

APRIL 4, 2024

HARVARD

VOL LV ISSUE 21

# independent

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969



# THE SEX ISSUE

# MASTHEAD

April 4, 2024

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# Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

The staff of the *Harvard Independent* is proud to present the 2024 Sex Issue. This issue is a tradition which has been cherished and highly-anticipated annually for over 25 years. Each year's Sex Issue explores the joys and the complexities of sex and sexuality, and aims to promote sex-positivity in many forms on Harvard's campus. It is intended to be a reflection of student opinion and spark important conversations.

For those not familiar with our paper, the Indy was founded in 1969 and publishes weekly throughout the school year. This is therefore just one of many topics we write about, but it exemplifies our purpose well by championing the more obscure, unseen aspects of Harvard life.

Furthermore, sex is always a relevant story, especially on a college campus.

We have a great array of content in this issue, with a strong bulk of personal stories in the Forum section. Some touch on sensitive topics, and we will therefore preserve the anonymity of those writers. Whether it be pubic hair, contraception, or abstinence, we hope there is a story in here which resonates with you. There is some poetry and creative writing as well as lighthearted "advice" pieces which are intended to be fun, but should not take away from the gravity of some of the other, more serious aspects at play.

Thank you for taking our Sex Survey last week. We received over 500 responses, distributed almost evenly across the four class years. We greatly

appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences, opinions, and desires. Be aware that our respondents likely do not represent the whole student body and we cannot verify the accuracy of self-reported results. Nevertheless, on page four and five, we have compiled many of the results for your perusal—enjoy!

In the words of Hugh Hefner, "Sex is the driving force on the planet. We should embrace it, not see it as the enemy." You have certainly shared much with us, and we will share as much with you in the following pages. Read on, dear reader, and enjoy the fruits of your wonderfully horny labor and of ours.

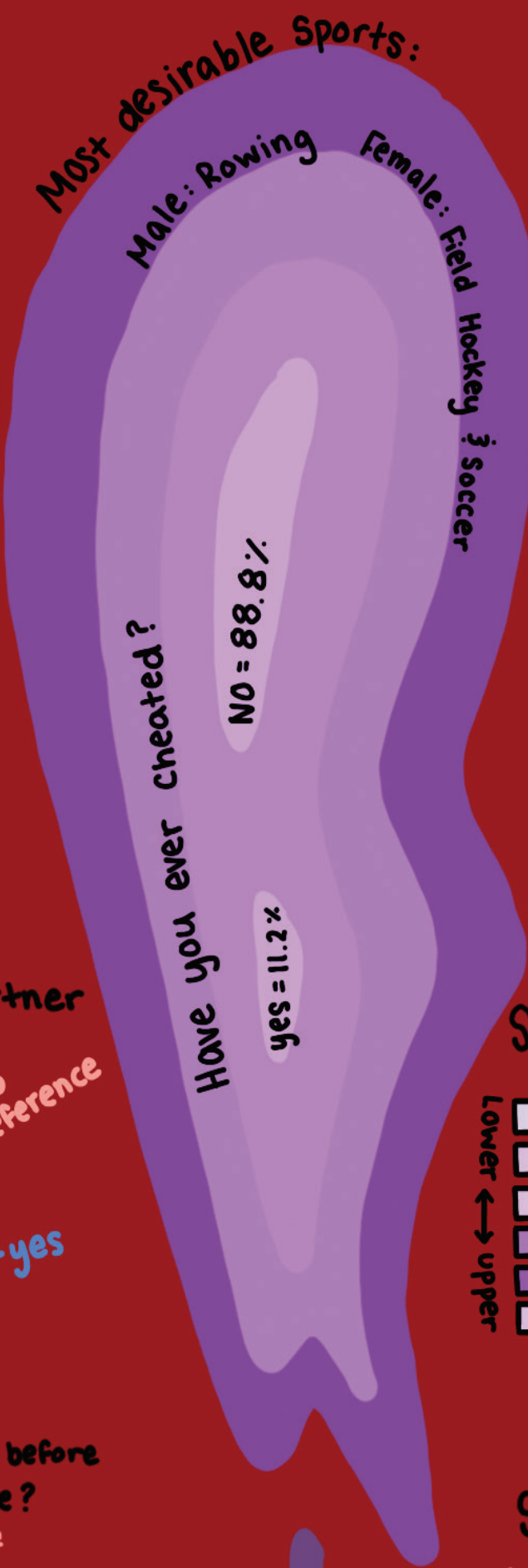
Indy Love,

The Editors of the  
*Independent*

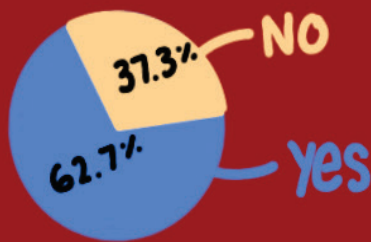
# 2024 Sex Survey



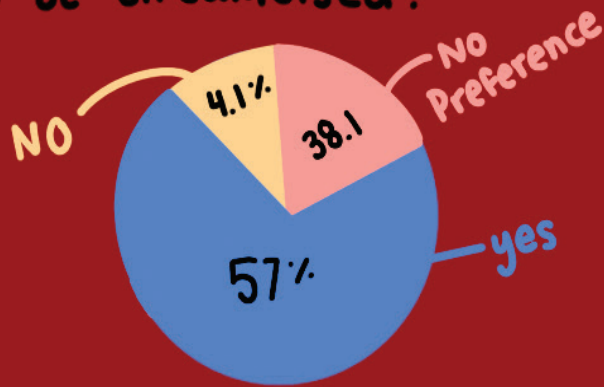
## Results



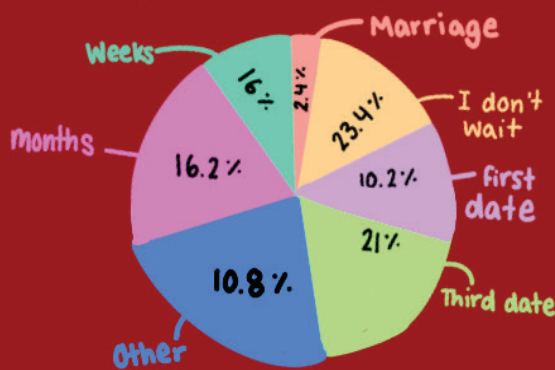
**Are you circumcised?**



**Do you prefer your partner to be circumcised?**



**How long do you wait before having sex with someone?**

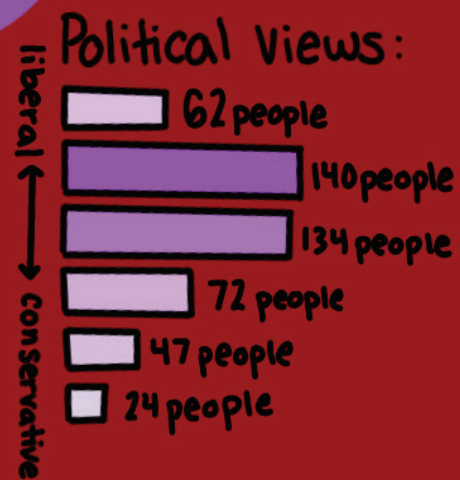
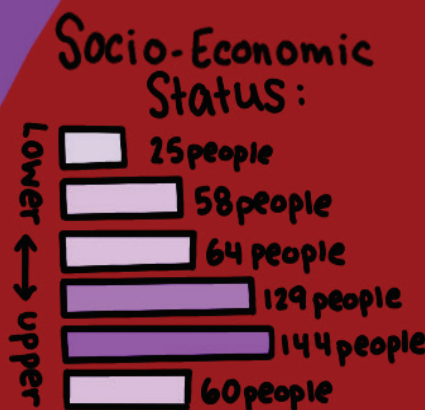


**Are you a virgin?**

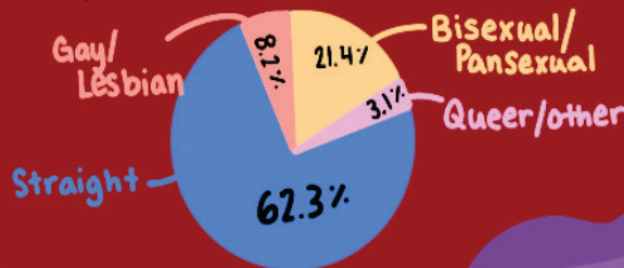


**Most desirable groups:**

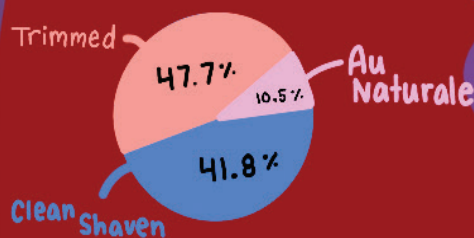
Athletes: 51.2%  
impressive jobs: 30.8%  
Final Clubs: 34.7%



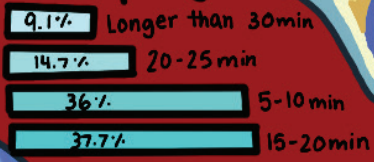
**Sexual Orientation:**



**Do you trim your pubes?**



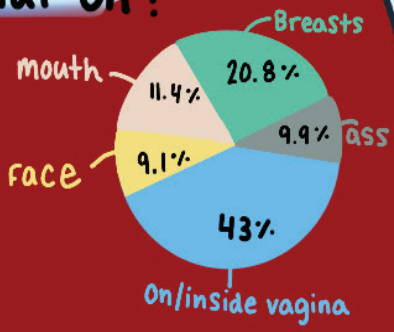
**Length of foreplay:**



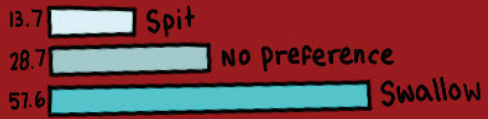
**Craziest places to have sex:**

- Harvard Stadium
- Neuroscience lab
- Farkas Hall
- Faculty Dean's Shower
- The Stacks
- Hammock at the Fly
- SEC Conference rooms
- Science center classroom
- Canaday hallway bathroom

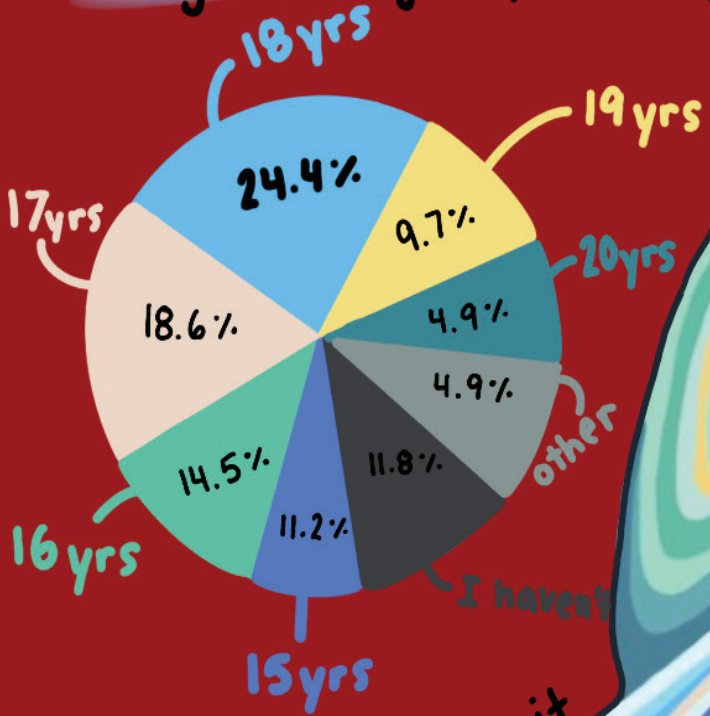
**favorite place to nut on or get nut on?**



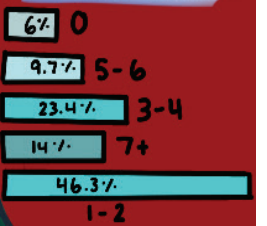
**Spit or Swallow?**



**What age did you lose your virginity?**

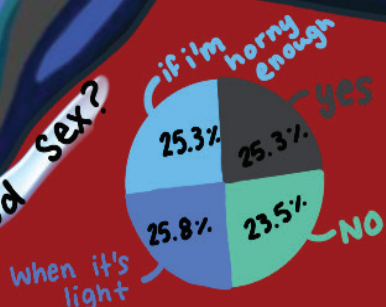


**Number of fucks Per sheet wash:**



Hot Take: 69 is not worth it

**Period sex?**



Common Kinks: Choking, biting, bondage, slapping, and submission

# Sex (Mis)Education

The state of sex ed in the United States.

BY GEMMA MALTBY '27

The majority (57%) of students in the United States have sex before graduating from high school, according to the Guttmacher Institute. At a time when teenagers are having sex earlier and with more partners than ever before, providing access to medically accurate and nondiscriminatory sex education is crucial to ensuring that adolescents can engage in sex safely.

Around the U.S., students have dramatically different experiences in their sex education classes, which teach adolescents about a range of topics related to sex and sexuality. Eliza Fried '27 recalls giggling alongside her classmates at the Commonwealth School outside of Boston, Massachusetts, in her ninth-grade “sex ed” class as her teacher passed around condoms, blindfolds, and wooden penises. The teacher instructed the students to blindfold themselves before putting the condoms on the wooden models to simulate the dark environment of a bedroom.

By contrast, Annika Dellinger '27 never received any sex education at Stonewall Jackson High School in Shenandoah County, Virginia. What she remembers most vividly about her middle school sex education though was a few periods of physical education during which a football coach repeated over and over, “Just don't have sex.”

Due to the absence of a federal mandate on sex education in the United States, sex education varies greatly across states, school districts, and even individual schools. Thirty-nine states and Washington, D.C., currently require some form of sex or HIV/AIDS education, but that leaves a significant swath of the country without any sex education requirements. Even in the states that do mandate sex education, the timing, instructors, and content of the programs differ markedly, as more states require that their curricula emphasize abstinence than require they be medically accurate.

In some states, like California and Oregon, students must receive some form of age-appropriate sex education every year. In others, they may receive sex education only periodically in middle school and high school—either online or in-person—and may be taught by health teachers, gym coaches, or even outsourced church leaders or pregnancy crisis center representatives. Many students receive no sex education at all, either because their schools do not provide sex education or because their parents have opted for their children not to participate in those classes.

Moreover, there are several different categories of sexual education provided at schools around the country: abstinence-only, abstinence-plus, sexual risk avoidance, and comprehensive sex education. The first three, opposed by prominent medical experts like the

American Medical Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, emphasize waiting to have sex until marriage to avoid the risks of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These programs now receive \$110 million annually in federal funding, up from \$50 million in 2010. Yet research shows the rates of adolescent pregnancies and births are greater in states whose programs emphasize abstinence. Studies also show that these programs do not reduce the frequency of sex or the incidence of HIV and other STIs in teenagers.

