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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newspaper, the *Harvard Independent* provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The *Independent* has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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The Harvard Independent's Annual Sex Survey Reveals Shifts in Campus Attitudes Toward Intimacy and Identity

An analysis of Harvard Independent's 2025 Sex Survey results.

BY HARVARD INDEPENDENT NEWS STAFF

Released every year to demystify intimate topics, the *Independent's* 2025 Sex Survey revealed a campus increasingly nuanced in its views regarding relationships, gender, and sexuality. With 545 responses across all four undergraduate years, this year's results peel back the curtain on norms surrounding dating, sex, and self-expression.

Respondent Demographics

Survey engagement was balanced across all four grades, with 28.6% being from the Class of 2029, 30.7% from the Class of 2028, 20.6% from the Class of 2027, and 20.2% from the Class of 2026. 49% respondents were 17-19, 49% respondents were 20-22, and 2.1% were 23 or older.

With respect to gender identity, 58.9% of all respondents were female, 39.9% male, 0.9% non-binary, and 0.3% gender queer or preferred not to disclose. Out of all respondents, 1.9% were transgender. Among these individuals, 64.4% identified as straight, 23.6% as bisexual, 8% as gay or lesbian, and 2.3% as pansexual. The last 1.7% entered other sexualities or preferred not to respond.

When asked to describe their religious views, the majority 49.5% reported being not very religious, 41.9% said they were religiously moderate, and 8.5 disclosed being very religious.

Racially, 62.2% of all survey takers were white, 28.2% Asian, 12.5% Black or African American, 12% Hispanic or Latino, 2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The remaining 1.4% specified their race as Middle Eastern or Arab.

Relationships and Hook-Up Culture

Harvard's hookup culture remains alive and well, but just like the rest of Gen Z, undergraduates also reflect the increasing trend of abstinence. Among respondents, 26.5% reported that they are virgins, while the average age for someone to lose their virginity was 18. When asked whether they had ever lied about their virginity, 10.4% of respondents lied that they were a virgin, 9.2% had said they weren't a virgin, and 17% said they "keep it vague."

On average, students reported having had 2 sexual partners—yet sentiment on this topic varied.

"We all should be fucking more," one respondent wrote. Alternatively, another respondent commented: "Don't have sex before marriage, yall [*sic*] will go to hell."

Students reported finding hookups primarily through parties, dating apps, and random interactions. However, 24% use dating apps such as Hinge, Tinder, and Grindr. "I hooked up with a girl off Sidechat," one student wrote.

Hookups continue to happen across a range of settings. From dorm rooms to the Stacks, 62% of respondents shared they had sex with their roommates next door, and 12% claimed to have had sex in a public bathroom. The "craziest" places people have had sex include: 23 responses for Widener, 18 reported classrooms, 6 reported Lamont, and 2 shared the dining hall.

Attraction and Preferences

Beyond frequency and experience, the *Independent* explored what students find most desirable in a partner.

When asked which groups they find more attractive than the general campus population, 52.8% cited athletes as more desirable—others noted more specific preferences. "People who like breaking and entering/

getting onto rooftops," one student wrote. "I think people are attractive if they're nice," another commented. "Academic weapons," a third respondent said.

Among surveyed students with penises, the average reported size was 6.005 inches. 10.5% of respondents said they preferred greater girth, 17.5% preferred lengthier penises, and 36.3% preferred both. 35.7% did not care about the two.

Across respondents with breasts, the average reported cup size was between B and C cups. When asked about cup size preferences, 59.5% of surveyed students said they had no preferences, 25.1% preferred a C cup or more, and 15.5% preferred a B cup or less. Regarding pubic hair, 42.6% of respondents said that they were "trimmed," 39.8% said that they were "clean-shaven," and 17.6% were "au naturale." As for preferences for their partners, 33.8% said they had no preference, whereas 37.1% preferred trimmed and 26.4% preferred clean-shaven pubic regions.

When it came to intimacy, 40.3% reported their

minority, 16.6% admitted to masturbating in public at least once.

When asked about contraception, the most common method cited was condoms, chosen by 49.7% of respondents, followed by "the pill" at 20.1% and IUD at 16.4%. Only 10.7% said they use the pull-out method.

As for aftercare and food after sex, respondents listed pizza, Mexican cuisine, and burgers as their favorites. One respondent also noted enjoying "a zyn" post-sex.

Student Commentary

What do you think is the biggest misconception about sex?

"Honest communication makes the biggest difference. Stop faking your orgasm and be clear and direct about what feels good. You deserve pleasure, and it will be better for both parties involved!"

"That guys want it more than girls. In truth, girls want it as well; however, there is a rampant culture of slut-shaming that only applies to women and not men."

"That it is dirty and that you are a slut if u have sex! #nottrue #yesssexyes"

"That you can just go right into it. Usually, I feel like women (and sometimes men) need foreplay to loosen up and relax before any penetration can happen. People also assume it has to go perfectly the first time, or they've failed. Usually it takes a few tries to get it to work or find out what works."

"That it's clean. It's definitely not."

Most awkward sexual experience?

"First time."

"He had a small dick and it went really soft, and then he tried to give me his Rolex."

"Dude got impotent because he remembered his trauma from being in a Christian cult."

"My first time was a foursome at 14. It was awkward. Very awkward."

"I was really drunk and I fell asleep while my boyfriend was giving me head and started sleep talking about the dhal."

"Farting while bottoming for the first time (it's ok he farted first)"

A crazy story or a hot take?

"I black out and wake up in girls' beds sometimes, I swear it's a form of teleportation."

"I once hooked up with an Australian guy, and when I was riding him (Bulgarian squat style), he compared me to a kangaroo."

"I once gave head to my bf and the room's door was open, his dad walked in front of it..."

"Once a British guy in the Royal Air Force made me prove to him that I knew every single word of 'We Didn't Start the Fire' by singing it to him as he smoked a cig [*sic*] as we sat under a tree in Cambridge Commons before he would kiss me"

"Normalize talking about sex!"

WRITTEN BY THE NEWS STAFF OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG '27



favorite sex position was missionary, 23.1% doggy, and 20.3% cowgirl; preferred places to be kissed were on the neck, ears, and lips. "Below belt :))," one respondent specified.

As for sex during menstruation, responses were varied. 27.7% of respondents flat out said no, 26.4% said "if I'm horny enough," 20.8% said "if it's light," and 25.1% simply responded "Yes."

Students also shared their favorite euphemisms for their genitalia: "The ICE cannon," "Big mama and the twins," and "Draco Mouthful" were among the 62 answers. Two separate responses said "Bonnie and Clyde."

For those wondering how many sexual partners were viewed as "too many" when looking for a future partner, 24.7% chose 10+, 21.5% shared they do not care, 21% answered 20+, and 18.7% said 5+. The remaining respondents ranged from selecting 35 or 50+, or believing one or two prior partners would be a deal-breaker.

Sex and Self-Care

The survey also delved into solo sexual behavior. 36.8% of respondents watch or read pornography occasionally, 19.3% do so a few times a week, and 22.5% reported that they had never done so. The average respondent reported masturbating 1.57 times per week. A

“All Checked Out: Male and Female Personal Health Clinics in Cambridge”

A list of information on services offered in personal health offices at and around Harvard University’s campus.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

Following the closure of Harvard University’s Women’s Center and Office of BGLTQ Student Life this past summer, many undergraduates have been left with limited options for personal health services. Considering the importance of medical care in the areas of reproductive health, hormone imbalances, nutrition, and mental health, students must now turn to other resources to meet their needs.

Harvard University Health Services

HUHS is a multi-specialty medical center designed for Harvard University affiliates—including students, faculty, staff, eligible post-docs, retirees, in addition to their dependents. Clinics are located at the Smith Campus Center in Harvard Square, Pound Hall at Harvard Law School, and Vanderbilt Hall in Boston.

The majority of HUHS services are partially or fully covered by the Harvard University Student Health Insurance Plan or the Harvard University Group Health Plan. For those not enrolled in either insurance program, billing varies depending on the services provided. Any questions regarding finances can be directed to (617) 496-8700 or billing@huhs.harvard.edu from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mount Auburn Obstetrics and Gynecology at HUHS

Located on the fifth floor of the Smith Campus Center HUHS clinic, Mount Auburn Obstetrics and Gynecology offers women’s healthcare services ranging from family planning to reproductive endocrinology. Registered nurses are on site to answer any questions and expedite pressing queries. “We are a group of experienced women’s health clinicians who have come together out of a commitment to providing the highest quality of care to our patients,” MAOG’s website reads. MAOG’s team of experienced clinicians and registered nurses offers specialized care in partnership with Mount Auburn Hospital, located at 330 Mt. Auburn St. in Cambridge.

Appointments must be scheduled in advance for all non-urgent and preventative care. For urgent matters, MAOG asks that you call 617-495-2333 to reach one of the office’s five primary care doctors.

LGBTQ+ Health Support at HUHS

Also located on the fifth floor of the Smith Campus Center, the LGBTQ+ Health Support program at HUHS provides affirming medical and counseling services tailored to sexual orientation, gender identity, transitioning, sexuality, sexual health, reproductive health, and mental wellness.

The support center offers both medical and counseling services, each staffed by its own care committee of physicians. Medically, the center provides comprehensive and hormonal gender-affirming care, STI testing, HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, and consultation for gender-affirming surgery.

For counseling, the center collaborates with the Counseling and Mental Health Services team and behavioral health staff. These teams offer individual therapy with LGBTQ+ affirming therapists, group support, and peer dialogues facilitated between Harvard undergraduates.

Students

enrolled in the Harvard University Student Health Insurance Plan or the Harvard University Group Health Plan may be eligible for financial coverage for gender affirming health care such as hormone therapy, chest reconstruction, genital surgery, and related procedures. Call (617) 495-2042 for related inquiries.

