocent people endlessly choke on pain they don't deserve and yet are still forced to swallow it every single day while privileged people can sit back in their luxurious sofas and watch television until their eyes rot? Even the plumes of purple smoke trailing from their rich fireplaces suffocate the air and everyone around them and yet they still seem to breathe with such infuriating ease.

Why do so many men feel the urge to catcall and belittle women on the street just in the hopes of finding a date they so do not deserve? And these same vile animals happen to have Mother Nature on their side and are able to overpower women in every possible way of society. It makes me wonder if these creatures forget that they came from a woman. That they actually have a mother. But no, we should ignore that because that's just the way of life, isn't it?

Why are people who just look different slaughtered every day out of pure rage and hate? Why are people of color so easily discriminated against when they have done nothing wrong? Why do LGBTQ+ people have to endure so much pain just by being who they are?

Why do people have to kill and steal to get what they want, why is there even war, why are children of all people being trafficked and raped, why are women less than men, why are black people less than white people, why are Asians, Latinos, and indigenous people so easily forgotten in society, why are people so selfish, judgemental, racist, perverted, close-minded and please

just answer me when I ask you:
WHY IS THERE SO MUCH HATE.

Isn't that what we learned back in kindergarten,
Scribbling the golden rule in waxy crayons clasped in our chubby hands
Making the paper sticky, bright
Our smiles sticky, bright
Our souls sticky, bright
Why must it be different now?
What changed?

Is it because we are poisoned,

consumed, dark, hateful, contorted, mutilated, hungry, brainwashed, stupid, sad, angry,
confused, awful, evil, blind, deaf, mute, sick, psychotic, boiling, furious, tired, exhausted

Or is it because we are afraid?

And is fear even an excuse for evil?

Because when I look up to you guys, when I place my trust
Into you and when you cup my face in your hands
And tell me that the world is my oyster
And that I will be accepted by society

You. Are. Lying.

You left this mess for me to clean up. You never intended to clean it up yourself.
And instead of teaching us,
You lie.

Do you know how badly I wished to have known before?
Do you know how badly I now wish to have helped the world?
To help the world?
To protect the people who have no voice?

I wish I could've pulled George Floyd away and just helped him breathe, but instead, I was
screaming at my computer like a crazed maniac and watched the whole event take place at a
location
I couldn't ever reach.

I wish I could protect every child from their abusive parents because
They deserve so much better

I wish I could adopt every child in the world and take care of them because
They deserve so much better

I wish I could feed the homeless and care for the starving because
They deserve so much better

I want so badly to take the noose away from the girl and tell her that she's too beautiful for the
world but I can't and I'm crying and crying and I'm crying because I don't know what to do.

Because in all honesty, what am I supposed to do?

What am I, a stupid kid in this gigantic world, supposed to do?

I'm tired of not knowing
And I'm scared and distraught
And you all are just ignoring me

I'm begging you
to help me

Because I have a question. Do I still need to raise my hand?

Signed,
the new generation