More generally, sex education curricula that stress abstinence have contributed to a culture that dramatizes, rather than normalizes, teenage sex. Students are taught to associate sex with fear, guilt, and shame, rather than view sex as a healthy part of life when engaged in safely. In countries with more comprehensive sex education programs, like the Netherlands, attitudes toward adolescent sex have grown more accepting, and teenagers are more likely to engage in relational sex and feel comfortable communicating about sex with their parents and others.

Comprehensive sex education programs are designed to equip students with medically accurate information on how to have sex safely. These programs may also address other related topics such as gender and sexual identity, consent, and healthy relationships. The effectiveness of comprehensive sex education is still up for debate due to a lack of rigorous research comparing the results of different programs. However, there is some evidence suggesting that comprehensive sex education around the world has contributed to later initiation and decreased frequency of sexual intercourse, fewer sexual partners, and increased contraceptive use. Moreover, research suggests that these programs may have the additional benefit of reducing homophobia, increasing understanding of gender and sexuality, and decreasing sexual violence.

The addition of LGBTQ+-inclusive material to sex education curricula has thrown sex education into the fierce culture wars occurring around the country. These culture wars have led to a serious decline in the quality of many sex education programs in public schools, with students less likely to report receiving sex education on

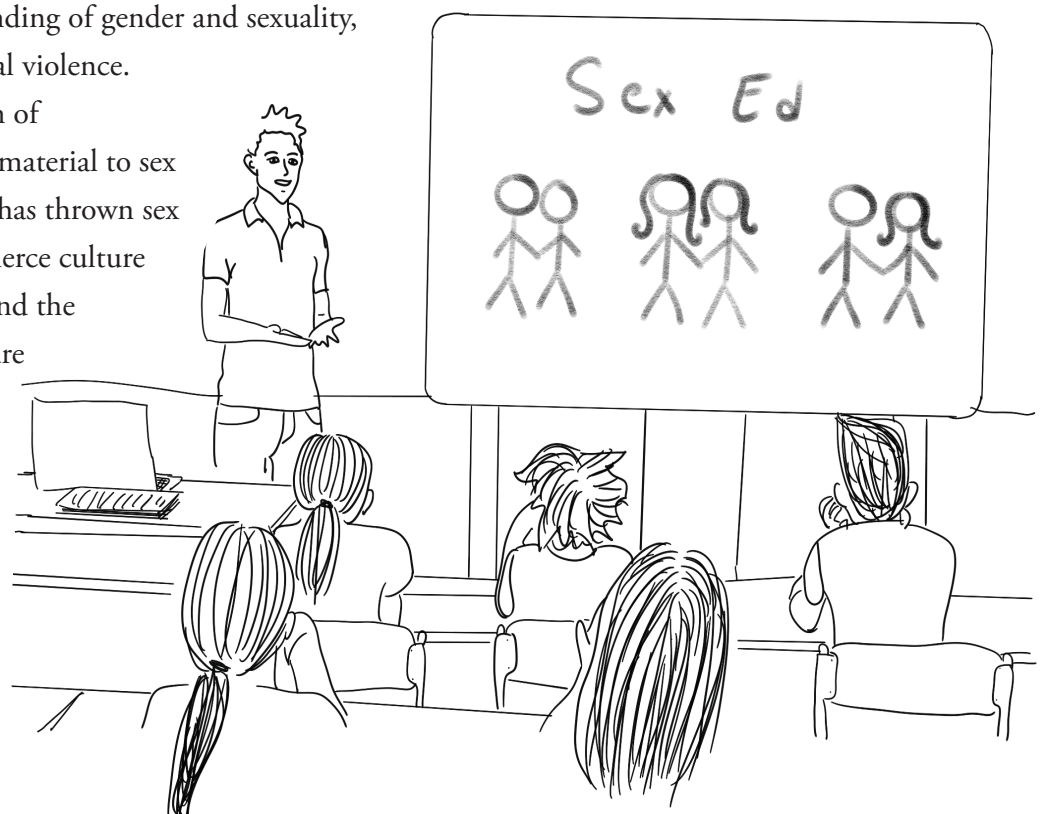
topics considered essential by the CDC in 2015-2019 than they were in 1995. Students around the country are now more likely to hear about the virtues of abstinence until marriage and the dangers of adolescent and premarital sex than about where to obtain birth control or how to use a condom.

Harvard students from states where abstinence is the primary focus of sex education programs wished they had received more substantive sex education in high school. Jeeya Patel '27, who received only a minimal online sex education at her high school in Charleston, West Virginia, said, “With the number of teen pregnancies we had at our school...it wouldn't have hurt anyone and definitely would have helped some people if [the sex education] had been more thorough and included different types of sex.” Anya Movius '27 also felt that much was missing from the sex education at her high school in Charlottesville, Virginia: “Consent education, among other things, was [missing],” she said. “They also don't talk about being queer in a very nuanced way, or what queer sex looks like.”

Although Fried may not have initially appreciated just how comprehensive her sex education was in high school, looking back and hearing about the deficiencies in other programming, she is now grateful for the discussions she was able to have on sexuality, consent, and self-worth in sex. “Honestly,” she said, “It was pretty useful to hear.”

**GEMMA MALTBY '27 (GMALTBY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ACCIDENTALLY SKIPPED SEX ED IN HIGH SCHOOL.**

**GRAPHIC BY GABI PONIZ '26**



# FORUM

## Benefits Beneath The Sheets

The medical advantages of a healthy sex life.

BY EROS

Imagine walking into your therapist's office and leaving with instructions to go have sex.

While it may seem odd, the science behind this prescription exists. Within the medical community, it is becoming increasingly clear that having sex regularly (more than once a week) has long-term health benefits. Along with the physical pleasure of sexual encounters, numerous biological benefits of sex can help ease day-to-day problems like insomnia and provide long-term cardiovascular advantages. Especially on college campuses where we are constantly stressed, your late-night hookup is actually helping you in more ways than one.

A majority of the benefits from sex directly result from orgasms. For women, this happens 18% of the time from intercourse alone. The chemical release of oxytocin following a male or female orgasm, aside from leading to physical pleasure, infiltrates the bloodstream and counteracts the presence of harmful hormones. Levels of cortisol, the hormone produced by the body in response to stress, are lowered as an increase in oxytocin levels occurs. At the same time, endorphins and dopamine are released into the bloodstream; these hormones help to ease anxiety and improve mood. So, the next time you feel overwhelmed,

consider a quickie for your study break.

The same goes for sleepless nights: orgasms help you fall asleep. They have

been proven to decrease the time it takes to fall asleep and improve sleep quality due to the release of prolactin. As college students, the importance of sleep is hammered into us from the moment we step foot on campus (we even have a Gen Ed about it). Restless and get a 'you up?' text from your situationship at 3 a.m.? Consider the benefits to your sleep before responding.

The best-kept secret to healthy, clear skin: sex. The increase in blood flow from sex increases the amount of oxygen in your blood. This causes a brighter complexion, resulting in the infamous "post-sex glow." The bonuses do not stop there. The same effect that causes stress levels to decrease after sex also results in less collagen breakdown within the skin. Collagen breakdown is the direct cause of wrinkles and scarring as we age, so having sex allows you to maintain a more youthful appearance. In theory, having sex is delaying future Botox appointments, saving you money in the long run.

Have you been feeling a little under the weather? Consider sex to boost your immunity. Having consistent sex boosts the levels of immunoglobulin A in the bloodstream. This protein in the blood aids in fighting off infections and higher levels strengthen the defense mechanisms of the immune system. One study even found that having sex more than three times a week gives your body a better ability to fight off COVID-19. If you feel like you cannot stop getting sick, consider adding a one-night stand to your list of cures.

Furthermore, a healthy sex life has been proven in multiple studies to be correlated with longer life spans. For biological men specifically, frequent orgasms lead to a 50% decrease in mortality risk after the age of 45. Sexually active women have a lower risk

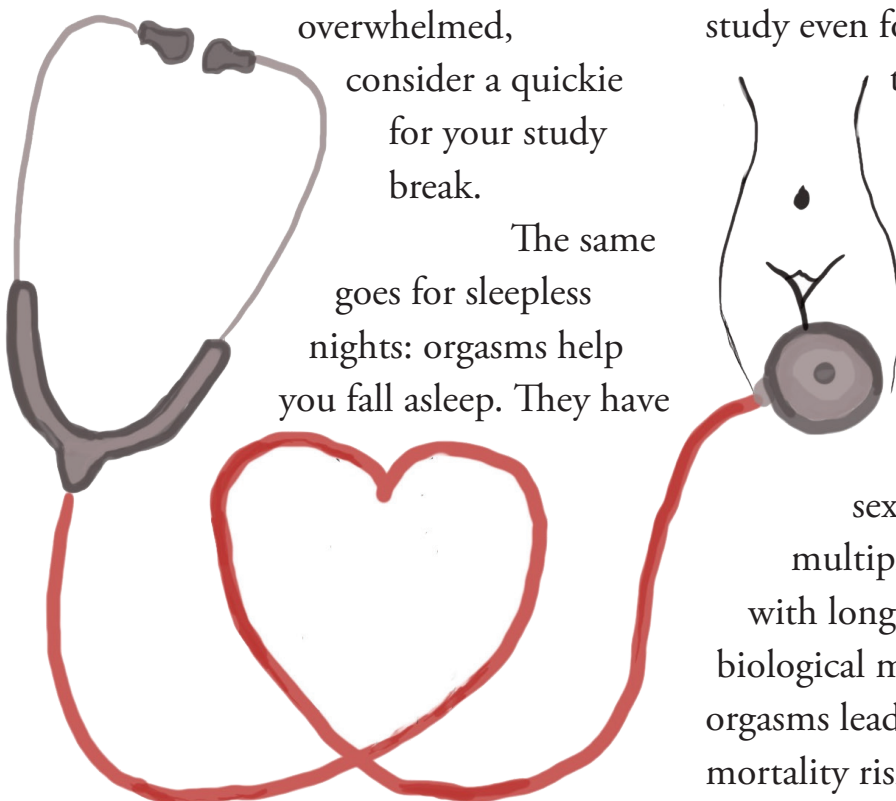
of cardiac events later in life. The essence of the science is that the release of hormones during sex relaxes your arteries, which lowers blood pressure and decreases the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Additionally, men who have sex more often have a lowered risk of prostate cancer as they age. For biological women, there is a reduced risk of breast and cervical cancer. It's safe to say you are doing your future self a favor by having sex as frequently as possible.

However, all of the benefits of sex do not come without risks, especially if you are not practicing it safely. While there is a very limited window for pregnancy to occur within a menstrual cycle, unwanted pregnancies occur up to 75% of the time after a year of unprotected sex. Additionally, every time you have sex without protection, you increase your risk of contracting STIs such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, HPV, and herpes. Infections like HIV and HPV are incurable, so think twice before going raw.

While the benefits of sex are not universal, they are still scientific facts. In a world of abstinence-focused sex education, talking about the advantages of sex is important to foster more open communication and understanding regarding the practice. Spreading this knowledge can lead to better-informed choices about sexual habits and destigmatize negative perceptions about sex. There are other ways to achieve all the benefits listed above, so why not have some fun while doing so?

**EROS HATES HUHS AND WILL AVOID GOING THERE AT ALL COSTS.**

**GRAPHIC BY EMILY PALLAN '27**



# More Hair Down There

Shaving your vagina is NOT a big deal. At least, it shouldn't be.

BY THE BUSH

When I entered the “talking stage” with my now boyfriend, I must have doubled the water bill. Absolutely terrified of what he might think when he inevitably felt or saw my figure, I spent hours contorting my body in the shower to reach every nook, cranny, flap, and crack I could find. Feeling around to make sure I was *literally* as smooth as a baby's butt, I refused to leave the bathroom until I was certain no hair was left behind.

To be honest, I couldn't tell you why I did this. It's not that I believed he was going to judge me; in fact, knowing him and how understanding and open he was, I think I knew that he wouldn't care what he saw. Yet just the *thought* of him potentially judging me or expecting the mound and around to be absolutely hairless was enough for me to scrutinize every inch of my body and take extra precautions. What if, out of all of his past partners, I was the hairiest? My ego couldn't stand to be known as “Chewbacca” or “the Beast.”

To give you a bit of context, I *hate* shaving. I think it is time-consuming, unnecessary, and not worth the trouble. Sure, I regularly go through with the occasional armpit swipe, but if no one's looking at my legs, vagina, or ass anyway, then what's the point? In the winter, *The Lorax* and I have the same idea going for us: “Let it Grow.”

In the summer months, I slightly change my mindset, but shaving my legs is really more to ensure an even tan than because I want to get rid of hair. Since my body becomes slightly more visible at this point, I often opt to trim my bikini line as well, but still—what's out of sight is out of mind. Additionally, as a dark-haired Italian, I have the perfect genetic recipe for a hairy body similar to that of Tarzan's. I'm doomed.

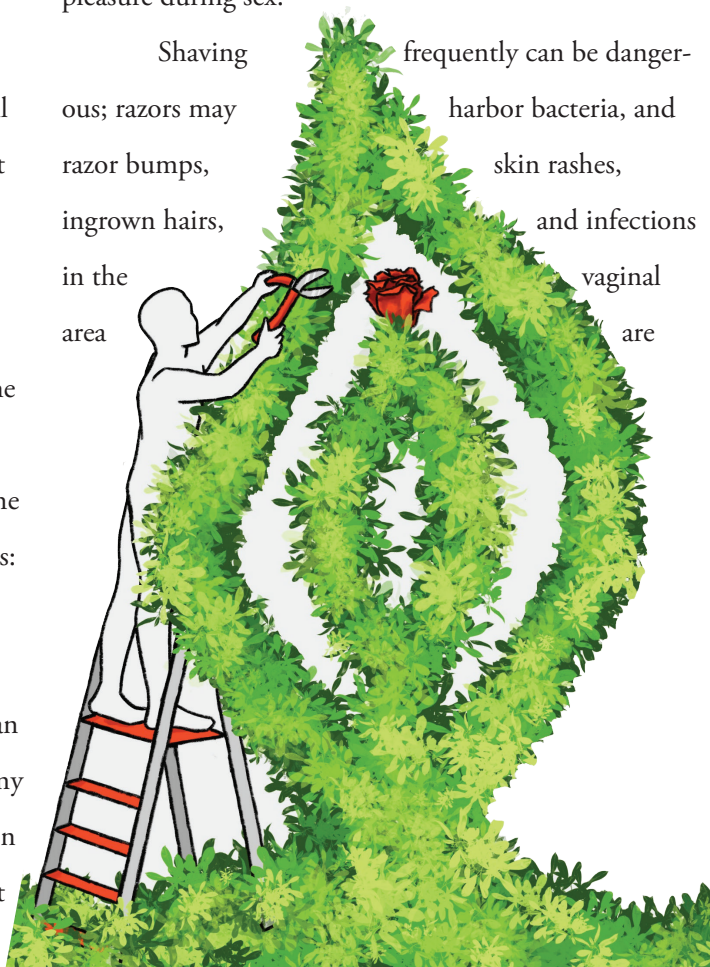
Once we finally made it *officially official*, I realized that I was being overdramatic. I am lucky enough to have a boyfriend who couldn't care less about whether I was bald, prickly, or a bush. He loves me for who I am, no matter what I look like—especially down there. However, not all are lucky enough to have this luxury. When women with vaginas have hair down there or don't match pre-existing expectations, it's a deal breaker for certain men and sexual partners. Pubic hair is perceived by society as unattractive; where a clean-shaven body is a sign of “femininity,” hairy vaginas are considered “gross.”