Sexual and Reproductive Health at HUHS

For the last mentionable branch of HUHS solely dedicated to sexual health at the Smith Campus Center, the Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic focuses on disease prevention, contraceptive education, and pregnancy-related care. Harvard students who have paid the Student Health Fee have unlimited access to STI testing at no additional cost—though an appointment with an HUHS provider is required before they will be granted access to Quest Laboratory—adhering to HIPPA, test results remain confidential.

For contraception, HUHS offers a range of birth control options available after consultation with a primary care provider. Emergency contraception is accessible 24/7 at the ScriptCenter kiosk located on the first floor of the HUHS main office. Options include Plan B, Ella, and the copper ParaGard IUD. These items are available for a reduced cost of \$15 or free for affiliates who experience sexual trauma.

University affiliates seeking support for pregnancy termination are also welcome at the Sexual and Reproductive Health Center. HUHS healthcare providers provide guidance to patients through the process, and both the Student Health Insurance Plan and the Harvard University Group Health Plan cover surgical and medical abortion costs at no expense to network members.

Sexual and Reproductive Health at HUHS can be contacted at (617) 495-5711.

Men’s Health Boston

Though HUHS offers a range of male and female health services, Men’s Health Boston highlights a demographic that usually is not focused on when it comes to sexual and reproductive health needs. Despite being located outside of Cambridge, this center is a short 22-minute drive from Harvard Yard. Men’s Health Boston offers services including testosterone therapy, treatment for erectile dysfunction, cardiovascular medicine, sonic wave therapy, and nutritional counseling.

“The mission of MHB is to deliver world-class healthcare and help men live their best lives possible and strives to provide every patient a remarkable experience, in every dimension, every time,” the website states.

Cambridge Health Alliance OB/GYN Center, Cambridge

Located around a 14-minute walk or four-minute drive from Harvard Yard, CHA’s OB/GYN Center is fully staffed with board-certified specialists in obstetrics and gynecology, along with nurses and support staff. The center also offers services in LGBTQ+ health, midwifery, nutrition, pregnancy care, sexual and reproductive health, and general women’s wellness.

Those interested can contact CHA at 617-665-2800 up until 4:30 p.m. They are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

“Life can be busy, but it’s important to take care of yourself. Whatever your age or stage of your life, we’re here to help with inclusive and caring gynecology, obstetric, and reproductive health providers,” the CHS website homepage reads.

Cambridge Health Alliance Sexual and Reproductive Health

An affiliated practice of CHA, this division provides care related to birth control, STI testing, pregnancy counseling, abortion services, PrEP, PEP, and more. CHA also operates reproductive health clinics in Somerville, Revere, and Cambridge, many offering evening hours, IUD and implant contraception, and free services to qualifying parties.

Though operating under the same hospital as the OB/GYN center, to contact CHA’s Sexual and Reproductive Health team, reach out to 617-591-6746.

Hims & Hers

Confidential, online care has become increasingly popular in the post-pandemic practice of public health. Hims & Hers in particular has gained traction amongst college-aged students seeking online resources for their healthcare needs—populations including Harvard undergraduates.

Topics relating to sexual performance, weight loss, skin care, hair growth, and mental health are offered across both platforms. For men specifically, Hims provides support with erectile dysfunction, testosterone levels, trouble staying or getting hard, among other things. For women, Hers delivers medications that can ease premenopause, relieve menopause, control menstrual cycles, and more.

“Your health is personal. Now, so is your care,” the Hims website reads.

For individuals looking to enroll in either service, Hims and Hers starts with personal intake; the platforms ask for health history, symptoms, and past treatments so their providers can give individualized care. From there, patient backgrounds are reviewed by a provider, and medications are recommended via online messaging if deemed appropriate. Finally, patients are mailed prescriptions under their determined plan.

Undergraduate houses are frequent recipients of packages from both companies.

For Harvard affiliates looking for a starting point to tackle all personal health concerns, HUHS is available via phone at (617) 495-5711 and operates Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS NEWS EDITOR OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY KATHARINE WEINER '29



Desire Meets Discourse: Harvard College's Sex Week

Harvard College's Sex Week is opening dialogue around pleasure, communication, and modern sex education.

BY FRANCES CONNORS '26

Every year since 2012, Harvard eschews its Puritan roots and shines a spotlight on a topic often deemed taboo in higher education: sex. Between Nov. 2 and Nov. 9, the campus organization Sex Education by Harvard College Students puts on its annual Sex Week. The week offers informational seminars on topics such as sexually transmitted illnesses, pregnancy prevention, female pleasure, and queer sex, alongside entertainment such as trivia night and a painting workshop. On Nov. 4, SEHCS proctored "Putting the Talk in Dirty Talk: Learn to Communicate Your Wants and Needs," which featured a presentation by Elizabeth Ashford '19, a Sex Week alumna and founder of Beyond the Beez, a sex education platform. Ashford focused on bettering dialogue about sexual desires and necessities—an often underaddressed yet critical topic in sex education.

Harvard's Sex Week comes at a time of extreme upheaval in American sex education curricula. On May 21, Alabama Senator Shay Shellnutt (R-Trussville) pre-filed a bill set to be read in January 2026 aimed at changing Alabama's approach to sex education in public secondary schools. Shellnutt's policy enforces abstinence-centric curricula that centers on avoiding all sexual risk. This approach would prevent schools from demonstrating how to use contraceptives like condoms or referring students to clinics or providers where they can get abortions. On Aug. 26, the Trump Administration compounded Alabama's efforts and demanded that 46 states and territories remove gender ideology from their Personal Responsibility Education Program curricula or risk losing their federal funding for this sexual education initiative.

Yet while national contention around sex education persists, SEHCS continues to pursue its mission of "empowering members of the Harvard

community to explore their experiences with love and sex by providing comprehensive sex education programming on Harvard's campus." During "Sex Week" in the fall and "Sex Weekend" in the spring, the organization invites sex educators to Cambridge to foster dialogue with the Harvard student body on all topics related to intimacy and love.

On Tuesday night, Ashford and an audience of around 60 students were eager to discuss healthy dialogue over scallion pancakes and lo mein at the communication workshop.

The presentation itself was split into two parts: one focused on sexual wants and needs, and the other on communication. During the first half, Ashford explained the origins of common sexual fantasies like foot fetishes and pain kinks and the psychology behind them. She likened the pleasure derived from pain to the shock of jumping into snow after being in a hot tub, helping students understand why people have this kink. Ashford made it clear that there was no place for shame in the conversation, and her slides were rooted in academic content, focusing on factual explanations.

"Getting rid of the myth space and really finding the facts in the conversation is to me what the goals of all of this work [are] and why people can then walk away with the truth and then work through their sexual interests with the right information," Ashford said in an interview with the *Harvard Independent* after her presentation.

By presenting a wide range of sexual interests, Ashford gave students a better understanding of what they or their partners might want in the bedroom, setting a framework for how they might discuss these interests with their partners.

"I think I have trouble communicating my feelings, and I wanted to learn different methods to do that so I can have a healthy relationship," a first-

year attendee shared.

The second half of the event offered suggestions for how students can express their wants and needs to romantic partners, regardless of how difficult such dialogue may be. Ashford's tips ranged from maintaining a five-to-one compliment to critique ratio to approaching conversations from the "I" perspective. Throughout the lecture, Ashford emphasized the importance of understanding how you feel, so those emotions can be properly conveyed to your partner.

In addition to tips for conversations with current partners, Ashford also talked about how to start conversations with strangers and be more approachable using a science-backed approach. She shared that open body language is key. For instance, having your feet pointed outward and holding your drink or phone to the side instead of in front of your chest will make you seem more open to conversation.

"I wanted to be more informed about my own body and desires, and I guess the desires of my partner," an undergraduate told the *Independent*.

Students started trying out a new handshake technique after learning it was a good way to demonstrate interest. The lecture hall was filled with students brushing their friends' right elbows with their left hands as they shook hands. Students oohed and ahed as they discovered how flirty this new trick was.

At the end of the event, students scrambled to the front of the room to pick up the staple of every Sex Week event: safe sex supplies and toys. Condoms and lubricant were spread across a table, and the event also ran a lottery with sex toys as prizes. The supplies represent the mission of Harvard Sex Week: empowering students to explore new sexual experiences on top of being a major attraction to the event.

"I wanted free lube because I think people usually come prepared with a condom but not lube, and I want to be prepared," shared the first-year.

Students' reasons for coming to the event extended beyond upping their sex supply inventory.

"A lot of stuff regarding, not just sex education, but even just stuff about sex culturally, is not covered that much in school. You just don't get a lot of access to it," one student said to the *Independent* following the event.

Other students were more partner-focused. "I came to the event to learn more about how I can handle sexual conversations with women," a sophomore in Cabot House added.

As Ashford points out, Sex Week is a key tenet of the undergraduate experience: "There are so many amazing things that you can learn in college, but we don't always focus on the things that will actually carry you through a lot of the very important things in your life."

FRANCES CONNORS '26 (MARYFRANCESCONNORS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE PROGRAMS DIRECTOR FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY TRISCHELLE AFIHENE '27



Veritas and Vulnerability: Sexual Wellness in the Square

What does it mean for students, Cambridge residents, and store management to have BDSM businesses in Harvard Square?

BY SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28

Deep in Harvard Square, amidst the many coffee shops, bagel stops, and bookstores, stands “Good Vibrations,” a nationally known chain of sex-toy stores. Less than a mile apart from Good Vibrations is Hubba Hubba, another renowned BDSM-centric business. For some Harvard College students, these sexual wellness stores serve as an essential resource for exploring intimacy and alternative romantic practices. With Hubba Hubba permanently closing on Nov. 24, Good Vibrations is set to be the Square’s last-standing hub for such practices in proximity to University affiliates.