There are arguments that I recognize in this conversation. I, for one, am completely supportive of

decisions of women. Choosing to keep your vagina clean-shaven may just feel more comfortable! Maybe you don't like the slightly itchy feeling of when the hair begins to grow back, and so you opt to keep it smooth at all times. For men, I recognize that physical preferences exist just as emotional ones do, and that should be acknowledged.

However, I'd like to offer an alternative perspective. Keeping your vagina hairy protects it from germs and dirt, mitigating infections. Pubic hair helps reduce sweat in the vaginal area and regulate body temperature, keeping the skin hydrated and warm. It has even been observed to make you seem more sexually attractive, despite societal standards, and increase pleasure during sex.

Shaving frequently can be dangerous; razors may harbor bacteria, and razor bumps, skin rashes, ingrown hairs, and infections in the vaginal area are



frequent consequences of shaving. In recent years, more women have been hospitalized due to vaginal injuries from cutting or infecting themselves when shaving, and the chemicals used while shaving can lead to increased body odors and burns.

It has been proven that shaving is not medically necessary, and having pubic hair is neither dirty nor unhygienic. Shaving should be seen as a personal choice, not due to beauty expectations or out of public shame. Risking your life and your vaginal health because you don't know what someone is going to think of a few extra locks around your lips is silly. The right person will love you for you—to be bushed or to not be bushed!

While the standards for women when it comes to shaving their vaginas (and elsewhere) are high,

expectations for men vary. Men are not expected to be hairless; in fact, studies have shown that men do not feel the external pressure to shave that women do. Women have their preferences too, but women have actually been noted to prefer body hair or not have as strong feelings regarding its presence as men do. The stigma around female body hair is dangerous; women's bodies are policed, yet men having this hair is socially acceptable.

Porn is partially to blame for contributing to these unrealistic expectations. Mainstream media depicts images and videos of the “perfect woman” having a clean-shaven vagina or perfect triangular strip of hair. With the depiction of vaginas in film elsewhere being extremely limited in comparison to how often penises are shown, these unrealistic body expectations lead to a double standard that perpetuates pubic hair on women as unideal. What we think the vagina “should” look like is not up to us—there is no one way, shape, hair follicle, or form.

When I hang out with my boyfriend now, I opt to shave on an occasional basis. I don't let my hair reach twistable length, but I shave on a schedule that works for me and my body, not out of fear of what my own or his expectations may potentially be. This choice is what I suggest all to consider. Shave when it makes you feel comfortable, and shave when you want. Hair is not something to be scared of, but rather it should be celebrated with self-acceptance and positivity, as it is a part of who we are. We have the bodily autonomy and privilege to take care of ourselves however we see fit.

For those out there who consider it a deal breaker if their partner is anything but a sphynx, my advice is to think otherwise. Your partner is much more than the length of their pubes. Trust me, the hair won't do anything to bring down the success of the sex. I'd know, *wink wink*.

Your partner should always love you. When you get married, they vow to be there for you in sickness and in health, for richer and for poorer, for shaggy and for shaved, and the rest. So, keep things bushy, trimmed, smooth, or prickly as a cactus—whatever you like, just make sure you do it for you.

**THE BUSH IS ALSO KIND OF LAZY BUT THINKS AN ARGUMENT FOR AUTONOMY AND PROTESTING THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN'S BODIES ADDS FURTHER LEGITIMACY TO HER POINT.**

**GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27**



# Wañña Compare Vagiñas?

Looking at my friends' vulvas was the solution to my genital shame.

BY VAGINA WOOLF

The first time I looked at my vagina, I was repulsed. Legs spread in a frog-like fashion, right hand equipped with a handheld mirror patterned with Disney Princess stickers and fingers poking at my labia in the most unsexual manner possible, I had never felt more concentrated in my 12 years of life. And, simultaneously, so unsatisfied with my findings.

Despite the euphemism of my vulva as a “blooming flower” that my sixth-grade science teacher had employed earlier that day, after pulling all the girls in my grade for our school district-mandated first-ever sex-ed talk, the *thing* I saw between my legs looked nothing like a beautiful peony. And it certainly did not look like the silicone replica my teacher had paraded around the room.

Of course, conversations around the appearance of our vulvas were not considered appropriate playground talk, and none of my friends—at least not until later high-school years—wanted to be the first to break the silent reverie around topics involving genitals, masturbation, or sex. Thus, the curiosity over how my labia looked slowly turned into an unconfirmed shame that I was the only weird one of the bunch—forever cursed without a plastic, pornstar pussy.

The Latin term for vulva (including the labia, clitoris, and pubic mound) is *pudendum*, derived from “to be ashamed.” Male genitalia has no equivalent term. The analysis drawn here is of the “duh” variety. Throughout history, women’s sexuality has been shadowed, and mentions of impurity were sins to be outcasted for. But even now, men masturbate three times more frequently than women in early adolescence, and across their lifetime, twice as many men will ever masturbate compared to women.

While boys spend the hormonal part of their early teenage years becoming comfortable touching their dicks and talking about their dicks, (and for some of them, being dicks,) girls do not become as friendly acquaintances with their vaginas. They don’t make jokes about their vulvas or their friends’

vulvas to each other. As a young girl growing up in the South, where having a sex-ed talk in the first place was already a cause for scandal, I certainly was not going to be the first to broach my questions on how vaginas are “supposed” to look, how mine looked, and if it was weird that the two images did not match.

Later, when I became curious enough to watch porn for the first time, I was soon dismayed to learn that the majority of the picture-perfect vaginas on my screen confirmed the basis of my embarrassment. Upon further research, there seemed to be a basis for my feelings. In 2013, researchers in Australia found a threefold increase in women requesting a labiaplasty (a cosmetic surgery on the vagina). This procedure has become the fastest-growing plastic surgery globally. If the other “genetically wronged” women of the world were chopping up their vulvas for insecurity’s sake (in what appeared to be an increasingly growing epidemic), *was that not evidence enough that I harbored an objective flaw?* And so, the shame built: a mixture of anxiety that my vagina was ugly and that any guy would automatically find it disgusting.

The first time someone went down on me, I was unjustifiably nervous that he would immediately pop back up and proclaim that I was no longer attractive to him. A quick spoiler alert: no such thing occurred. Now, years (and guys) later, I have learned that no partner seems to care at all.

Yet, male validation was not—and still is not—everything. Obviously, not everyone can see my vulva and judge me on first impressions, but I still felt like I was harboring a dirty secret, unbeknownst to everyone else. And despite the dissolution of any embarrassment with men related to how my body looked, the hidden fog around what a “normal” vagina looked like still seemed to elude me.

Like all good life revelations, the answer to my

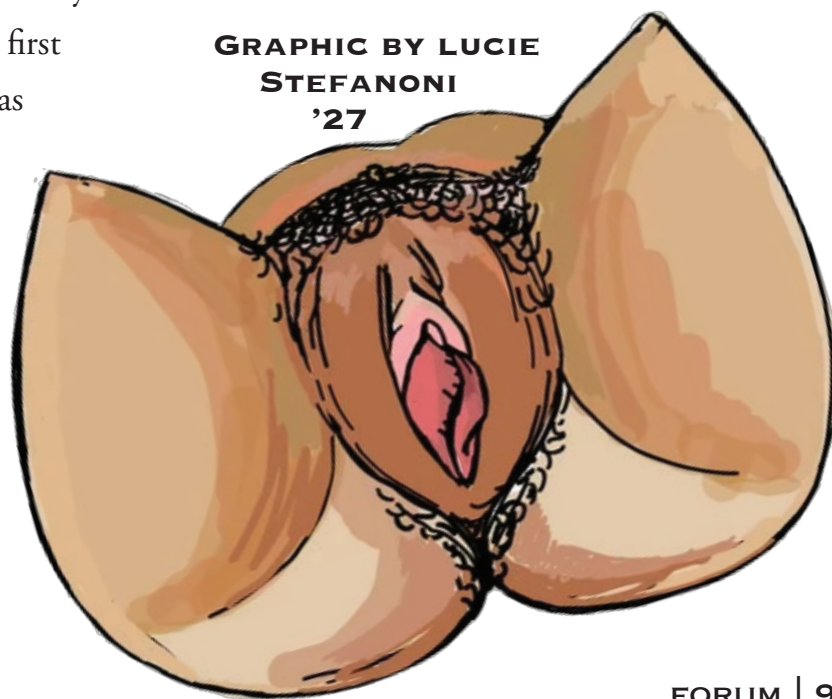
question came during a spring break trip. On one particular night, after dinner and one of those question-card games that are only fun when tipsy, two of my friends and I chanced upon the “vagina and shame” conversation. Induced by the mutual shame and curiosity surrounding the appearance of our vulvas, we collectively came up with the exciting and completely logical idea to compare our genitalia in the bathroom mirror together.

So there we stood: side by side, pants and skirts off, in all of our naked glory, looking at each others’ vulvas. The end result was mostly laughter at its absurdity but also, more importantly, the big realization that my vagina was not an oddity. Of course, no two vulvas look entirely alike. (Although, as a fun fact, one of my friends and I share a freakishly similar appearance.) But that was largely the point: there was no point worrying about something that had no standard—or at least not a standard the majority of vagina owners fit. And, as similarly true for most things, it was comforting to know I was not the only one who had ever experienced vagina-induced embarrassment.

If you have friends down to pursue a similar vulva-showing event, I highly recommend it. But even if you do not ever experience this bonding moment, take it from me that just like the rest of your body, there is truly no certain way that the most intimate parts of your physical appearance need to look.

**VAGINA WOOLF IS ALSO KNOWN FOR A PUSSY OF ONE’S OWN, TO THE WHOREHOUSE, AND MRS. DALLOWAY (TO THE CLIT).**

GRAPHIC BY LUCIE  
STEFANONI  
'27



# The Long Game

Waiting for marriage can be sex-positive.

BY ANONYMOUS

“Tell us about your first time.”

It always happens when we're playing Hot Seat or Truth or Dare. Everyone buckles up for a good story—bonus points if it happened somewhere crazy. I smile softly to myself, knowing they're going to be surprised, or maybe even disappointed, by my response that I'm a virgin and waiting for marriage.

I always knew sex was a big deal. In high school, when my friends started having it, I'd listen intently to how it affected their relationships. *Everything changed once we started having sex*, they'd say. Beyond the logistical fears I had—pain, pregnancy, and the horror of cherry-popping—I began to realize that sex had the power to change the course of a relationship. How compatible two people are in bed, whether they're able to pleasure each other, can make or break it.

Thankfully, I never really had to worry much about it. Dating wasn't a part of my life until college, so before coming to Harvard, sex wasn't really on my mind. It was something my friends did and something that made for interesting stories, but it was not something I was concerned with. I don't think I considered it inevitable, nor did I think critically about whether or not I would sleep with someone if given the chance.

Then, when I got to college, everything changed. I started dating, and I began to more seriously examine my moral values. I was struck, and a little bit scared, by the world of casual sex: Irish exits from parties, sleeping with strangers, being “exclusive” or “hooking up” without dating. I realized quickly that for most other women I spoke with, this was the *exclusive* definition of sex-positivity: something that requires being sexually active to display control over one's own sexuality and comfortability with sex.

There's a lot of good done in the modern sex-positivity movement. Intimacy is such a personal concept, and how a person chooses to go about their sex life should be received without shame or judgment. Moreover, a modern sex-positive attitude includes plenty of safety-focused concepts such as consent, open communication about sex, and sex education, all of which can contribute to a more supportive environment, particularly for adolescents and young adults just becoming comfortable in their bodies and sexualities.

For some, casual sex feels empowering. It's no surprise that with the right boundaries, consent, and open communication, hookups are all the rage. The issue is that this seems to be the *only* collegiate definition of “sex-positivity.” According to the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 94% of college students are sexually active. So where does that leave those of us playing the long game?

The answer, sadly, is lumped in the “purity culture” category. Purity culture refers to a harmful mindset around sex which first gained popularity with evangelical Christians but has spread to secular culture as well. It is the idea that not only is premarital sex sinful, but also the brunt of the responsibility is on women to suppress their sexuality and practice modesty in order to protect men—whose sexuality is seen as much more acceptable—from falling into sin. Purity culture is often weaponized against women who have engaged in premarital sex and can be used to create an atmosphere of shame surrounding sex education, including important conversations about consent and women's health. Unfortunately, this is what many people associate with waiting for marriage.

But the truth is, chastity doesn't have

to look that way. I am waiting for marriage, because I believe sex is a way for two people to give themselves to each other, fully, which is essentially the promise of marriage. To me, it makes sense not to say to someone, *I give myself to you*, entirely, with my body, before saying it to them out loud. And contrary to popular belief, virgins can still have deep understandings of their own sexuality. Though I am not currently sexually active, I am in charge of my own sexuality. I am comfortable talking about sex. I know what it means to me and what I want it to mean to the person I someday marry.

Just as sex-positivity can mean casual sex, or sex while dating, I argue that so too can it mean chastity. Choosing to wait for marriage doesn't make you a prude, or out of touch with sex—rather, it can be an informed decision tethered to a deep understanding of sexuality. Let's broaden what we mean by sex-positivity to a definition that includes virginity along with being sexually active, and equally empower those of us who choose to wait.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.



GRAPHIC  
BY DHATI  
OOMMEN '27

# Bisexual “Virgin”

What sex means to a girl who bats for both teams—and is saving herself for marriage.

BY ANONYMOUS

Whenever I’ve let it slip to a friend that I’m saving myself for marriage, they ask me what that looks like. They aren’t questioning my religious beliefs or suggesting a possible far-right indoctrination in my childhood that led to deep sexual repression. Instead, they wonder how I could possibly reconcile my “commitment to purity” and my stereotypically “promiscuous” bisexuality. *How does that even work with women? Do girls count?* they’ll ask. They inquire if there is any tangible difference between what I do with boys and what I do with girls. They want to know if I can describe to them what sex between two women even is.