Located at 52 John F. Kennedy St., Good Vibrations, a storefront for the “Good Vibes” corporation founded in 1977 and based in San Francisco, offers an array of products both online and in-store.

Their website’s anthem speaks to their ethos and product line: “In our world, pleasure is celebrated. Shame is erased in favor of empowerment. WHY? is replaced with HOW? Or maybe, HOW OFTEN? Curiosity is revered and encouraged. Information is openly shared. And sex, in every form, can be nothing short of extraordinary. This is the world of Good Vibes. COME JOIN US HERE. WE’LL BE YOUR GUIDE.”

Good Vibrations’s approach to sex toys focuses on rewriting the current shame-saturated narrative, emphasizing that their storefront is a woman-friendly place to shop. The inventory includes vibrators, dildos, lube, penis toys, anal toys, BDSM fetish, harnesses, lingerie, and more. Prices range from \$5 to over \$150, with the cheapest item being “Poppin’ Rock Candy Oral Sex Candy,” priced at \$2. Some higher-end products can cost more than \$1,000 and are designed for advanced or specialized use, such as “The Dictator—Extreme Sex Machine.”

Before Good Vibrations’s establishment in January of 2017, Hubba Hubba was the sole sex store serving the Cambridge community. To Hubba Hubba’s owners, employees, and customers, it was more than a facility to purchase intimacy products; it was a place of education and open-heartedness. What started as an underground, alternative, and woman-owned fashion store in 1978 has transformed into the sex-positive alternative store that it is today.

“Hubba Hubba is: a health education center, salon, art gallery; as well as a place to restart, meditate, dance, meet a date, learn, and become politically active,” the business’s website reads.

However, due to rising expenses, landlord tensions, environmental changes, and a fluctuating economy, the community that Hubba Hubba hoped to amplify is now in jeopardy, and the business is shuttering in two weeks.

Neither Good Vibrations nor Hubba Hubba were available for comment on the impact of their stores on the Cambridge community. Hubba Hubba expressed having faced past controversies with the Harvard community to the *Independent*, though further details were not shared. Similar to Hubba Hubba, BDSM-oriented stores and communities often contend with comparable misconceptions and misunderstandings.

In an article written by Dr. Namita Chaen—a clinical sexologist, certified sex, intimacy & relationship coach, and certified sexual bodyworker—Chaen addresses the common misconception that BDSM practices are abusive and purely about pain. She challenges this viewpoint by explaining that it is a very consensual and individualized practice for all participants.

“At the heart of BDSM lies the interplay of dominance and submission, where individuals willingly engage in power exchange dynamics for mutual pleasure and fulfillment,” she explains. “Dominance involves asserting control over a partner, guiding and directing their actions within agreed-upon boundaries. Submission entails surrendering control and entrusting oneself to the dominant partner’s guidance and authority.”

While BDSM culture has been more accepted in mainstream media in recent years, typically conservative viewpoints regarding sexual practices seem to have become more common among young adults.

“In the last one or two years, I have noticed more people subscribing to purity culture—I hear more about people talking about having a low body count or waiting for certain relationship milestones than I used to,” an anonymous senior in Winthrop House shared in a statement to the *Independent*. Despite the Hubba Hubba and Good Vibrations’ struggles, Harvard College undergraduates spoke to the growing trend in demystifying sex in anonymous public forums. “I think in a broader long-term sense, there has been an attitude toward sex positivity over the years; however, shame/

In addition to having mixed answers to visiting sex stores in the Square, there was also a sense of uncertainty about the educational purpose of sex stores. “I don’t know if [sex stores] actually affect anything, but rather just have people walk by and giggle,” the sophomore continued. “I think a productive conversation is induced by two people, not just the presence of the store.”

G.B. shared a similar sentiment. “I think they are [a good way to spread awareness about sexuality]. But since it requires people to buy things, I don’t think it’s accessible to everyone.”

In Harvard Square, sex stores occupy a small but visible share of local businesses. Such visibility has sparked conversation about whether the culture they promote will gain more traction in the future.

“Even though I’ve never been to one myself, seeing the signs around the square definitely opened my mind more to the possibility,” the Winthrop senior said. “I’ve also heard friends talking about things they’ve seen or bought at sex stores, which could increase sex positivity, although that is more included in just talking to people more openly about sex.”

Others disagreed, explaining that the sex stores in the Square did place sexual wellness in plain sight; however, that was not quite enough. “I don’t think their existence alone pushes for a sex-positive mindset in the average person due to the general sentiment that hovers around them,” the senior in Currier House said.

Both store owners and Harvard students agree that honest discourse about wellness and intimacy is highly important to create a truly sex-positive environment. Good Vibrations offers multiple how-to blog guides for people to begin exploring self-induced pleasure and sex toys, both for couples and individually.

The Currier House student emphasized that sexuality should be something that everyone feels comfortable exploring.

“My philosophy is that everyone should feel comfortable exploring their sexuality however they see fit as long as it is done in a manner that is respectful to any other parties involved,”

they explained. “Sex is a pretty inherent part of human culture, and I think perpetuating a level of shame or negativity around it creates unnecessary harm.”

With Hubba Hubba closing and Good Vibrations remaining the last sexual-wellness shop in the Square, the conversation regarding sexual wellness and sex positivity seems to be one that will continue, regardless of students’ interactions with these stores. And while Hubba Hubba still has its doors open, students and community members can stop by and explore its diverse products, with all products in the store being 25% off.

SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28 (SIDNEYREGELBRUGGE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HOPES THAT DIALOGUE ABOUT INTIMACY CONTINUES ACROSS CAMPUS.

GRAPHIC BY CALEB BOYCE '29



purity culture definitely renews itself in waves, and recently there has been a return to conservative attitudes in the last year or so,” a senior in Currier House said.

However, conversations regarding sex, intimacy, and sexual wellness on campus are still viewed as too taboo for open dialogue, delegating such conversations to smaller, personal groups. “Me and my friends I love talking about sex. That being said, I think Americans are more squeamish about talking about sex than certain other cultures (e.g., Europeans),” G.B. '27 wrote to the *Independent*.

That same hesitation surrounding open dialogue about sex appears to carry over into students’ real-world behaviors, with the majority of interviewees expressing uncertainty or reluctance about visiting sex stores, including Hubba Hubba and Good Vibrations.

A sophomore in Adams House disclosed that they had been to a sex store in the Square, but did not specify which one, and clarified their visit was not by choice. “[It was] for an initiation task, not of my own volition,” the student said.

FORUM

The Art of Sexting

A guide to perfecting the sexting craft by analyzing personal and crowd-sourced sexts.

BY HORNY PENPAL '27

There are few things I appreciate more in life than a well-crafted sext. I have always, and will always, be a firm believer in the positive power of sexting. Truly good sexting requires a level of intimacy and understanding of your partner that a purely physical hookup often does not. To arouse someone *through a screen*, you have to become an effective communicator. Not just of imaginative action, but of sensation. You need to be highly attentive to what turns your partner on, and they need to communicate that back to you explicitly, because their body can't.

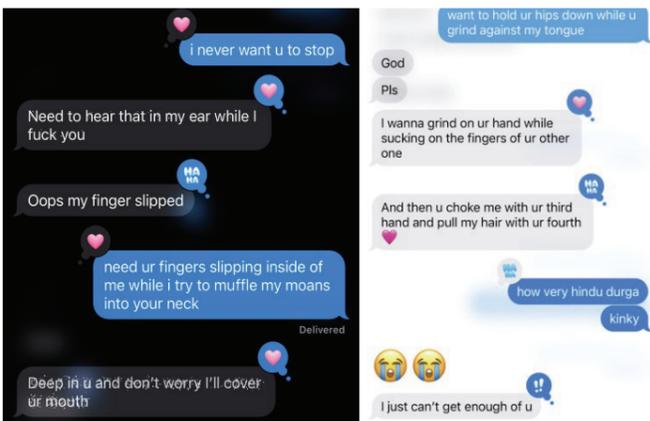
Digital intimacy has become an expected aspect of modern relationships, but while the instant connection can grow a relationship, it can also cause its own problems. We're expected to know how to be vulnerable with our partners and charm them without physical contact. While this has always been the case throughout time—Napoleon's steamy letters to Josephine, Keats's yearning poems for Fanny, Frida Kahlo's lustful notes to Rivera—technology has made instant connection even easier, and thus more fragile. There are ethical dilemmas that arise—we're forced to ask questions like: what does it mean to be sexting more than one person at once? Or what are the ethics around storing nudes from past relationships? Sexting is just as important a part of modern relationships as is physical chemistry and verbal communication. It requires an entirely new level of trust in your partner and your relationship.

Yet, just as many real-life sexual encounters can be underwhelming, there is a lot of bad sexting out there. People often make mistakes: being too aggressive, overly explicit with their language in a jarring way, or offering vague, lukewarm responses that kill the flow of conversation.

With this article, I intend to provide a (more or less) comprehensive beginner's guide to sexting. In line with the principles of hands-on learning, which I believe are essential to becoming good at anything sex-related, I'll be using examples from my own sexting repertoire as well as responses from the Indy Sex Survey. And, because I'm sure you don't want *just* my opinion, I'll occasionally include commentary from my current favorite sexting partner on certain examples. (Yes, we might've used some of your responses as nerdy foreplay.)

I'll point out which aspects of each sext are additive versus subtractive, and by the end, hopefully, you'll be both entertained and slightly more prepared to sext confidently.

Example 1: Funny People Fuck



These sexts highlight an important principle: self-awareness and humor. Sexting is inherently unserious. It's weird and hilarious to type your horniest thoughts onto a 3 in. x 5 in. glowing device and send them to another person permanently. Failing to recognize that can send you down the slippery slope of cringing out your partner.

Just as natural laughter can enhance real sex, it's good to giggle while sexting, too. Keeping things fun and light-hearted allows you to say bolder, more intense things without triggering the ick, because your partner is more likely to be receptive. At the end of the day, sexting (like sex) takes two to tango. It's quick thinking and improvisation, so humor helps diffuse tension. As my partner put it, "the way we riff...translates to sexting." If you can joke together, you can fuck together.

Bonus points for the well-timed invisible ink moment, but minus points for the half-sentence in the last message. Fully formed sentences and proper grammar can go a long way.

Example 2: Coaching the Play-by-Play



A lot is happening here. While the detail is great, the delivery lacks a certain intimacy. As my partner described it, these texts feel "procedural." She explained that "guys often focus on the acts rather than the feeling... so that leads to a lack of artistry." I completely agree.

First, the tone feels detached. The response is not exactly ecstatic. Even though sexy things are being described, there is no sense of how the intended recipient is meant to *feel*. Telling me I'll be "thrown around" and that I *WILL* cum is hard to believe when there's no passion behind it.

For some people, this might work. According to some of my guy friends, this seems like a quality sext. The girls have all felt differently, calling it more cringe-inducing than libido-raising. Interpret that data as you will.

To improve: focus on the *feeling* that you, as a giver, want to create in your partner. Connect the physical action to the emotional response you're trying to elicit. That's what gets the butterflies fluttering.

Example 3: Consent & Knowing Each Other's Kinks



As graphic as these sexts are, they illustrate an important principle: know your partner and remember that consent *is* sexy. It's clear from these messages that both people understand each other's preferences and dynamics. There's a natural back-and-forth that builds momentum and consistent themes throughout.

Sexting is about indulging in fantasies you are physically unable to act on in the moment. In this example, those fantasies are made clear, and both partners check in on and confirm what they want and enjoy. A pointed question not only works as dirty talk but also reinforces consent, which, let's be honest, is incredibly hot. It really can be as simple as just recognizing, reiterating, and responding to your partner's wishes.

Example 4: Reminiscence

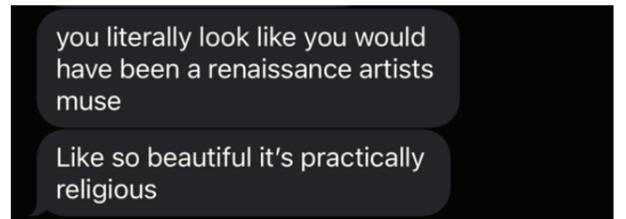


Some of the best sexts aren't about the future; they're about the past. Remembering particularly hot sexual encounters can be just as arousing as anticipation. Sexting is timeless, allowing you to indulge your horniness at any hour of the day and from anywhere in the world. Conversely, that can also make the content feel more intangible.

Ground your sexts in real moments! These examples do an excellent job calling back to shared moments. Everyone knows how powerful a midday sex flashback can be; describing it in detail reminds your partner how much you enjoyed it, syncing your pleasure for next time.

This approach also helps you figure out what your partner truly enjoys in bed, so you can keep doing those things. Sexting, in that way, is a valuable tool in learning how to please your partner. It allows you to test out things on text before real life. Frankly, it's the easiest cheat code out there. Use it.

Example 5: Responding to a nude



Sexting doesn't just involve words. I, for one, have been known to incorporate GIFs, stickers, emojis, voice messages, and most importantly, photos. Technology has allowed us to express desire in a variety of media, but it also means we have to be aware of how vulnerable that can make us. Appropriately responding to a nude photo can make or break the vibe. No one wants to send an exposing photo of themselves only to be met with "Oh, haha, cool" in return.

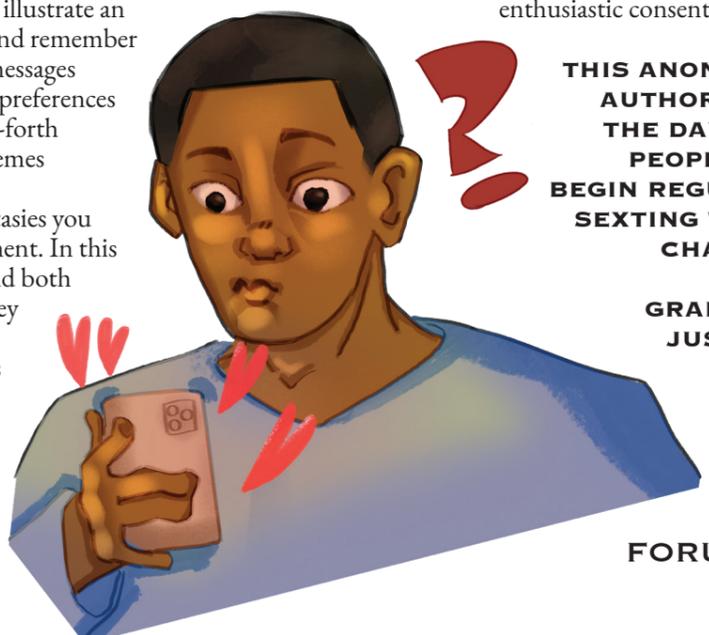
These texts, sent in response to an exceptionally sexy nude, remind us that not every sext has to be explicit in its language. Take advantage of the full range of digital communication. A little yearning or tenderness makes the dirtier lines that follow feel more genuine and palatable.

At the end of the day, there is no single way to sext, but there *are* definitely techniques that work better than others. I've sexted very differently with various partners, but the fundamentals remain the same: sexting is about connection and communication.

If you are both having fun, keep doing what you're doing! And if you're finding someone isn't being responsive, switch it up! Just like sex, listen to your partner, be responsive, and, as always, make sure you have enthusiastic consent.

THIS ANONYMOUS AUTHOR FEARS THE DAY WHEN PEOPLE WILL BEGIN REGULARLY SEXTING WITH AI CHATBOTS.

GRAPHIC BY JUSTIN MA '29



It's Time to Deconsumerize Sex

Why sex shouldn't be just another opportunity to make a profit.

BY ZAID AL-ISSISS '28

Buying condoms for the first time was a confusing experience.

I was at DM-drogerie markt, the European analog of CVS, surrounded by a sea of products I could neither interpret nor distinguish from each other. At the time, I was a student at an international boarding school in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and my Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian skills were extremely limited—especially when it came to sex.

More than the language barrier, however, I was completely and utterly lost trying to choose which pack of condoms to buy. They all seemed different: each pack a new color, shape, design, and even *flavor*. Do we really need to have so many variations of a product with one simple purpose? I didn't think so. But more than that, I was shocked at the extent to which manufacturers were competing for my attention, trying to make me think about their products in personal contexts.

Being in the 'family planning' aisle was more overwhelming than it needed to be. I participated in the sexual wellness market out of necessity because, let's face it, protection is important. Yet my desire for condoms dragged me into the trap of the inflammatory and often over-the-top marketing used by the industry to garner attention.

The borderline pornographic, over-sexualized nature of several condom advertisements I saw, for example, immediately shifted the tone to be less intimate and more objectifying. What should be a tool for having safe sex was being hijacked into a narrative that is strictly unsafe for women. Additionally, the overly casual, conversational tone adopted by companies such as Durex and Trojan in their messaging *almost* makes you forget the fact that these intrusive and innuendo-filled posters are being written by multibillion-dollar companies prying into your sexual affairs. Yet legitimizing this type of language and tone by massive companies only normalizes harassing language.

I recognize that normalizing harassment and objectifying women are not the goals of these advertisements, but that's precisely my point: even if done to spark a reaction, there are real people affected by these campaigns. There should be a distinction between selling a product and using marketing campaigns or collaborations that co-opt our private experiences into twisted interpretations of them for corporate gain. Why should massive companies be involved so granularly in my private sex life? When their presence only diminishes intimacy and creates unsafe narratives around sex, why do we allow companies to corrupt sex—one of the things that makes us human?

Sexual wellness has become another way for corporations to make money. Sex and

sexuality have become highly marketable, and naturally, companies have started to exploit this for profit. The sexual wellness market was valued at \$28.5 billion in 2024 and is expected to more than double to \$65 billion by 2034. Moreover, the sex toy industry has seen a similar boom, reaching a valuation of \$10 billion in 2024. This is not to say that the emergence of these markets is inherently problematic; having industries that manufacture and sell safe products is certainly a good thing. The issue arises when these industries scale up and shift toward a purely profit-driven, shareholder-centered approach, as we are seeing right now.

Growth almost always shifts industries away from their original motivations. For food, drinks, and mass-produced staples, I see less of an issue: they are impersonal goods with little emotional attachment, so profit-maximizing makes sense. I wouldn't blink twice at yet another McDonald's collaboration with a pop culture star. While such campaigns have other drawbacks, the logic is straightforward: McDonald's exists to make money.

Sexual wellness, on the other hand, is fundamentally different. Sex and sexuality are deeply personal and should remain so. Every element of sex should intimately focus on individual pleasure and connection, from the products used to the act itself. Corporations producing these goods do so for profit, and it would be naive to think otherwise. But the approaches they've taken go too far and don't respect the delicacy of sex in particular.

When businesses overstep the ideally clear line between private intimacy and their role in it, it diminishes the personal nature of sex. My attention during sex should be entirely on my partner; Durex is not welcome to pry away my thoughts towards Daft Punk's latest single through their collaborative "Get Lucky" condoms. Likewise, no one should think about the marketing appeal of Harry Styles's lube testimonial mid-intimacy. The impersonality of modern dating apps already threatens intimacy, and consumerized sex only exacerbates this problem.

On a broader scale, pleasure needs to be separated from consumption. Capitalism teaches us that sexual

happiness depends on condom flavor, lube brand, and sex toy color; the resultant social pressure to pursue these aspirations only raises barriers toward having safe and enjoyable sex. When social pressure can lead to using the wrong product (such as using an oversized condom), it's the person seeking STD treatment who gets affected, not the company that put them in that situation. Similarly, when the prohibitively high costs of these products as a result of their overcommodification lead to teen pregnancy, companies are not responsible for any of the consequences. Even for people who have a go-to or favorite choice of a sexual wellness product and tend not to shop around in the market, this choice itself can become a pillar of their experiences in ways that distract from the act of intimacy itself.