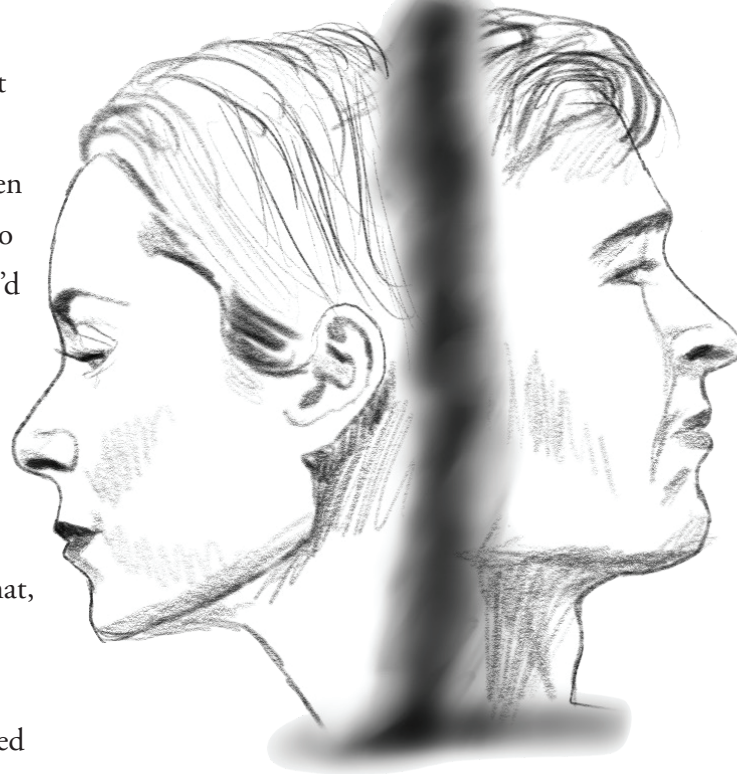
For a long time, I couldn’t answer their questions. Sometimes I would lie awake at night pondering my choices and desires. I chose to wait for sex until marriage before I learned I was into both men and women. And there were times when I felt like it couldn’t possibly make sense for me to do so. How was I even supposed to know when I’d had sex with a girl? When did it count as sex? I’d consider throwing my commitment out the window before eventually falling into a lucid slumber, puzzling over the same mysteries in my dreamscape.

I tried to convince myself this way and that, recounting every sexual encounter I’d ever had in hopes of identifying some new truth that had previously eluded me. I was consistently concerned with the differentiation between hooking up with boys and girls. The answer I’d give my friends is that sex with girls is just “a vibe check,” and, thus, my commitment to waiting for marriage is even more of a “vibe thing.” I still call myself a virgin because I haven’t had penetrative sex with a man, but according to some crowd-sourced opinions, I have fucked a couple of girls. And while this classification might seem damning to my claim of virginity, I’m not so sure that it even matters at all.

I kissed my first boy in eighth grade. It was sloppy, and I was left so rattled by the overwhelmingly wet experience that I didn’t kiss another boy until my junior year of high school. By that time, I knew I liked girls too. I got with a few more guys, and my rice purity score steadily decreased. It was fun, and if something was fun, I did it. I was still hesitant with hand stuff and had never even considered the thought of giving head to anyone, but boys were pushy, and I started to think that sooner or later I’d have to get over my trepidations.

I kissed my first girl the summer before senior year. I could still feel her lips on mine

when she broke my heart less than two months later. I spiraled and hooked up with my second girl two weeks after that, followed by three more guys in quick succession. In the backseat of her Tesla, bras on the car floor, she told me I kissed like a girl who kisses boys. I didn’t really understand what she meant, but I knew it wasn’t a compliment. So, I learned how to kiss like a girl who kisses girls by becoming attuned to the minute details and the subtleties of kissing. Boys kiss aggressively, treating it like a means to an end. Girls treat it like one of the main events—each kiss carries deep intention. I was convinced, for a moment, that no boy could kiss well and that every girl was innately blessed with the ability to



kiss perfectly.

A year later, in Paris, a French man told me I *really* knew how to kiss—like the French—and that very few American girls could do the same. I was simultaneously flattered and offended for my fellow American women. The following night, a different Parisian boy kissed me until I felt like I was levitating, and everything that I’d ever believed about men’s ability to kiss flew out the window. He was my 21st kiss. Since then, I’ve had a lot of great kisses and some really bad ones, split evenly between ladies and gents.

But this article isn’t just about my NCMO adventures—the moral of my story is broader than that. For some time, I consistently categorized all of my sexual partners into gendered boxes in my mind. I felt almost obligated to believe that *all* girls had to be better at sex than *all* boys, because it validated my sexuality. If girls were worse, then why should I even like them? I exclusively got with extremely conventionally attractive girls—girls that my female friends were jealous of and that *my* male friends wanted for themselves. And even though my type was girls whose vibes screamed “she/they” in

their bios and had obligatory septum piercings, if I couldn’t get heterosexual validation from my male friends that they also thought she was hot, I’d shy away.

In a sort of twisted way, I found validation in going further with girls than I did with guys, because that meant I really was gay and wasn’t doing it “just for show,” like I felt so many girls at my high school were. I went down on a girl before I blew a guy for the first time. After he reciprocated, I realized that I’d essentially done the same thing with a girl and called it sex, but with him, I hadn’t. The labels and categories that I’d assigned each of my sexual encounters to had created artificial distinctions—distinctions that negatively affected my relationships and self-image.

I’ve learned now that the true sexual differences between men and women are more *perceived* than anything at all. The stereotypes that exist about both men and women as sexual partners are just that—deeply-rooted, mostly-incorrect stereotypes. I’ve had boys ask me what I like and handle me gently with utmost respect, and I’ve had girls treat my labia like a DJ’s turntable as they struggle to find the clit. The more people I’ve gotten with, the more I’ve realized that the individual is more important than their gender. I’ve shared deep intimacy with people but deemed them irrelevant according to the world of classifications that I’d created for myself, just because of what’s in their pants. Really, each experience should be “classified” on its own within its singular context, because it’s hard to describe it otherwise. Lumping experiences together or entering a sexual encounter with misguided expectations has proven to be unhelpful in every way.

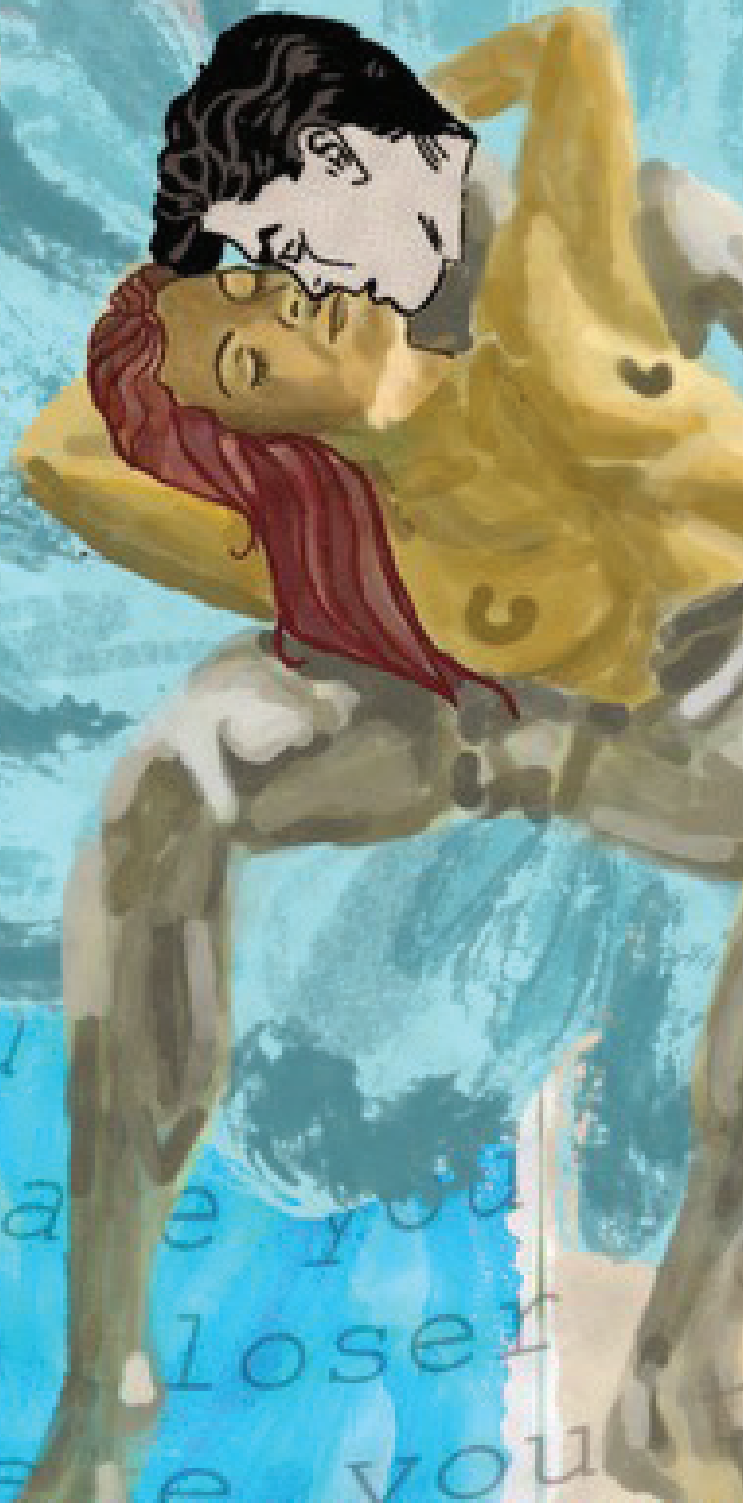
The term “sex” no longer means much to me. Despite the many forms queer sex takes on, every experience is undeniably real. If I can’t strictly define my virginity with respect to fucking girls, why should I define it with respect to fucking boys? And while I’m still saving myself for marriage, whether it’s with a man or a woman, what I’m saving is not just a physical checkbox defined centuries ago by a collection of old men. It is a specific amalgam of intimacy, care, and simultaneous emotional and physical vulnerability that I hope to share with them, and them alone.

**THIS ANONYMOUS AUTHOR NEEDS A SHE/  
THEY BISEXUAL THEATER GIRLFRIEND  
OR AN AESTHETIC POSTS-FILM-PICS-ON-  
INSTAGRAM ATHLETE BOYFRIEND.**

**GRAPHIC BY NATALIE MENDEZ '26  
FORUM | 11**

♥ Harvard can be a lonely place, and it is easy to get lost.

sexual diversity. THANK YOU to those who trusted me to represent their bodies & made this work possible.



the connection between and within Harvard students through sex



# For the Bodies the Pill Left Bleeding

Despite what experts from the *Washington Post* say, the birth control pill made me incredibly sick.

BY ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ '26

On March 22, I opened my email over breakfast to *The Post Most* and clicked on the headliner: “Women are getting off birth control amid misinformation explosion.” Written by two female health reporters, Lauren Weber and Sabrina Malhi, the article criticized women who share negative experiences with hormonal contraceptives online. Weber and Malhi called the rising birth control backlash a result of “rampant misinformation about basic health tenets,” and categorized hormonal contraceptives as “safe and effective.” Their argument was essentially aggressive and unapologetic in its entirety, sure of its every sweeping statement: birth control has negligible side effects, anyone who reports otherwise must be confused, and negative accounts on social media are “divorced from scientific evidence.”

I finished reading in disbelief, tears of frustration in my eyes. During the seven months I was on “the pill,” I felt the sickest I ever had in my life. I was prescribed oral contraceptives due to amenorrhea resulting from my polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). While on them, I bled monthly, reducing my risks of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease. But I also gained sixty pounds, endured chronic fatigue, woke up nightly from hot flashes and leg cramps, and became frighteningly disinterested in life.

Despite what the *Washington Post* negligently asserted to its audience of millions, evidence shows that hormonal contraceptives, especially the pill—the most common form of contraception—can provoke serious side effects. The information leaflet that comes with the pill includes a lengthy list, including acne, bloating, blood clots, elevated blood pressure, depression, fatigue, headache, insomnia, nausea, vomiting, and weight gain. Beyond what is listed on the leaflet, emerging studies link the pill to cancer, heart attack, stroke, and more. But arguably the most alarming side effects are the psychological ones. Study after study finds negative mood changes resulting from hormonal contraceptives,

with one 2023 study finding that 43.6% of participants experienced mood changes. The study also found that 83% of participants stated that their providers made no mention of mood-related side effects before they began using contraception.

Nicole Bendayan is a certified holistic nutritionist specializing in holistic menstrual health with over one million followers between Instagram and TikTok. She was interviewed by the *Washington Post* about her experience sharing information about hormonal and menstrual health, for what she felt would be a very different article.

“I was definitely under the impression that it was going to be a positive article of why women are... [starting to] take their health into their own hands because they’ve been so dismissed and invalidated for so many years,” she explained in an interview with the *Independent*. “The whole experience was very misleading and I was definitely misrepresented in the article.”

Bendayan was disappointed by the direction the article took, saying that the *Washington Post* “minimized not only [her] personal experience on birth control but the experience of thousands upon thousands of women. And they also minimized scientific research and evidence... They minimized the side effects that are listed on the box.”

“The article was really a representation of women’s experiences in the healthcare system [being] invalidated, dismissed, misled, and misrepresented,” Bendayan said. “I think that the *Washington Post* missed out on a really good opportunity to bring attention to the fact that women’s health needs to be further researched and that women need to feel like they’re being seen in the medical system.”

Bendayan also expressed her frustration with the politicization in the *Washington Post* article. “Women’s health should not be a political issue... To politicize women’s bodies I think is really kind of disgraceful.”

Weber and Malhi wrote that there is “no proven science that the hormone-balancing regimes pushed by some social media

influencers such as Bendayan work,” and that experts view this type of work as “often a cash grab.” Yet, Bendayan asserted that the information she shares is based on research articles and evidence-based, peer-reviewed studies. She also said that while she does charge for some of her services, which are a representation of her valuable experience and education, she also provides women with an extensive amount of free information online. Bendayan added, “The whole article in itself was really a promotional piece for Opill, which is a pharmaceutical, and the birth control industry is a billion-dollar industry.”

Bendayan believes in a woman’s personal choice but said that women must be given informed consent by their medical providers. In regard to hormonal birth control, she described three pillars necessary for informed consent to occur. First, patients must be pre-screened for risk factors such as mood disorders, as well as certain types of cancers and tumors. “Practitioners should be pre-screening for a history of mood disorders or predisposition,” she said. Second, patients must receive comprehensive education on risk factors and side effects. “There’s a ton of different side effects so women should be walked through those. It’s up to the doctor to really have women be confident with understanding risk factors or side effects. Further, birth control can impact certain things such as nutrient requirements or your microbiome, so if a doctor tells us that that is a factor, we can take the precautions that we need such as increasing our micronutrient intake or supporting our gut health.” And third, doctors must provide patients with information about alternative resources.



GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26

Bendayan says that fertility awareness methods get a bad rap because they get lumped together or aren't effective, but some, such as the symptothermal method, are scientifically backed to be equivalent in effectiveness to hormonal contraception, when used properly. Additionally, she said, "About 58% of women are on hormonal contraception not just to avoid pregnancy, but also for other issues such as PCOS, acne, painful periods, etcetera. There should be alternative resources that provide information about dietary and lifestyle interventions that a woman could take in order to support themselves and mitigate a lot of those symptoms."

"If that information is presented and someone still wants to go on birth control, 100 percent, go for it. That's your choice, but the fact is, it should be your choice having a good understanding of all the information," Bendayan emphasized.

One study found that while 88% of participants started taking oral contraceptive pills as their first form of hormonal contraceptive, only 29% were still on them by the time of the study. One factor that may have played a role in this is the fact that side effects are the most common reason why women discontinue oral contraception. The data shows that despite women reporting negative side effects and ceasing hormonal contraceptive use at high rates, information providers continue to dismiss and disregard these concerns. The potential effects of hormonal contraception are under-researched and poorly understood—an issue in and of itself—but why is it so difficult to believe the thousands of women who report negative experiences? Why did I spend months trying to explain what I felt to my doctors, only for them to tell me it was all in my head?

My experience is my truth. The woman next to me might have an opposite story: her symptoms—PCOS, painful periods, acne, et cetera—might

have improved drastically on birth control. Another woman might not have noticed a difference. Each body is different, and one person's experience does not negate another's. I have heard "I don't know" from the mouths of my endocrinologists dozens of times. I have spent hundreds of hours on medical sites, academic research sites, and Reddit threads reading opposing accounts and evidence. The point is that the unique potential effects of birth control are heavily under-studied and not fully understood. But the *Washington Post* did not acknowledge any of this.

My decision to stop taking the pill was one I made on my own. And sure enough, in the month following, my

body and face debloated, a fog lifted from over me, and for the first time in months, the blue

California sky was bright again. The pill left my body scarred, defeated, and corrupted. The months that followed were a taxing, gradual recovery.

I long ago made peace with the fact that I cannot rely on the medical system to take care of me. Unfortunately, it falls on me to run trials on my body, make calls about how to treat myself, and try to understand my body with whatever resources I can find. Weber and Malhi point to the fact that women all over the world are getting health information from social media, and perhaps we should ask ourselves why that is. The doctor's office can feel like a hostile place, especially for women on hormonal contraception who report negative experiences. The medical system is failing them. Doctors are failing them. They are prescribed hormonal contraception without warnings about potential repercussions, and if they report

symptoms that are out of the ordinary or not sufficiently concerning, they are met with incredulity and told to deal with it.

I am a firm believer that hormonal contraceptives, in all their approved forms, should be freely accessible. But they should never be presented as risk-free options. Before starting patients on hormonal contraceptives, medical professionals should provide them—especially those who struggle with mental health—the academic evidence that exists regarding potential side effects. Additionally, it is a doctor's responsibility to openly hear patients who report negative side effects and provide them with alternative options or referrals.

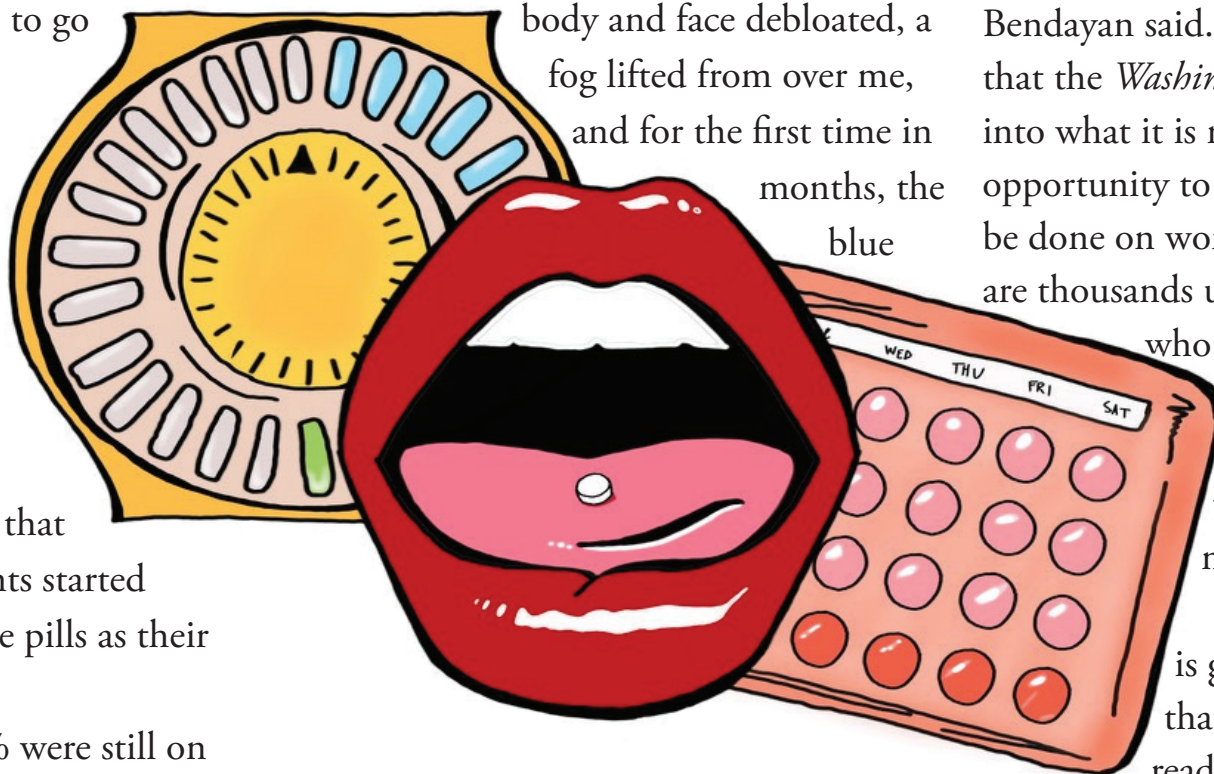
"Women's health is so under-researched and underfunded," Bendayan said. "It is really unfortunate that the *Washington Post* made this article into what it is rather than taking the opportunity to call for more research to be done on women's experiences. There are thousands upon thousands of women who have these experiences, and the fact that [their experiences] are under-researched does not mean [they are] false."

Bendayan said that she is grateful for the pushback that the article received from readers, so much so that the *Washington Post* ended up cutting off their comments. "I'm glad that it's been able to spark a discourse and have women feel confident sharing their personal stories."

The female body is sensitive, unique, and mysterious. With so much more to be discovered, modern medicine still has many advancements left to achieve in understanding it. What does wonders for one woman may ruin the next. We must accept the individuality of our bodies, encourage further research on women's health, and work towards a more supportive medical system.

**ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ '26**  
(**ABRILRODRIGUEZDIAZ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU**) WRITES FORUM FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.

**GRAPHIC BY ALMA RUSSELL '26**



# i u Don't Even Know

A reflection on getting an IUD at 16.

BY ANONYMOUS

*Note: The author recognizes that there are many women who do not have vaginas or uteruses. This is a personal exploration of a transformation into adulthood, and the author wants to express her love for women of all shapes, sizes, races, gender expressions, and sexual identities as they battle what can be a very scary world.*

My mom dropped me off outside of the office and wished me luck. I did not respond. The doctor had reassured me that it was a simple procedure with no need to fear, but I still remember every second of getting my first intra-uterine device (IUD) inserted as a terrifying marker of my personal transition into womanhood.

I was 16 years old when I sat alone in my OB-GYN's office after popping a muscle relaxant earlier that morning. A nurse came in to take some basic medical histories before instructing me to remove all of my clothing from the waist down and wait for the doctor to arrive. It was very cold—that is mostly what I recall about those seemingly endless moments in the room alone. My butt was bare against the table, and I was uncomfortable being so exposed underneath the paper sheet they gave me to cover myself. When the doctor entered, she was very kind and said a quick hello before instructing me to place my feet in the stirrups and scoot myself to the edge.

Nothing truly prepares you for the feeling of having someone inside of you in a non-sexual way, and as a young teenager relatively new to any form of sexual touch, the experience was bizarre.

First in the steps of getting an IUD is the manual exam; the gynecologist inserts two fingers into the vagina, before following with a freezing, might I add, metal speculum to open your vagina and expose the cervix.

Having never seen that part of my own

body, it was absurd to feel air touch it, and somewhat disturbing to have my interiors visible to the outside world. Next, the doctor administers a shot of a local anesthetic into the cervix which would hopefully lessen the pain of stretching it.

Sometimes I contemplate how a foreign object has penetrated my body's natural seal. One of the functions of the cervix is to ensure nothing enters the uterus, so thinking about its biological role helped me conceptualize the pain I felt during my IUD procedure. The shot was a shock; I was ignorant of how unwelcome the sharp pinch would feel in my body. My now (mildly) numb uterus was then measured by pushing a uterine through the cervix to determine the length of my uterus cavity. Once that was removed, the IUD itself was collapsed, inserted through the cervix and into the uterus, and then expanded and placed securely.

The final two steps induced more pain than I could have imagined. Brought to tears, I remember being fearful that any movement would tear something within me. I mustered what I could to unsuccessfully control my shaking legs. No breathing patterns can ease the pressure of your uterus desperately wanting to expel the unfamiliar tenant trying to take up residence in its precious space. But, truly, it was that no warning would have prepared me for the realization that this was only a taste of the pain associated with becoming a woman.

People tell you it is unpleasant and uncomfortable, but getting an IUD is worth it to relieve the fear of unwanted pregnancy and avoid the side effects of birth control pills. Having experienced severe mood swings and depression on the oral birth control I was prescribed, it seemed logical and normal to get an IUD. Yes, it was logical and normal, but it was also distressing and alarming. It hurts to prevent pregnancy, and as a teenager, I was unaware of how it would impact me. To be so violently confronted with my sexuality and anatomy feels reminiscent of the other moments in life when I would feel equally alone and afraid in my pain, but expected to stomach it because of my gender.

I walked for 20 minutes home alone after the procedure and bled for 30 days after that.

Now, I share my experience with my IUD freely with my friends, wishing I had someone to guide me through my own. Going into this procedure and leaving it was made much more difficult in a world of silence surrounding women's birth control and pain. I was anxious that my partner would be disgusted by the menstrual spotting I experienced for a month post-procedure or that they would get bored of my hesitance to be intimate because I did not fully trust the little device inside of me allegedly preventing pregnancy.

In high school, there was an aura of coolness around those using hormonal contraception as a marker of their maturity and entrance into adulthood. The silence about the reality of the procedures some undergo, I surmise, was prevalent because of the power of sex in that space and the desire to confidently step into the group experimenting with their sexual citizenship.

Now, my IUD brings me sexual freedom and a notion of protection completely in my control; however, shame was not my desired feeling as I entered intimate relationships. And more, shame is not what you should feel when taking steps to protect your bodily autonomy and rights. Given the state of current reproductive rights and the restrictions placed on those carrying children, I want to share my own journey, now having my second IUD in place.

Twice I have opened my legs to protect myself, and I have reflected far more than twice on my authority even at the age of 16 to do so. I have also reflected on my privilege to have a mother who helped me make the appointment and dropped me off, supporting my coming of age. However, the general silence, the *societal silence*, that still remains around procedures like getting an IUD ensures that the pain, side effects, and aftermath are still consistently stigmatized.

I'm not writing this to be inspirational but instead to be honest and hopeful that perhaps someone who reads this will not feel quite as scared. I hope that more people can walk out of a gynecologist's office filled with pride rather than with shame.

**WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26**



# Dear Daddy..

The next great American media mogul is a woman who sometimes just gives sex advice.

BY RANIA JONES '27

*Do you call him daddy? Do I call her daddy? Call Her. Daddy.*

I can still remember the illicit feelings of shame that consumed the thirteen-year-old version of myself who secretly listened to “Call Her Daddy.” Holding my phone up to my ear so that no one could hear, I listened as Alex Cooper bellowed away her most raw and unvarnished female advice with fearless sexual prowess.

Alex Cooper is best known as the host of “Call Her Daddy,” the original Barstool Sports podcast that took off in 2018. Immediately after the first episode aired, where Cooper discussed the perfect adjective to use while sexting, “Call Her Daddy” became a smashing success. As the host and producer of the podcast, Cooper quickly became one of the country’s most popular podcasters, developing a following of millions of predominantly women listeners ages 18 to 33, formally known as the “Daddy Gang.” In 2021, 26-year-old Cooper landed a \$60 million three-year deal to take the podcast to Spotify.

During her transition to Spotify, “Call Her Daddy,” shifted from a primarily sex podcast to also focus on guest speakers and celebrity perspectives. Cooper recently released her new venture, The Unwell Network, a media outlet aimed at providing Generation Z with pop culture and lifestyle content. “Call Her Daddy” now stands as a platform for conversations with guests on the show to talk about sexual experiences that are different from her own as a straight, white, cisgender woman. Cooper talks a lot about female empowerment, which has always been an undercurrent of the show, even if salacious stories are no longer what draws people in.

When “Call Her Daddy” started, Cooper and former co-host Sofia Franklyn garnered immediate attention for their sexual explicitness and candid story-telling nature. The “About” section on the “Call Her Daddy” Spotify page describes the podcast as “putting a modern twist on feminism” and “spitting in the face of misogyny.”

From periods to pleasure, few topics are as taboo as female sexuality. Though women are

educated on sex from a biological perspective, they are traditionally not taught that they too are allowed to enjoy sex without feelings of embarrassment and shame. Pleasure is neither foolish nor improper, and yet, women are drowning in shame as they desperately struggle to muster the courage to explore. The double standard between men’s and women’s sexuality remains persistent; there are many things that men can talk about, but when women talk about them, it becomes socially unacceptable.

I was never taught to talk with my girlfriends about the messy, uncomfortable, taboo parts of growing up, and when women around lack this willingness to face discomfort, shame is perpetuated. This silence surrounding the uncomfortable left me feeling uninformed and unprepared, especially when it came to understanding the more nuanced aspects of sexuality and relationships.