In reality, what matters is you, your partner, and your safety. The more we let corporations co-opt our private lives for profit, the further we drift from one of the most meaningful human experiences. Sex belongs to us, not to the companies that see your intimacy as a revenue opportunity, and that reclamation is long overdue. Making it clear that companies are not welcome to prey on our intimacy will reduce anxiety and protect the sanctity of such a vulnerable and sensitive act. At the very least, it might make buying condoms less intimidating.

ZAID AL-ISSISS '28 (ZALISSISS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS NOT A FAN OF CONSUMER CAPITALISM.

GRAPHIC BY NUALA MERNIN '29



Sex Ed as an Asian in the South

A lesson about Sex Education.

BY TYLER DANG '28

Education has been an integral part of human history, allowing each generation to develop beyond what is currently known. Sciences build upon what is already understood to discover the next innovation. History hopes to avoid previous mistakes. English courses foster an appreciation for the stories of different cultures. But one type of education is dedicated to promoting safety: sex education. However awkward this education may be, it is certainly better than silence.

Being born in the South and having attended primarily white, all-boys private schools, I was raised surrounded by conservative thought that emphasized chivalry and reservedness. But it's hard to reconcile this emphasis on modesty with education on the taboo, especially when you're dealing with boys who struggle to take anything seriously. My elementary school's solution: monthly grade-wide meetings titled "Building Boys, Making Men."

As a sixth grader, a chunk of time on the first Tuesday of every month was set aside for this program, during which the school's chaplain, principal, or Dean of Students would lecture us on the fundamentals of manhood. We were all given a book written for the program, with each chapter representing a different "lesson." Like those moral talks your parents try to give when you make a simple, insensitive joke, these sessions were uncomfortable, as each of us put on our best fake listening faces. Lessons varied from talking with the opposite gender (in fairness, the school was all-boys from kindergarten to sixth grade) to handling peer pressure and alcohol (I foolishly believed I would never crack to that vile substance).

However, the worst lesson by far covered chapters eight and nine: "Understanding Puberty" and "Purity and Porn." Put 80 twelve-year-olds in a big conference room and talk about their bodies: you either receive dead silence or sustained, awkward laughter.

For forty minutes, the chaplain rambled on about our "changing bodies" and "newfound attraction to the opposite sex." He spoke about how sex is a natural part of a healthy relationship, but that we must be careful about who we choose as our partners. Afterward, he transitioned to the internet and the presence of porn. He warned about its temptation and consuming nature, and how it was "disrespectful to the female population," reducing women to objects of carnal desire.

Throughout the entire lesson, no one said a word. We had heard warnings

about "Chapter Nine" from older students, but no one was expecting *this*. After the spiel, the chaplain opened the floor for questions, promising to answer anything, regardless of topic. No one dared to say a word until one of my classmates (whom I've now known for 18 years) decided to take him at his word.

"When was the last time you had sex?"

Without missing a beat, the chaplain answered, "Last Tuesday."

For a group of sixth graders with no concept of what a "healthy amount" was, we were appalled. No one expected the lesson, the question, or the answer. The rest of the day was uncomfortable, to say the least.

Unfortunately, my personal sex education extended beyond school. While others might have had a genuine sex education that covered the processes, anatomy, and safe practices, my exposure was limited to "respecting the activity." Instead, my real sex education came from my parents.

Both my mother and father are doctors: an obstetrician-gynecologist and a urologist, respectively. What their practices meant was that they had easy access to detailed diagrams and models of the human anatomy, specifically the genitals. They made sure to capitalize on that access.

One sunny Sunday when I was in fifth grade, my parents sat my fourth-grade sister and me down for the "birds and the bees" talk. While other parents might have broached the topic slowly, with the whole "when a mommy and a daddy really love each other" speech, my parents wasted no time getting into the nitty-gritty, showcasing their numerous models. My sister and I were subjected to the most uncomfortable hour of our lives.

My family was certainly not the norm for many Asian American families. Many Asian families tend to avoid having

these explicit, uncomfortable talks with their children. Cultural norms of shame and modesty often lead parents to force obliviousness in the name of propriety. In fact, for some Asian households, the emphasis on honor results in priorities shifting from open communication to more reserved interactions. In a study of 359 Vietnamese parent-child dyads, only 25% of the parents were aware that their child had a significant other. Moreover, 61% of parents reported feeling uncomfortable discussing sexuality with their children.

Just as Asian tradition silences this discussion of the taboo on the grounds of avoiding what should be a private matter, Southern conservative thought also tends to shun the discussion of sex to preserve its moral values and family structure. Openly speaking and educating about sex might be seen as openly promoting the act in a way that is antithetical to the religious or moral expectations of social order. By promoting sex, some conservatives believe they are encouraging sexual exploration and permissiveness.

However, the lack of any further education on safe sex could easily have been harmful for me or my peers. Similarly, had my family chosen avoidance of these tough discussions, I might have entered college lacking crucial knowledge about protecting myself. Teen birthrates are consistently higher in Southern states than in Northern states for all races, pointing to an education discrepancy being the contributing factor. Sex education that primarily promotes abstinence does not adequately prepare these students for sexual activity.

So while respecting the taboo may help create a polite society, having those tough, uncomfortable talks is just as necessary to ensure that we are safe and well-informed.

As such, I am grateful for my parents and their decision to have "the talk," though they could have kept a few of those models at the office.

**TYLER DANG '28
(TYLERDANG@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.
EDU) IS STILL
RECOVERING FROM
THESE TRAUMATIC
EVENTS.**

**GRAPHIC BY
ALMA RUSSELL '26**



God Doesn't Care If You're Gay, and Neither Should the Law

How “religious freedom” is becoming a license to discriminate.

BY NOAH BASDEN '29

On Oct. 24, the Texas Supreme Court unanimously voted to amend the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct to allow judges in the state to refuse same-sex marriage ceremonies, if doing so would be contrary to their “sincerely held religious beliefs.” To be clear, judges are not required to perform marriages, but are now legally allowed to refuse ceremonies for same-sex couples without facing any repercussions.

In Texas, judges are elected. As Ash Hal, policy and advocacy strategist on LGBTQ+ rights for the Texas ACLU, said in an interview with *The Hill*, “It’s really disappointing... To be a judge is to be a public servant. Offering to do marriages for the general public, but then turning around and saying, ‘Unless that couple is an LGBTQIA+ couple,’ that’s discrimination. That’s not serving the general public.”

Hal makes a compelling argument, one that legal scholars will likely consider when inevitable litigation surrounding the issue comes to fruition. This ruling sets a concerning precedent for public service. Through the codification of religious exemptions into the rules of judicial conduct, discrimination has effectively been authorized in the enactment of government duties.

Legality aside, what is particularly striking in this case is the excuse of “sincerely held religious beliefs” as a moral justification for discriminatory acts against the LGBTQ+ community. Many are calling this decision a win for religious freedom. This viewpoint misunderstands the role of public servants in a diverse and pluralistic society. Religious freedom is a protection for the individual from government interference, not a tool to be used by the government to discriminate against its own citizens.

In a state where the vast majority of people identify as Christian, it is worth asking whether these beliefs represent a distortion of the essential teachings of the Bible, being used as a tool for discrimination in ways that contravene the principles of the religion itself.

The central tenet of the faith is love. The two greatest commandments, identified by Jesus in Matthew 22: 36-40, are to “Love the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul and mind” and to “Love thy neighbor as yourself.” Christians believe that Jesus spent his life among those whom others excluded: he broke bread with debt collectors and sinners alike, gave women a voice in a patriarchal society, and ministered to the sick, poor, and social outcasts, meeting them with kindness, compassion, and empathy. It would not shock anyone to learn that his greatest condemnation came not from the marginalized but from religious authorities, such as the Pharisees, who weaponized faith, choosing condemnation over compassion and exclusion over inclusion.

Jesus reached out to those whom society couldn’t bear to coexist with, those with leprosy, showing that love knows no social or moral boundary. Yet, for these judges, a gay person who loves and is loved, capable of commitment and devotion, represents a line they refuse to cross.

There is no uniform position on homosexuality across Christian denominations, nor is there agreement on what the Bible says about same-sex marriage. No matter one’s interpretation, does refusing marriage services circumvent Jesus’s teachings in Matthew 25:31-46, in the parable of the

Sheep and Goats? I think not. In this parable, Jesus outlines the criteria for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Nowhere does he exclude people based on sexual orientation; rather, he condemns those who fail to show compassion or hospitality to those in need.

So, when Texas judges choose to bar same-sex couples, or LGBTQ+ couples more broadly, from being married in their courthouses, which part of their “sincerely held religious beliefs” justifies turning a stranger away from their door? Where is the compassion for marginalized communities, the faith in action for those cast out from their own homes?

In 2025, at least nine states have introduced legislation attempting to roll back marriage rights guaranteed to same-sex couples in *Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)*, which declared the denial of same-sex couples the right to marry as unconstitutional. This, along with the Supreme Court’s potential review of the precedent set in *Obergefell*, a review which they have now rejected, highlights escalating threats to LGBTQ+ rights nationwide.

American Christianity has a history of weaponizing religion to exclude and discriminate, distorting scripture to serve morally corrupt motives. For instance, the “Curse of Ham” was often cited as a Biblical defense of slavery, despite the fact that race is not mentioned in the text. Similarly, select verses and archaic Christian doctrines were used to justify other atrocities in America’s past, such as Indigenous genocide and the historic subjugation of women.