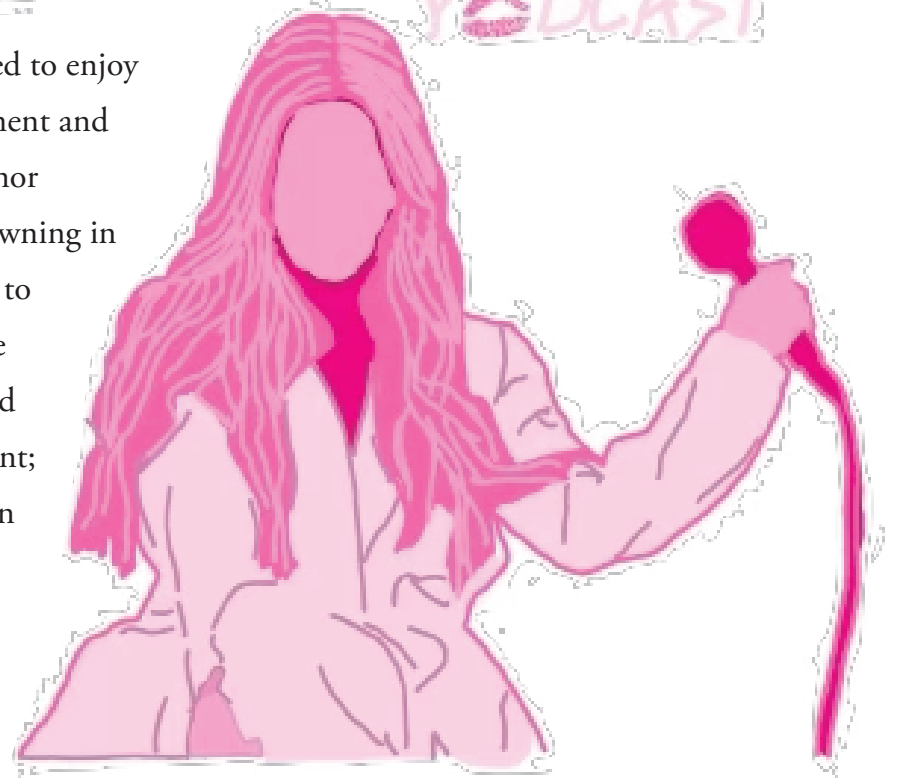
But listening to other women talk freely about sexuality is what helped me stay afloat. On “Call Her Daddy,” Cooper speaks unabashedly about her sex life, in a way that is praised and celebrated and makes me realize that I too am allowed to talk about sex.

On “Call Her Daddy,” Cooper executes a women’s version of “locker-room talk,” where women are comfortable with getting personal. Cooper wants to own locker-room talk—and do it better—as a form of reclamation. And she does it in a way where women and girls feel personally connected to both her and one another.

Most importantly, Alex Cooper has shown that silly, raunchy girl topics, like her specialized oral sex technique, which she famously referred to as the “Gluck Gluck 9000,” can be a multimillion-dollar media empire that is taken seriously by traditional media, which then destigmatizes these topics.

Beyond her more amusing anecdotes, Cooper frames female sexuality as a serious, important part of women’s physical and mental

**CALL HER DADDY**  
PODCAST



health, empowering her followers and giving them advice in a way that is not necessarily outrageous but instead more sincere. Through discussing sex and relationships in a humorous, relatable way, “Call Her Daddy” showed that these topics are fair game for women to own and discuss publicly.

“Call Her Daddy” is all about embodying confidence in yourself and starting taboo conversations. Cooper is unapologetically and fearlessly feminine as she tackles sex, relationships, and even masturbation, with confidence and wit.

This component of womanhood is new, and it is evolving. It might seem simple, but as women, we are taught to procure the validation of men, even when it is at the expense of our confidence and dignity. The deep shame women have been subconsciously conditioned to feel surrounding sexual intercourse has become so inherently woven into the fabric of our beings.

But what Alex Cooper and other women like her are doing is allowing women to make their own definition for the word sex. So, revel in your discomfort, and expand your ideas—of both yourself and of the world we can inhabit.

**RANIA JONES '27 (RJONES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ONCE ACCIDENTALLY PLAYED CALL HER DADDY IN THE CAR WITH HER DAD.**

**GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27**

# Broken Crimson Hearts

Exploring the unspoken rules of dating and the pursuit of romance on campus.

BY CHIDIMMA ADINNA '25 AND ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26

While many self-help books and advice columns claim to have “expert knowledge” on dating, none seem to include vignettes from the lives of Harvard’s hopeless and hopeful romantics. Since personal stories resonate more than advice alone, we’ve collected stories from our friends with invaluable lessons (and given each of them pseudonyms).

Sometimes it feels like we, as students of all genders, were trying to decipher secret codes that would reveal the unspoken protocol for finding and nurturing a romantic relationship. If love at Harvard were an assignment, it would be long overdue. A number of our friends from high school are already married, yet most of our peers at Harvard have never even had a long-term relationship. In fact, many have expressed frustration with how seeking a meaningful relationship seems impossible, while hookups and situationships are readily available. Our number one New Year’s resolution? Stop looking for love.

Of course, this conclusion is based on our own personal experiences. We are ready to admit that our friends—being similar to us—may be destined to have similar outlooks and expectations when it comes to relationships. We also acknowledge that we have plenty to learn about love and relationships ourselves. In order to get a less biased view and to potentially discover the secrets of falling and staying in love we teamed up to investigate the “Do’s and Don’ts” of dating at Harvard.

## DO: COMMIT TO PLANS

Christine and Clara met over the summer and almost instantly fell for each other. Early on in the school year, they arranged to meet at Tatte one Saturday for brunch. Christine was counting down the days until they could see each other again. Imagine her surprise when Clara texted her early that Saturday morning to ask for a new location because the drive was too far. It would have been more considerate to request a different location earlier.

## DON’T: CATFISH

On Theo’s profile, it said that he was 6’5”, an athlete, and had blonde hair. However, upon meeting Iris in person, Theo was nothing like he had described. He was not 6’5”—as a matter of fact, he was 5’5”—not an athlete, and had black hair. Iris walked completely past him and didn’t recognize him until he called out her name. There’s nothing wrong with being 5’5”, but don’t catfish the person you hope to possibly spend a future with, especially considering they’re bound to find out once you meet in person.

## DO: MAKE AN EXCUSE TO LEAVE THE DATE IF FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE

Kimberley was extremely nervous to go on her first date with Mark at Shake Shack. To help calm her down, her friend Amber agreed to sit at another table not far from them. While Mark was a nice person, Kimberley

just didn’t feel ready to date and wanted a way to “escape.” She snuck into the bathroom and texted Amber about how she was worried about ending the date early because she didn’t want to seem rude. Amber texted back agreeing to call Kimberley with an “emergency” at her dorm, allowing for a convenient exit.

## DON’T: ALL BUT DEMAND A HOOKUP

Diego had his own car and had driven an hour to meet Ella in the Square. The date was not going well, so Ella followed one of our do’s and made an excuse to leave early. But since Diego had driven an hour to meet with Ella for the first time, he felt entitled to a hookup. He kept offering to drive Ella back to her dorm, although she lived a 2 minute walk away. He finally left Ella alone, but she was so creeped out that she walked somewhere else to avoid him knowing where she lived. Don’t be like Diego. Don’t expect a hookup if that wasn’t agreed on before, especially if the date is not going well—even if you drove an hour to see the person, no means no.

## DO: BE EARLY

Chase and Eloise agreed to go on a date. Chase, being the gentleman that he is, arrived a few minutes before Eloise and was waiting for her by the door. Chase instantly became more attractive in Eloise’s eyes.

## DON’T: FORGET TO BE CONSIDERATE

Our friend Emma recently agreed to meet a man at a cafe in Boston at 11:30 a.m. one weekend. She arrived at 11:15 a.m., but he was nowhere in sight. While waiting at one of the tables, she received a text from her potential Mr. Right: “Let me know when you’re there, and I’ll walk over.” Maybe this would have been alright if it wasn’t already 11:31. After her date arrived nearly a half hour late, Emma walked with him around the city while mainly hearing him talk about his future A.I. business. When Emma finally got the chance to get a word in about being in student government, her date briefly reminisced about his ex-girlfriend who was also involved in campus politics before talking more about his crypto wallet. There was no second date.

## DO: BE HONEST ABOUT DEAL-BREAKERS EARLY

Tyrone was diagnosed with bipolar disorder during his first year of college. His diagnosis is just one component of his life, but it is an extremely important one. He knew that anyone he dated would need to be comfortable with his identity and supportive of his mental health. He decided to tell Madison about his diagnosis early on in their relationship. She was not comfortable continuing to see him. While he

was saddened to no longer go out with her, he was happy to not have wasted too much time with someone who wasn’t able to walk alongside him in his health journey.

## DON’T: GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF...

While the date might be going INCREDIBLY well, there’s no need to get ahead of yourself—especially on the first date. Tim was on a date with Millie, and he couldn’t help but notice that she checked all of his boxes. He started planning a future with Millie, going as far as to ask her what an ideal wedding venue would be and how many kids she wanted. Little did Tim know that Millie was not that interested in him. Even after she politely declined to go out with him, he repeatedly asked her to be his girlfriend, making her even more uncomfortable. Please wait until at least the third date to ask about kids.

## DO: TEXT AFTER THE DATE

Logan had an exceptional date with Evelyn, to the point where he could not get her off of his mind. As one does, he texted her about how much he enjoyed the date. This kind gesture touched Evelyn’s heart, and she was more than willing to go on a second date with Logan!

## DON’T: DATE WHEN YOU’RE NOT READY

Rowan was on a date with Adalyn and could not stop talking about how much he misses his ex-girlfriend, who he had broken up with a week ago. Dating is not a therapy session. Wait until you are completely over your ex before you start dating again.

With all that being said, if you follow our Do’s and avoid our Don’ts, you are sure to find a partner (maybe)—or at the very least, some self-love. Good luck with either!



CHIDIMMA  
ADINNA '25  
(CADINNA@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) DEFINITELY  
DID NOT EXPERIENCE SOME  
OF THOSE EVENTS.  
ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26  
(AADEBAYO@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) PLEADS  
THE FIFTH.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES  
'26

# ARTS *Awake*

Youth, libido, and violence collide in *Spring Awakening*, the musical of the season.

BY NOAH TAVARES '24

■ This performance is not suitable for children under the age of 16...and includes references to genitalia, sexual abuse, homelessness, and abortion.”

Covering the bottom third of the promotional website for *Spring Awakening*, the content warning for the show reads like the text at the end of a pharmaceutical advertisement. I walked into the main stage at the American Repertory Theater nervous to experience this mythical theatrical event. The original play was banned in Germany for being too pornographic. Every performance afterward has been heavily censored or received some sort of outrage. Even the modernized musical, given a pop-punk score in the wake of the Columbine shooting, had to release a heavily edited “school edition” despite winning eight Tonys.

Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club’s (HRDC) only musical to grace the 550-person-capacity Loeb Drama Center this season, “Spring Awakening” places sex and violence at its center. Warning against the dangers of societal silence, the musical tells a coming-of-age story focused on a group of German schoolchildren. Though nominally set in the 19th century, timelessness is at the center of the production. The visual language communicates a world just a little further behind ours today, but a world that will persist past our time. Wide Dickie shorts cuffed barely two inches above the knees define the silhouette of young schoolboys discovering wet dreams for the first time. The shadows cast by the stage lights hitting the short’s fabric make the boys’ legs look like they are always shaking, reminding me of the feeling of precarity that puberty invokes.

But Director Grace Allen '24 and her team go beyond just the male experience (which has been developed plenty by previous major productions). The team specially attends to the experience of the adolescent women in the story, who deal directly with miseducation, social pressure, physical abuse, sexual coercion, and, in one case, a deadly back-alley abortion. Green room conversations with the cast revealed an intentional directing practice that placed actor safety at the

forefront of the production process.

While I watched the cast warm up, the trust they had built with each other over a relatively luxurious rehearsal window was evident. Despite the gravity and gruesome nature of the show’s content, the entire production team is prepared to take risks for each other. These risks play out beautifully on stage, like during a bone-chilling performance of “The Dark I Know Well.” The rendition, led by a breathtaking Andreea Haidau '26 (Martha Bessell) and a forceful Hannah Alexis '27 (Ilse Neumann), sounds like a substantial departure from the original 2006 score. Musical directors Fahim Ahmed '25, Joe Bradley '25, and Henry Wu '25 have given sonic space to feel the vulnerability in Haidau’s voice and the resilience in Alexis’s.

While the music throughout the entire two hours is often bombastic and benefits from the talented ensemble, in the dress rehearsal I watched, the deeply thoughtful choreography was incongruous with some of the excellent blocking. Even sitting in an 11-person crowd, the punk energy during “Totally F\*\*\*\*d” at the climax of the show almost compelled me to jump out of my seat and sing along. But, this energy was developed by letting the cast run wild, jumping in tandem with the energy of the live eight-person band on stage with them. Throughout the rest of the show, the rewarding choreography was characterized by large sweeping

arm movements and relatively restrained lower bodies. However, without performers moving with their base, group choreography

repeatedly evoked a helical motif which often distracted from sensitive scenes involving incredibly nuanced acting that had clearly been developed with care. Despite this, I enjoyed the decision to

introduce some asynchrony in the actors’ movement. The pattern of dancers diverging and converging to rhythm surfaced each character’s individuality through what could have easily been anonymizing set pieces.

The legibility of every performer’s individuality is ultimately what sells this production. Often musicals rely on hero performances, but *Spring Awakening* demands that every actor step up to the occasion. To be clear, the lead performers are successful. Leading man Jonah Sorscher '25 (Melchior Gabor) delivers something reminiscent of Timothée Chalamet’s performance in *The French Dispatch*, and Nikhil Kamat '25 (Moritz Stiefel) executes a convincingly tragic descent into suicide. The entire musical hinges on Shannon Harrington’s '26 (Wendla Bergmann) incredibly layered depiction of a girl becoming a woman while desperately holding on to her identity.

And still, the rest of the cast demands to be seen and heard. The *Independent’s* own Editor-in-Chief Andrew Spielmann '25 (Hanschen Rilow) provides a scintillating simulation of boyish autoerotic manipulation. Anna Fitzsimmons '25 (Frau Gabor) holds the emotional throughline of the script while balancing on the edge of an oedipal mother. Every cast member stands up to contribute a memorable moment.

So, I am left wanting more time. I want to get to know these characters better. In some sense, I feel rushed from emotional payoff to emotional payoff. In another sense, I understand this is the compromise of student theater—I cannot ask the sound designer to add more to the 300 cues this musical already uses. Ultimately, this desire for more is the struggle this show is taking on. It is asking me to become alongside the players, knowing I will always be rushed.

*Spring Awakening* opened on April 3 and runs until April 6.

NOAH TAVARES '24

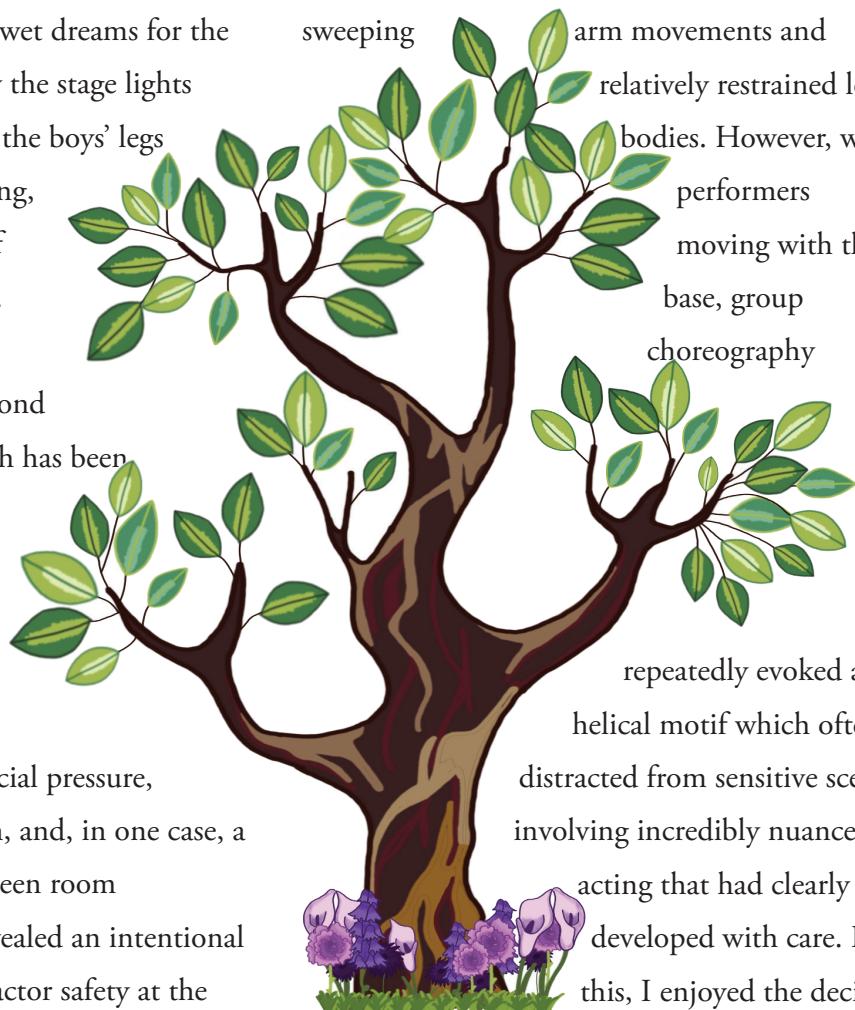
(NOAHTAVARES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)

CANNOT BE FIRED FROM THE *INDEPENDENT*

AND SO REMAINED COMPLETELY HONEST

AND TOTALLY SUBJECTIVE.

GRAPHIC BY ALMA RUSSELL '26



# Transcendentalism is a Techno Rave

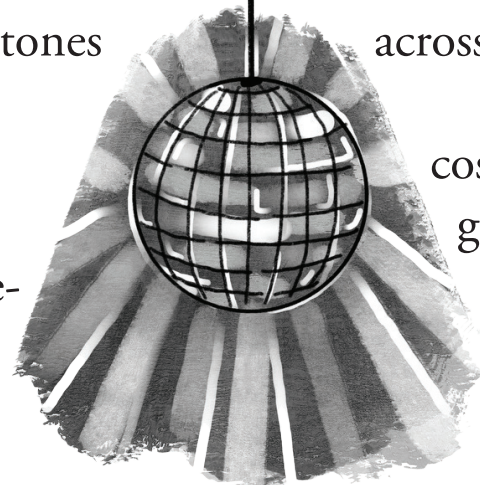
BY KYA BROOKS '25

Transcendentalism is a techno rave. The pounding tempo and shrieking dubstep, bass reverberating through bejeweled chests. Communion in candy bracelets, exchanged from my wrist to yours.

This is divine consciousness. Funhouse mirror bodies collide like billiard balls, the grinding hips of youth. Back cutouts, side cutouts, and midribs everywhere.

There is something spiritual in exotic birds. In the multicolored majesty of gyrating figures of resplendent plumage — metallic silver and aztec gold, pearl pink and glacier blue. We find revelation in rainbow fishnets, latex spandex, and lycra.

I trace gemstones across your collarbones, lost in your cosmetics. Your pink glitter and shadow, obsidian eye-glass skin and dewy lips.



This is catharsis. The white sky opens and outpours its feelings. Rain pooling into rouge, pink rivulets streaking your face, iridescent tears falling down.

Transcendentalism is a techno rave. Subliminal sensations beyond my understanding ghosting across my nerves. Emerson dwells in your emerald eyes, alight with the oversoul. In your mouth, I find Thoreau.

GRAPHIC BY DAVID LI '25

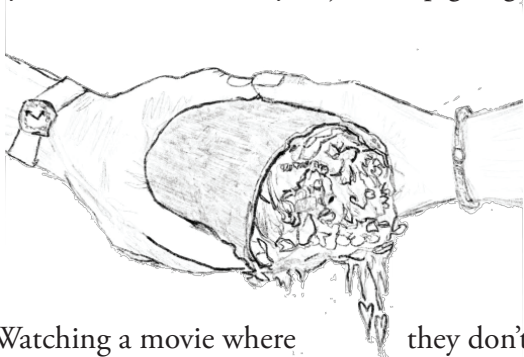
## 10 Things Better Than Sex

*Fornication or Felipe's?*

BY SOPHIE DEPAUL '27

Great sex is great sex—if you can find it. But let's be honest, there are ten things in this world that beat it (almost) every time.

1. Talking about sex. Sure, sex is great. But when it's over, there's nothing that beats the high of recounting your sexual escapades to your friends—complete with impressions, physical demonstrations, and audience commentary.
2. Eating a Felipe's burrito in one bite. There's something incredibly orgasmic about putting that wet, tightly wrapped burrito in your mouth. Teeth slicing through the tortilla to the juicy, spicy, cheesy insides. Pico drips down the side of your mouth—but you don't even care—you just keep going.



3. Watching a movie where they don't have sex but they really should. There's nothing like a toe-curlingly chaste, age-appropriate romance.

You just know that they're sleeping together, but they don't show it on screen. As the scene fades to black, you can only imagine the wild things they're getting up to.

4. An intellectually stimulating conversation with an equal whom you respect. Good luck finding that though.
5. Getting back from a long day of class and sitting on the toilet to let out that pee you've been holding for about an hour because you'll "be back at your dorm soon." Bonus points if you do it while watching TikTok.
6. Falling in love. HA!
7. Being able to finally breathe through BOTH nostrils after conquering the college flu for the third time this winter. There's nothing that makes you realize how much you take the ability to breathe for granted like your roommates (or hookups) giving you another viral infection.
8. Having someone admit that you're right and

they're wrong. Nothing beats the head rush of intellectual superiority. This one is even more orgasmic when they look it up online and end up proving themselves wrong.

9. Fantasizing about sex in class. Economics 10A struggles to compete with those made-up scenarios playing in your head. Did he just say, "You can shift down on this demand curve" or that he'd like to try "reverse causality?"
10. Remembering the best sex you've ever had. You usually remember it better than it was anyway. I bet you're blushing right now thinking about it.

So next time you're wondering about going back to him or feel like hating on a happy couple, remember the ten things that can be even better than consummation.

SOPHIE DEPAUL '27 (SOPHIE\_DEPAUL@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES ARTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

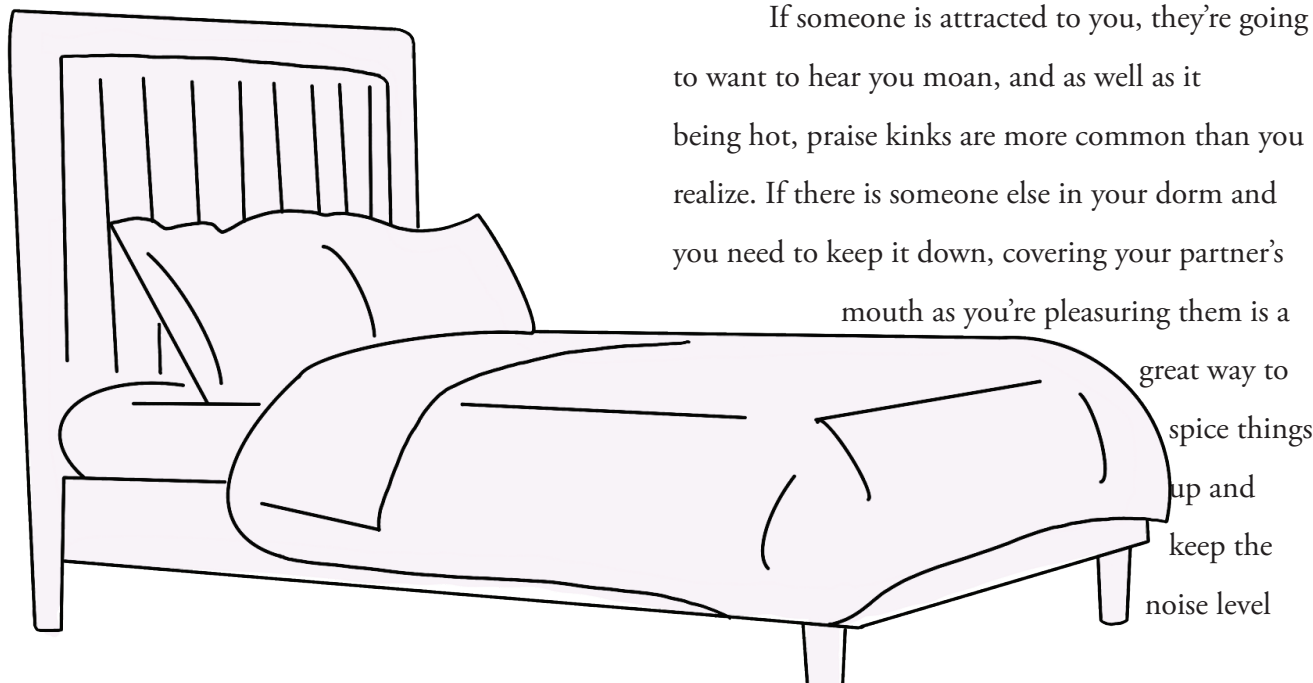
GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE BECKLEY '27

# How to Have Sex in a Harvard Dorm

"How big is it?" she whispered. "80 inches long and 38 inches wide."

BY JUSTIN AND SELENA

It, of course, is a twin XL bed, of which one or more resides in every Harvard dorm room. Uncomfortable, narrow, and really, really low to the ground, the beds here at Harvard are tough enough for one person to get settled in, let alone two. Having sex in these beds is difficult—thrusting your hardest while making sure your bed's creaks can't be heard from the Quad to the river isn't the hottest thing in the world. Lucky for you, we are two exes who like to think we've perfected the art of having sex in a twin XL. Trust us, the reasons we broke up had absolutely nothing to do with our sex life. By the end of this article, your Harvard dorm is going to be home to some of the best orgasms of your life. Below are some helpful tips to get you there.



## Prepare Thoroughly

Being in the mood for sex majorly improves the experience. Lighting is one of the most important elements of setting the mood in your dorm. Having sex with the lights on is a bit of a vibe killer, and having sex in pitch darkness is kinda wild. An easy fix for this is a common dorm room appliance—LED light strips. LED lights (purple ones are our personal favorite) are a happy medium.

Consider securing your mattress topper. Believe it or not, two (or more, if you're into that) people thrashing around on a tiny bed tends to mess it up a little. The last thing you want is to be doing the deed only to be interrupted by slipping off of the bed due to an unsecured mattress topper.

Make sure your sheets are neatly tucked in under your mattress for similar reasons, allowing you to focus on the person (or people) in front of

you. You might also want to put a pillow or blanket behind the headboard as a cushion. You don't (or do, if it suits your fancy) need your suitemates hearing your bed frame banging into the wall.

## Have Some Foreplay

Since the twin XL is certainly not the sexiest environment, you're going to have to put in a bit of extra effort to prime yourself for the best sex of your life. Foreplay is critical. One thing we can recommend would be to not have both people on the bed right away. Especially for foreplay, something you could try is one person sitting or lying on the edge of the bed and the other standing or kneeling in front of them.

If someone is attracted to you, they're going to want to hear you moan, and as well as it being hot, praise kinks are more common than you realize. If there is someone else in your dorm and you need to keep it down, covering your partner's mouth as you're pleasuring them is a great way to spice things up and keep the noise level

to a minimum. It's both functional and hot. We've definitely used that one in multiple places at Harvard (\*cough\* the stacks \*cough\*), and you can too!

Whether you want to be loud or quiet, it's important to plan ahead. So, if you're sexiling a suitemate, make sure to be courteous, understanding, and give advance notice. However, if you aren't, it's worth noting that "accidentally" having someone hear you having sex isn't the least hot thing we've ever heard of (but we don't condone this at all). In conclusion, let it loose! One of the upsides about having virtually no room in bed is that things tend to get pretty heated pretty quickly (what a great excuse to take off your clothes)!

## Use the Space (or Lack Thereof)

Normally, you should start sex by centering

yourselves in the bed, but this really isn't an option for your extremely cramped twin XL. Like it or not, if you're both getting into bed, you don't have much of a choice other than to be on top of each other. Use that to your advantage. Eye contact, if done right, is one of the best parts of sex, and is just as hot as it is intimate. Don't stare at your wall or ceiling while doing the deed and don't stare deep into your partner's soul, but intentional eye contact while having sex is a huge, huge turn-on. One other advantage the cramped space provides is that it allows you to touch your partner as much as possible. Again, you literally cannot avoid this, so please don't try to. Before, during, and after sex, having a cramped twin XL makes sure that you and your partner are touching at all times.

## Sex It Up.

We can now focus on actually doing the deed, because if you and your partner aren't having sex at this point, you probably aren't with the right person. This part can get a bit tricky given the bed's narrow dimensions, but believe us, it's totally doable, and you can use the lack of space to make things spicy. To set yourself up for success, start with the basics (missionary, cowgirl, doggie) and shake it up (speed bump, broken eagle, spider) as you get more comfortable with the less-than-ideal setting. Missionary in particular, while kind of boring, is going to be your best bet given the limited space a twin XL affords you.

As things get more aggressive, use your fear of rolling off the narrow bed (especially if you have bed risers) to your advantage: cling tightly to your partner and grab onto the bed frame for stability. Now that you have a complete guide, none of the old excuses ("the bed is too small," "my roommates will hear,") will work.

At the end of the day, sex is what you make of it. No matter the setting, if you're with the right person, your sex is going to be good...with enough practice. Just remember to follow these guidelines and *happy fucking!*

**JUSTIN AND SELENA ARE STUDENTS WHO THINK THAT IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL FOR TWO EXES TO WRITE THIS ARTICLE TOGETHER.**

**GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26**

# John Harvard, I Want You

A fan-fiction about Harvard's most famous statue.