When it came to interracial marriage, Judge Leon M. Bazile, who sentenced Mildred and Richard Loving for the crime of miscegenation, stated in his judicial opinion that: “Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents... The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.” In each case, those wielding scripture were sincere in belief, citing chapter and verse. Legally and morally, they were wrong. Today, the same is happening to LGBTQ+ communities in Texas.

My religious beliefs are my own. Everyone is entitled to theirs, and disagreement is inevitable.

What, in my view, is not acceptable is using faith to discriminate against and subjugate communities and identities, citing a religion that never condoned such acts. Religious freedom is a fundamental pillar upon which this nation was built, but so too was the idea of a separation of church and state, ensuring that no one religion’s views could be enforced through the law.

In a world filled with suffering, love should be our guiding principle. Love of neighbors, strangers, a love that transcends ignorance and hubris. As John 4:8 states, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves

has been born of God and knows God.”

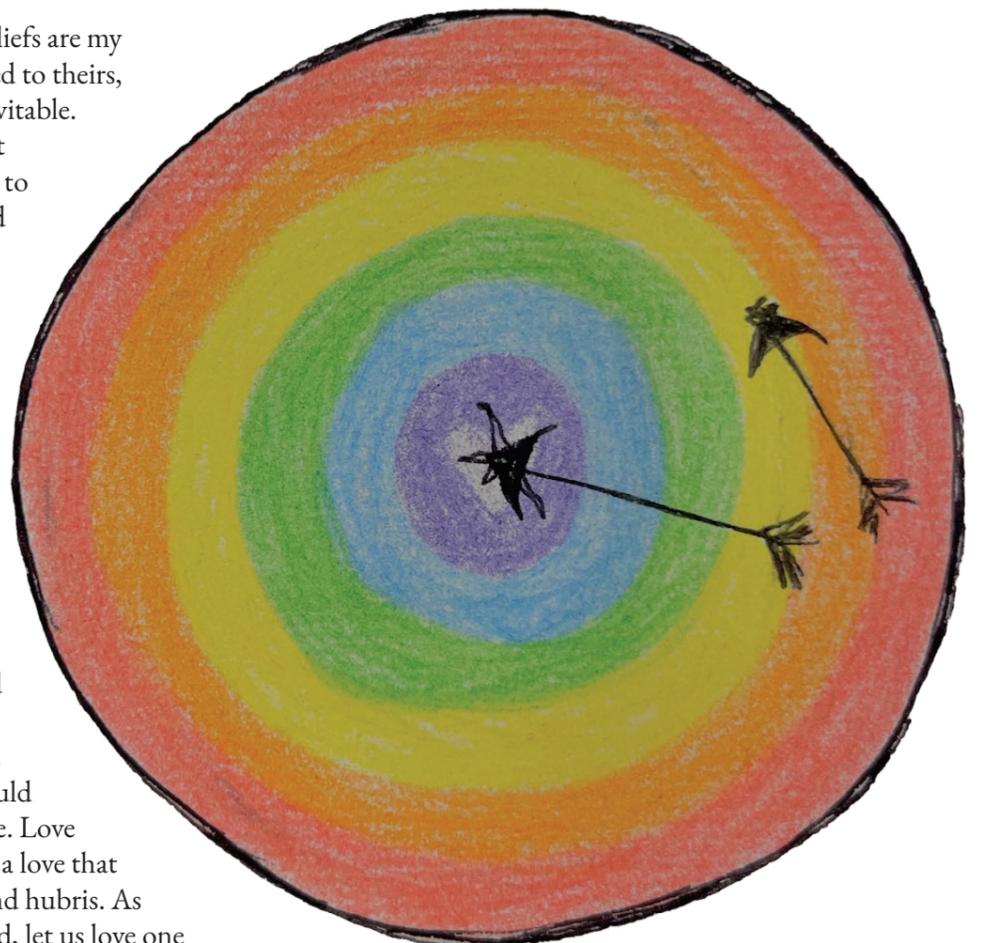
This passage does not differentiate between types of love or the identities of those giving and receiving it. God *is* love, and where genuine love exists between two consenting adults, who are we to deny a commitment that reflects that divine principle? Love is rare and fragile, and in a country where loving a person of the same sex is not a crime, why are judges empowered to turn away couples for the ‘crime’ of loving the “wrong” person based on their personal, arguably misguided, beliefs?

“Love” appears 22 times in this article. While this may seem excessive, prolific discourse reduces LGBTQ+ couples to sexual beings, ignoring what actually matters: commitment, devotion, and partnership. When heterosexual couples marry, we talk about love and dedication; when others marry, all of a sudden, the conversation often becomes hyper-focused on sexual acts. This reductionism is precisely what justifies discrimination.

Whoever you choose to dedicate your life to, privately or publicly, know that your love is no less holy, worthy, or real than anyone else’s. Love is a hard commodity to come by and an even harder one to preserve. Be proud of it, cherish it, and proclaim it. Let the judges in Texas hear that your love exists and that nothing can take it away.

NOAH BASDEN '29 (NHBASDEN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) SHOULD GO TO CHURCH MORE OFTEN, ACCORDING TO HIS FATHER.

GRAPHIC BY MIA STEWART '29



Thoughts from New Quincy: Presence, Lost

How technological mediation erodes the conditions for intimacy.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

Americans are having less sex than at any point in the modern era. The share of U.S. adults ages 18-64 who report having sex weekly has fallen from 55% in 1990 to 37% in 2024. Among young adults, the shift is sharper: the share of 18-29-year-olds who reported no sex in the past year doubled from 12% to 24%, and one in four Gen Z adults says they have never had partnered sex. This trend applies even to teenagers, surrounded by a culture saturated with sexual imagery; high-schoolers reporting ever having had sex fell from 53% in the early 1990s to 39% in 2022.

It's easy to read these numbers as a crisis of desire. But the trend isn't about libido—it's about physicality. Sex is the most literal form of embodied connection, and its decline reflects something broader: a generation that is losing practice in being physically present with each other.

The real shift isn't that people want to have less sex—it's that technological mediation has begun to erode the basic conditions that make intimacy possible: presence, practice, and physical closeness.

That loss shows up long before intimacy. It shows up in the everyday ways people interact—or avoid interacting—observable on our very own campus. Students walk together, eat together, and study in the same common rooms, but the scenes no longer function the way they did even 10 years ago. What looks like closeness is often a substitute for it. At a dining hall table, someone might sit with three friends while texting another friend who lives in the same building. Students who live minutes apart now rely on screens to communicate, even when meeting in-person would take the same amount of time.

This didn't happen overnight. Over the past decade, conversation has been steadily replaced by online messaging. A knock on someone's door became a text; a walk across the Yard became a call; a conversation became a FaceTime. These substitutions were convenient; it is this ease that gradually replaced the habits that once pulled people into the same space.

During the pandemic, screens became necessary. But, they didn't just fill a temporary gap—they have steadily become the default.

A screen can show a face, but it cannot replicate a presence. It flattens what used to be felt—turning a body into pixels, gestures into lag, and eye contact into the illusion of looking. Experiences that were once experienced in three-dimensions have been compressed into two: everything is visible, but nothing is felt. Mediated interaction comes with lag, compression artifacts, and the faint disconnect of looking through a lens instead of someone's eyes. Over time, that version of closeness becomes normal. Proximity becomes optional: something to add when convenient rather than something expected.

This decline in real-world interaction shows up in national data. Over the last 20 years, American men have spent 30% less time socializing face-to-face, and teenagers have seen an even steeper drop of more than 45%. What appears to be an individual preference is actually marking a generational shift. People are not only choosing screens—they are forgetting the default that existed before their creation.

As in-person interactions thin out, they become harder to tolerate. Silence between two people feels heavier when it is rarely practiced. Eye contact becomes something to avoid. Physical closeness without a buffer starts to feel unstructured, intrusive. The lack of control that once defined ordinary social life now feels like something to minimize.

At the same time, social media has transformed how people present themselves. Every platform rewards curation—flattering angles, retakes, Facetuned photos smoothed until they look natural. Performance becomes the expected form of expression. Over time, people have learned to think in posts: being seen becomes more important than being present, resulting in a generation fluent in performing intimacy yet unsure how to fulfill it.

These shifts set the conditions for the third: intimacy collapsing into simulation. Maybe not quite yet, but we are close. A person's physical presence comes last, after their digital version has already been built, evaluated, and judged.

The consequences are visible. People exchange hundreds of messages, photos, and videos before ever seeing each other. By the time they meet, the encounter feels pre-written. The unpredictability that once made intimacy exciting—the uncertainty of how someone might speak, how a moment might shift—has already been flattened. Sex becomes something rehearsed before it ever happens.

On dating apps, people swipe through faces the way they scroll through products—one quick flash after another. Infinite choice teaches users to assess rather than feel, to filter rather than engage. The psychology of desire shifts when the primary mode of interaction is comparison.

Porn and influencer culture reinforce those patterns. For many young people, these platforms function as a kind of informal sex education—teaching not through conversations or experience, but through a steady stream of optimized images. Algorithms amplify whatever performs well: bodies lit for maximum clarity, movements edited for smoothness, expressions calibrated to hold attention. Over time, those aesthetic norms shape expectations.

Not all mediated interactions are hollow. For people who are isolated—geographically, medically, socially—technology creates forms of connection that would otherwise be impossible. But those connections operate differently, and these interactions are like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. They offer communication without physicality, attention without presence. They can sustain someone, but they cannot teach the skills that in-person intimacy requires.

What disappears isn't the drive itself; it's the conditions that once grounded it. Privacy, patience, uncertainty, and risk all depend on an unedited self, and that is what people now have the least practice offering. As the skills needed for embodied interaction atrophy, the skills needed for intimacy dissolve with them.

The larger loss is not sexual but human. Physical presence is how empathy is learned. Sitting with someone teaches patience. Touch teaches care. Without those experiences, connection becomes theoretical. People can want

closeness without knowing how to create it.

Many argue this is simply adaptation, the natural evolution of technology. Maybe so. But the direction is unmistakable: people are more connected and yet somehow lonelier; more expressive and less intimate, more visible and less embodied. The emotional costs follow from that erosion: anxiety around unstructured interaction, confusion about how to read another person without a screen's cues, and a quiet sense of isolation even in crowded rooms. Distance becomes normal; closeness becomes uncomfortable.

Reversing that trend does not require deleting apps or rejecting technology. It might require something smaller: choosing presence when presence is possible. Sitting across from someone without a screen. Talking until the conversation runs out and staying anyway. Allowing silence to exist without mediation. Relearning what it feels like when another person's physical presence changes the air in the room.

Because if that disappears, everything else we build—every platform, every perfect image, every simulation of intimacy—will function only as noise trying to fill the silence of a connected world left behind.

LUKE WAGNER '26
(LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS THE
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE
HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY
KELLY TUNG '27



Sex and Salary Transparency

Conversations about pleasure and money equal greater satisfaction for all.

BY SOPHIA GONZALEZ '28

There are a few subjects that you just don't bring up at the dinner table; sex and salary are at the top of the list. Not exactly what you want to unpack with your grandparents over pie. Yet it isn't just among relatives that people hold back on discussing these "taboo" topics. Sex and salary are personal details at the core of who we are; they are intimate parts of our lives that we've been conditioned to see as shameful. How can something so intrinsic to everyday life and society be censored from conversations, even with your closest friends?

The very topics we are conditioned not to discuss, sex and salary, are precisely the ones that deserve open conversation. Breaking the culture of quiet not only empowers individuals to take charge of their bodies and finances, but also, challenges the systems that benefit from our hushed complacency.

I think it is precisely these issues deemed inappropriate that act almost like a red button for conversation—the topics people are desperate to talk about, relate over, and use to gauge whether they are "normal." Once the seal of the taboo is broken, it can feel like an exhale we didn't realize we were holding—a small release that reminds us we aren't alone in our experiences.

Generally speaking, not discussing money is considered classy, humble—a way to keep your cards close to your chest. If people don't know your next move, you're one step ahead in a cutthroat world. In a 2020 *New York Times* article, Jessica Bennett noted that modern women discuss money, negotiation, and fiscal aspirations. This transparency is a way to reclaim the idea that finances are a masculine field. True, but only if you actually talk about salary. How else will you know what benefits to negotiate for, what your salary should be, and what promotions are within reach?

Instead of having these conversations out in the open, they often take place around coffee machines or in hallway corners. Not having these conversations benefits only one party: the employer, who profits from employee isolation. Salary transparency can level the playing field. In fact, Massachusetts recently passed a salary transparency law, which includes a pay range not only when applying to new positions, but also upon request for current employees. If everyone reveals their slice of the cake, it becomes clearer when and how to ask for more, while also revealing discrepancies in the workplace, namely, the wage gap.

"Forget talking about our sex lives. The modern woman is talking about money," the subtitle of the article reads. However, I believe the modern woman can, and should, talk about both. Salary transparency is often considered analytically, while disclosing sex lives is addressed anecdotally. Both are private matters that, when approached candidly, strengthen individual understanding and agency.

The idea of the modern woman is fluid and endlessly referenced, yet often poorly defined. Harm comes when we try to pigeonhole women into one box or another, treating waves of feminism as fleeting rather than building on each other. Equal rights for women have long

encompassed financial freedom *and* sexual liberation. Where does this liberation begin, and how does it transform from collective to personal, from the big to the small?

Frankly, I've been talking about it much of my life. My mother raised me to believe that sex should never be shameful, that I should feel empowered in my choices around my body and sexuality, with the motherly caveat that I treat myself with respect. Because of her, I have never regarded sex as a dirty thing, something to be whispered about in giggles with friends. Although I do, of course, giggle with my friends, these giddy exchanges often lead to more serious conversations, sprinkled with laughter.

In high school, my friends and I shared the juicy and awkward encounters we had, along with the very real feelings, anxieties, and pressures we all experienced. At times, those of us more "experienced" would relay techniques, anecdotes, and the otherwise embarrassing happenings that naturally arise in the bedroom. Because sex was such a normalized matter, there was no fear of judgment in our friend group. These conversations became educational. From Venmo-ing our friend to serve as our unofficial vibrator dealer to the laughter-filled reenactments, those shared moments freed us from the isolation of mystery.

While silence around pay stifles financial autonomy, silence around sex suppresses pleasure. Both are forms of censorship that limit understanding, progress, and satisfaction. If pleasure is a quality-of-life metric, then surely we should be talking about sex more to increase collective intimacy. Research suggests that, especially for women, expressing admiration and comfort can boost sexual arousal. Essentially, "pillow talk" can lead to closeness and greater satisfaction.

Some platforms have served as outlets for this demand, particularly around women's roles. One of the most popular is the "Call Her Daddy" podcast, led by Alex Cooper. It became a hit, especially among young women seeking "older sister" advice on navigating boys, dating, and sex. My friends and I listened often, yet the podcast only imitates real conversation. Raunchy and entertaining, it lacks the depth and mutual exchange that comes from talking with friends.

Societal norms often impede discussions about sex; whether religions preach "no sex until marriage," or high school rumors circulate insulting labels like "slut," being outspoken about sex is likely to be met with judgment. Similarly, there has been a history of companies discouraging open talks about pay to

prevent internal strife and maintain a competitive advantage in the hiring market, even after laws have been implemented to protect workers; stigma persists, especially for marginalized communities.

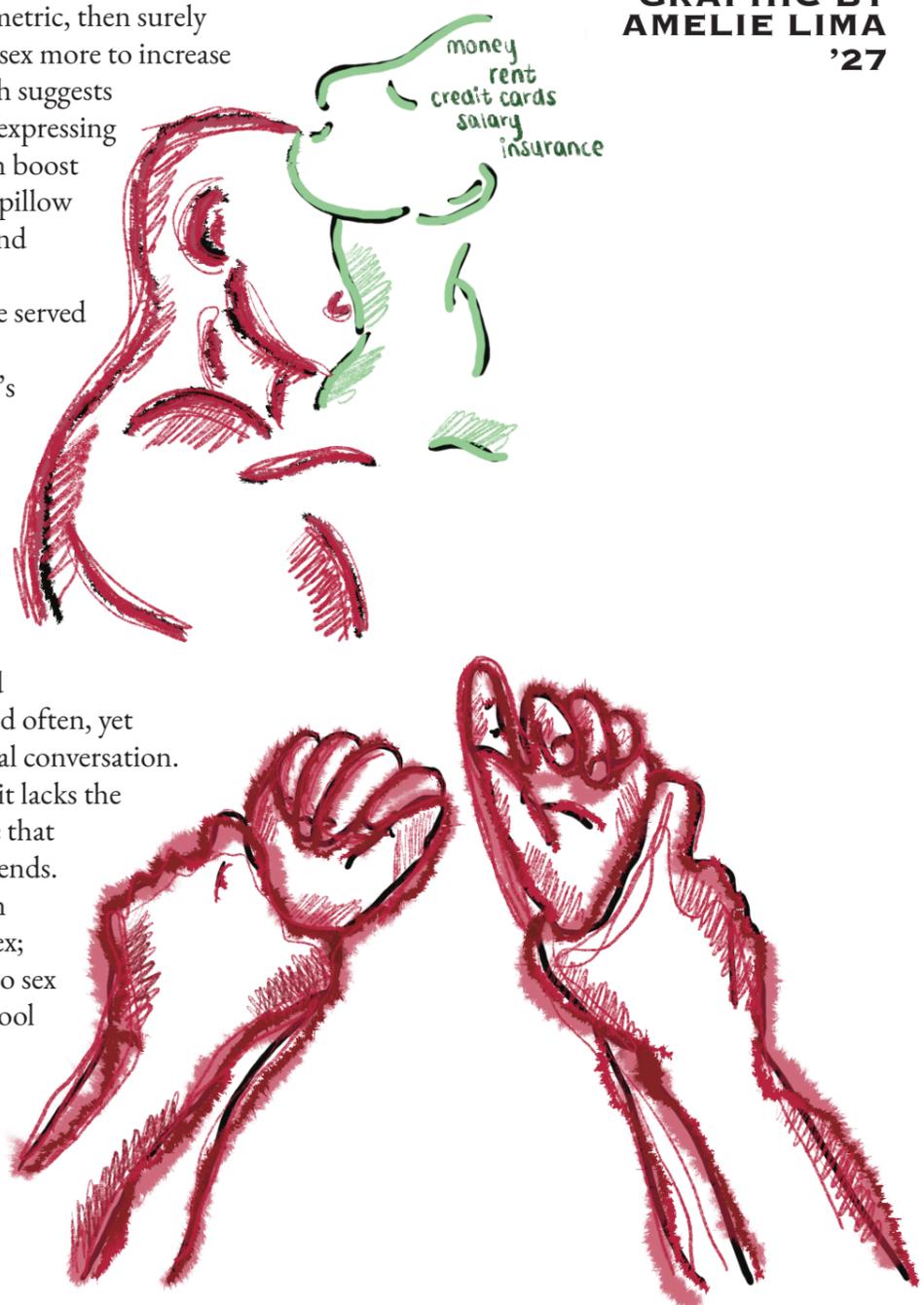
The provocative nature of "Call Her Daddy" pushed back against these standards, diving headfirst into the murky waters of women in power, both in the bedroom and in the workplace. This movement stands in contrast to the rise of conservatism and the label of "Trad Wife," which reinforces the historic trope of the submissive woman and ultimately romanticizes this role. The revival of "Trad Wife" rhetoric not only threatens women in the workplace but can also intensify the orgasm gap by viewing women as bystanders and homemakers rather than agents in sex.