BY ANONYMOUS

It was first-year move-in day. When I stepped foot on campus, I instantly felt a rush of excitement but also was overwhelmed. In high school, I focused on getting perfect grades and being president of my class. I had no time to relax and have fun. On those rare occasions where I did have free nights to spare, I spent my time watching raunchy 2000s college movies in which college is depicted as continually being naked and doing keg stands. In those moments, I closed my eyes, picturing my own euphoric college experience, and smiled. Suddenly, I was back on campus, starting my first day at Harvard.

During the mandatory orientation information sessions, I zoned out as deans and upperclassmen shared details about different courses and concentrations. I was done listening to anything school-related. I was ready to fuck. The only type of information my ears were opening to was where the parties were taking place and the weird vaguely sexual traditions

people were already beginning to complete, like peeing on the John Harvard statue or fucking in the stacks.

That first week of school, I tried to increase my chances of experiencing that first college sex euphoria I'd been dreaming about all of my life. I attended the First-Year Fling, numerous dorm parties, and parties hosted by organizations I had no business being at. And yet, there was nobody who grabbed my attention. Even worse, I grabbed nobody's attention. I dragged myself back to my dorm in Thayer and started to feel a sickening pit of dread in my stomach. Maybe college wasn't going to be all that I imagined it to be. I crawled into bed, turned on *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, and was about to leave it to myself to get the real party started when unexpectedly, I heard laughter outside my

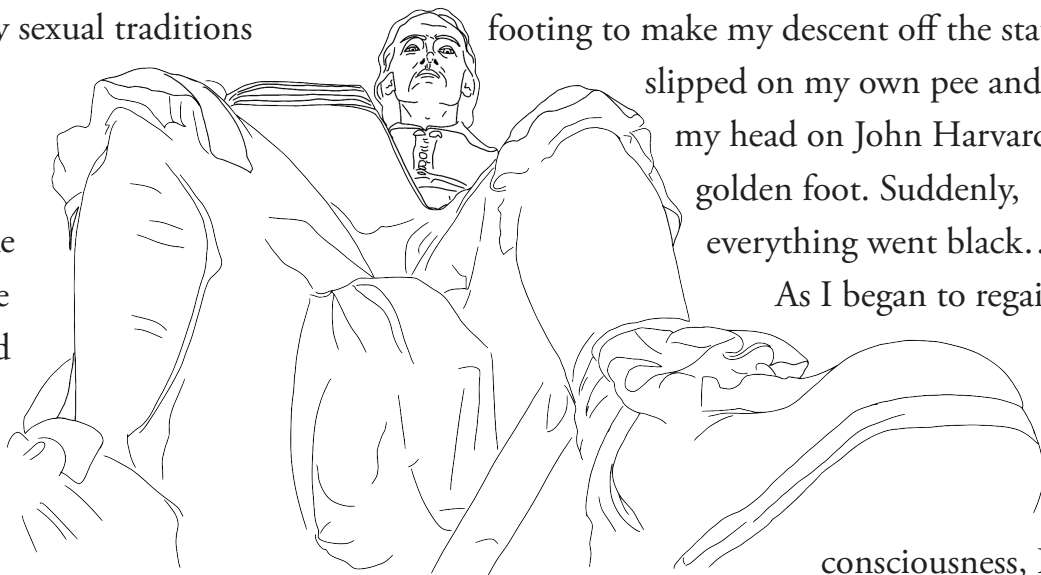
window.

I ran outside to see a group of kids standing around the statue of John Harvard, giggling and pointing as one boy stood on top and pissed all over John's ankles. I swiftly joined the group and waited to see who would be brave enough to go next. The laughter died down as no one seemed to be volunteering. This was it, I thought to myself. If I get up there and pee, everyone is going to think I'm so cool and funny and hot. Who wouldn't want to have sex with me then?

I made my way to the side of the statue and hauled myself up. I felt all eyes on me, as if I was on a big concert stage, and the spotlight was beaming directly on my face. This was my one opportunity to shine. I couldn't let any pee shyness fail me now. I focused really hard and let the warm liquid flood the bronze platform below me as the other students' laughter filled the air once more. It was finally time for my performance to come to an end. As I switched my footing to make my descent off the statue, I

slipped on my own pee and hit my head on John Harvard's golden foot. Suddenly, everything went black...

As I began to regain



consciousness, I felt

two big, strong hands holding me up. I assumed that I was being picked up and carried to an ambulance by paramedics or a Securitas officer. But these hands didn't feel like human skin. They were smooth and cold, almost metallic.

Abruptly, the owner of those hands whispered to me, "That was a close one." I opened my eyes. "WHAT THE FUCK!?" I screamed as I was face-to-face with JOHN HARVARD standing upright, holding me in the fetal position. It must have been very late at night because there was no one out in the Yard for me to yell to for help. The statue spoke again: "I've been stuck in this awful chair since 1884. Your special urine finally brought me to life. I've been waiting

for you." He put me down and adjusted his back as he stood up straight. Unsure if I should feel petrified or turned on, I looked John up and down, trying to make sure what I was seeing was real. His chiseled jaw, handsome face, and luscious locks were a sight for sore eyes, sending tingles down my whole body. My fear quickly turned into curiosity and arousal.

John and I stayed up and talked through all hours of the night. He spoke about his short life in the early 1600s as a passionate scholar. He discussed his hopes and dreams that he never got to fulfill. I listened attentively to his stories while he listened to mine. I shared that I too have ambitions that have yet to come true.

In a flash, his bronze, full lips were on top of mine. His breath tasted like shit, but poor Johnny hadn't had the chance to brush his teeth in hundreds of years, so I understood. We laughed, we cried, we touched each other, and we fucked like animals until the sun came up. All too quickly, it was time for John to sit back in position and turn back to metal before the tourists and students began to come out. We said our goodbyes and I prayed I would get the opportunity to bring John back to life again one day.

All of a sudden, I was back in my tiny dorm room. I woke up with a pounding migraine. Was it all just a dream? But it felt so real. I could still feel his cold lips on mine. I had to go see him. I raced out of bed and ran outside only to see John Harvard perfectly positioned in his chair, surrounded by tourists.

I couldn't help but feel a raging surge of jealousy as each tourist took turns taking pictures with John and rubbing his feet. That should be me, I thought to myself. I leaned against a tall tree, watching John and wishing he was right back next to me. A tear streamed down my face. At that instant, I could have sworn I saw the John Harvard statue wink at me.

I've finally experienced true euphoria. Thank you, John Harvard.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE  
*HARVARD INDEPENDENT*.

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26

# Hot and Heavy at Harvard

A selection of Harvard-themed sexual endeavors.

BY ANONYMOUS



*The John Harvard*  
If you are the type for a good old-fashioned foot fetish, this one's for you.

Any worship of those lovely little piggies fits the bill. Please do not interpret this as support for the oh-so-infamous golden shower...unless you are really into that.

*The Stacks*  
Great for a quickie in public, we recommend standing against each other, with the penetratee raising one leg for easy access (if there is penetration involved). Try to stabilize yourself with the penetrator, if there is one involved, have both feet on the floor and use the physics of counterbalance to remain upright, as no one quite knows how sturdy the stacks really are.

*The Tasty Bast*  
The only thing this requires is that you use protection, because we all know how many STDs may be living on the floors of Tasty Bast. Practice safe sex, keep yourselves clean, and, if anything goes awry, HUHS is only a call (and a long wait) away.

*The SpeeDSM*  
Get kinky with this one, as the Spee would encourage you to do. In this case, anything goes, so grab your leather and latex, and enjoy peeling each other out of your skimpy outfits before getting freaky with it.

*The Neighbors Are Home*  
Want to do the dirty without the unfortunate soul who shares your wall listening in? Try a seductive, almost tantric position, dare I say. Lay in the spooning position and move slowly and quietly so as not to shake the bed. We are all far too familiar with that creaking sound, but if you get into this one, the horizontal movement makes much less noise.

*The Harvard Independent*  
We all have those lonely nights, or mornings, or mid-afternoons. Look back in the Indy archives and find Becca Ackerman's article on how to masturbate when you have a roommate. Grab some lotion or a vibrator, and enjoy the wondrous time you can have all on your own.

*The Roomies Walked In*  
Did your roommate just walk in on you in the throws of it? Why the hell not invite them to join? (I would recommend this if it were not for the numerous blatantly obvious reasons why it is a terribly awkward idea.) If you have never had a threesome, this encounter may be an opportunity to check something off of the Rice Purity Test, and, well, you were both going to sleep there anyway.

*The Crimson*  
Reliable, mildly boring, but trusty, I guess; I hope it is evident that I am referring to missionary. An obvious place to start, but people who prefer this clearly don't belong to no one but themselves.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE  
HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26

LATEX GRAPHENE

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Davin Wedel founded Global Protection Corp. in 1987 when he was an undergraduate at Tufts University. Wedel was determined to make condom use fun and stylish – as socially acceptable as toothpaste and as second nature as wearing a seatbelt.

Global Protection has remained at the forefront of condom technology, including launching the first-ever glow-in-the-dark condoms and the groundbreaking MyONE® Custom Fit™ line of 52 condom sizes. Most recently, the company launched the world's first graphene condom called ONE® Flex™ under its ONE® Condoms brand.

After its discovery in 2004, graphene quickly captured international attention and became a catalyst for innovation across industries. NASA calls graphene a "wonder material." Graphene is 200 times stronger than steel, 1 million times thinner than human hair, and the most conductive solid ever discovered.

"Graphene is like a magic ingredient for condoms. It provides incredible thinness, strength, flexibility, and heat transfer – all the things you want in a condom. Our hybrid graphene-latex condom addresses some of the most common condom complaints head on, including pleasure, sensation, and comfort," said Davin Wedel, CEO and founder of Global Protection.


On its own, latex is an insulator, which keeps you from feeling your partner's natural body heat. Graphene, on the other hand, is the most conductive material on the planet. Because ONE® Flex™ molecularly combines latex with graphene, the condom increases body heat transfer by 85% compared to standard latex condoms. This results in a more natural, skin-on-skin feeling.

When combined with graphene, latex can also stretch farther without feeling tighter. Due to the capabilities of graphene, ONE® Flex™ condoms are ultra-thin without losing flexibility, sensation, or comfort.

ONE® Flex™ condoms are available at [onecondoms.com/flex](http://onecondoms.com/flex), [amazon.com/one](http://amazon.com/one), and select Walgreens stores. All ONE® Condoms are FDA-cleared, vegan-friendly, non-GMO, nontoxic, and free from any harmful chemicals.

Hi-Neighbor!

## NEW ENGLAND'S LAGER SINCE 1890



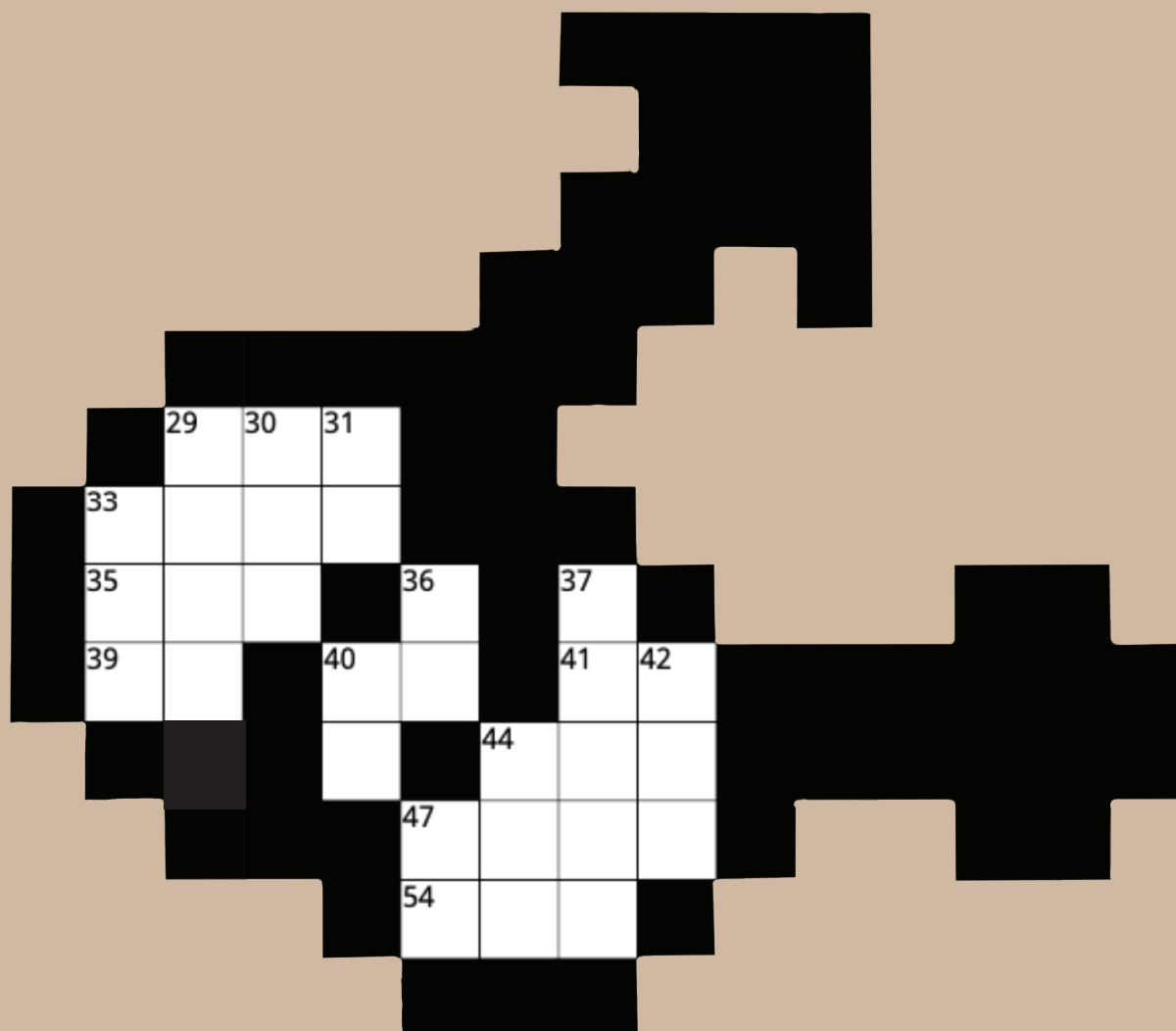
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# Sex Issue

BY REBECCA ACKERMAN '25



## ACROSS

- 29 Vietnamese soup  
33 A job?  
35 Waste away  
39 Might utter when reaching 47  
40 First day of the work wk.  
41 Captain of the Millennium Falcon initials  
44 \_\_cum  
47 Climax  
54 Enemy

## DOWN

- 29 "Dude, tonight I'm going to \_\_\_ those fields!"  
30 Sexy  
31 If it's too big one might utter:  
33 Taken off during sex  
36 Prefix meaning partner  
37 Metaphorical crowd  
40 Narcissist's main concern  
42 It sells, they say  
44 HMO alternative  
47 To a great degree, in slang

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