The measure of pleasure is ultimately personal. That pleasure comes not only from sexual satisfaction and adventure, but from the openness to consider and challenge the unknown.

A rising tide lifts all ships. We can all agree that we want to be paid more *and* orgasm more. How will we know what is out there—in the bedroom and the office—without exploring vulnerability and engaging in honest conversation?

SOPHIA GONZALEZ '28
(SOPHIAGONZALEZ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HOPES YOU DISCUSS THE TABOO TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR ALL.

GRAPHIC BY
AMELIE LIMA
'27



Make Harvard Fuck Again

Why Harvard students should have more sex.

BY CORPORIS LIBIDINE

As Harvard students, we are constantly under the pressure of rigorous coursework, demanding extracurriculars, and the struggle to succeed at the high level that this institution expects. Our schedules are busy at best and all-consuming at worst. The sheer effort it takes to manage it all leads many of us to deal with near-constant stress, lending some truth to the stereotype that Harvard students are uptight. It's not entirely our fault that we err on the tense side, but it does mean we tend to neglect time for ourselves and forget how to relax. If we want to become a little more *laid-back*, we need to get *laid*.

Simply put, Harvard students should be having more sex. Here's why.

Health Benefits

Academics are important, but maintaining overall health is essential, too. While we like to think those late-night Lamont sessions aren't killing us, most of us know the familiar midterm-season sickness all too well. And when your midterm season lasts the entire semester, your physical wellness can take a pounding (and not in a good way).

Research shows that sex offers a multitude of benefits for both your physical and mental health. Beyond the immediate gratification of pleasure and orgasms, it can lead to better sleep regulation, lower stress levels, and improved immune function, thanks to neuropeptides like oxytocin. In other words, sex means better rest, less stress, and fewer colds. What more could we ask for? It's the one remedy Harvard University Health Services can't offer us and the perfect antidote to the Harvard grind.

Let's Get Physical

Having more sex also offers a creative solution to a campus classic: the freshman 15. The weight gain that comes with the sudden shift to college life can be alarming, but there's no need to fear. By having more sex, you can beat it easily, all from the comfort of your own tiny dorm room. Intercourse burns around 3-5 calories per minute and builds stamina. There's no need to trek to the Mac or Hemingway in 40-degree weather when your bedroom is already the perfect gym.

If you feel like you're not quite meeting your cardio goals, just simply restart your sex playlist, ignore your roommate's annoyed texts, and go another round.

A Reputation to Uphold

In national rankings, Harvard often competes for the top spot, and our reputation for excellence is recognized globally. Students come here for the prestige, the rigor, and the promise of success. If these are the years we're meant to master the crucial skills for our future, why should sexual expertise be the exception?

We should utilize this time to refine our finger dexterity and stroke game. We've seen in the movie "Whiplash" the consequences of not meeting the correct tempo, and the human body proves to be shockingly more complicated than a drum set. Lots (and lots) of practice (sigh) is the best

route to improvement. We should leave Harvard with not just an academic degree, but an honorary citation in cliteracy.

Join the Movement

A defining Harvard trait is our willingness to mobilize and join forces to confront issues and demand change. Recent data shows Gen Z is having less sex than previous generations. A 2021 CDC survey found that only 30% of teenagers indicated that they've had sex. For Harvard specifically, 69% (ironically) of the Class of 2028 entered college as virgins.

If we can organize campaigns and rallies, surely we can bring the same revolutionary energy to facilitate a campus-wide social movement of sex positivity. This means encouraging consensual sex and applauding the special nature of intimate connections. Let's make Harvard a campus that actually gets it on. The weather is getting colder, and twin XL mattresses are starting to feel more spacious by the minute, so time is of the essence.

Exploration and Identity

College is the bridge between our teenage years and adulthood. Thus, it's the ideal time to begin exploring who you are, including your sexual identity, amidst a new environment, new people, and newfound independence.

Regardless of your background or experience, virgin, straight, queer, questioning, you should lean into your sexuality and learn what turns you on. Maybe you'll discover you're attracted to personality with no preference for gender, or realize that you've got a raging praise kink (shocker).

If you're unsure where to start, I recommend attending the functions hosted by organizations on campus like Queer Students Association, or even traversing to Dudley Co-Op for a tantalizing party. These hubs of sexual energy can be both enlightening and liberating. Like these examples, there are many communities on campus that are notably open, accepting spaces for expressions of gender and sexuality. Everyone should go to at least one event for the sake of their own personal development, and will probably come back for more once they get a taste.

Sources of Inspiration

Now that you've been presented with several convincing

reasons to clock in more hours at the fuck factory, you might be wondering *how* this can be achieved. Thankfully, we have some exemplary role models right here on campus.

Our dear friends residing in Leverett Towers have accomplished what few others on this campus have dared. Mather may have once been the "house of horniness," but it can claim that title no longer. Their "more singles, more sex" slogan has been drowned out by the moaning coming from the bunnies down the street.

To learn more, the *Harvard Independent* interviewed a Leverett student on their perspective. "I feel proud of the sex culture Leverett has cultivated. It allows for the freedom of expression in the rawest way," an anonymous sophomore told us. "I often host the events myself." This is a perfect example of the sex-positive attitude that is needed throughout campus.

Initiative, it seems, may be the key to fucking like rabbits. We should follow Leverett's example and stop waiting for intimacy to find us. Be bold. Host an orgy if you feel so inclined. Don't let fear of rejection kill your chances for connection. If we wholly commit ourselves to this goal, maybe we can change the trajectory of Harvard's sex life and foster a more sexually inclined community.

Sure, we may never hit the sex rates of colleges like Temple University or develop our own strain of STD like Florida State, but we can still become a college that fucks. For the sake of graduating from Harvard without a chronic stress condition, let's get naked more often.

AND, OF COURSE, ALWAYS PRACTICE ENTHUSIASTIC CONSENT AND SAFE SEX!

GRAPHIC BY LUCIE STEFANONI '27



The Sex Survey

CUP SIZE:
29% B
22.5% C
15.6% A
13.8% D

WHAT AGE DID YOU LOSE YOUR VIRGINITY?
19: 2.2% ~18 17.6% ~17 15.6% ~16
12: 4% ~18 11% ~16

ARE YOU CIRCUMCISED?
68.9% yes 31.1% no

... AND DO YOU PREFER YOUR PARTNER TO BE?
51.1% no preference
44.9% yes 4% no

GENITAL NICKNAMES:
1. Bonnie and Clyde
2. Little Henry
3. flavortown

HAVE YOU CHEATED?
92.3% no 7.7% yes

HOW OFTEN DO YOU MASTURBATE/WEEK?
24% ~0x 17.8% ~1x
16.9% ~2x 16.4% ~3x

PROF I'D LIKE TO FUCK:
Andrew Polittou,
Andrew Berry

GENDER:
58.9% female
39.9% male
0.9% non binary

GRADUATION YEAR:
2026: 20.2%
2027: 20.6%
2028: 30.7%
2029: 28.6%

HOW MANY SEXUAL PARTNERS HAVE YOU HAD?
0: 18% 1: 21.7% 2: 15.8%
3: 9.6% 4: 7% 5+: 27.9%

FAVE KINKS:
1. dom/sub 2: 15.8%
3. Bondage 2. feet
4. free use

PENIS SIZE:
48.2% 6-7"
30.7% 5-6"
13.1% 7-8"

HOW DO YOU TRIM YOUR PUBES?
42.6% trimmed
39.8% clean-shaven
17.6% natural
DO YOU PREFER THAT YOUR PARTNER IS SHAVED?

37.1% trimmed
33.8% clean-shaven
26.4% natural
ON DATING APPS:
1. Jeez 2. pizza 3. mozzarella sticks
78.6% Hinge
42% Tinder
13% Grindr

BEST AFTER-SEX FOOD?
CONCENTRATION:
55% STEM
44.6% social sciences
19.5% arts and humanities

ARE YOU A VIRGIN?
73.5% no
26.5% yes

DONE ANAL?
81.4% no
18.6% yes
FAVE SEX POSITION
40.3% missionary
23.1% doggy
20.3% cowgirl

MOST DESIRABLE GROUPS
52.8% athletes
25.4% final clubs
25.2% impressive jobs

CRAZIEST PLACE YOU'VE HAD SEX:
1. my ex's lawn
2. Straus practice room
3. swiss alps

SPIT OR SWALLOW?
49.9% swallow
31.7% no preference/
don't give head
18.4% spit

HOUSE FREAK FACTOR:
① mather
② Leverett
+ Dunster
+ Eliot
+ pfoho
⑥ quincy
⑦ Lowell
+ Kirkland
⑨ winthrop
+ currier
+ adams
⑫ cabot

He Thinks, She Thinks: the Nine Stages of a Hookup

A look into the minds of how men and women think at different points in hooking up with each other.

BY KATHERINE CHUNG '29 & PHILIPPOS ALEBACHEW '29

The “hookup” embodies one of our most basic impulses. The term has been diluted over time, used to describe anything from making out to simply meeting up. This analysis, however, focuses on the traditional interpretation: sex. While we have evolved from our cave-roaming days, the custom persists. Frat parties have replaced balls, flowers have replaced donkeys as socially acceptable courting gifts, but the core remains: two people coming together for mutual enjoyment.

Hookup culture is thought of as a modern invention, framed as freedom: an escape from commitment, a space to experiment and “let loose.” However, its roots stretch far deeper, echoing ancient impulses to ritualize desire and power. In Greek symposia, erotic encounters weren’t simply about pleasure; they were performances of status and identity, ways to affirm belonging within a social order.

Today’s equivalents to symposia—clubs, parties, dating apps, social media—carry that same ritualistic energy, but filtered through the capitalist drive to self-brand and pressure to maintain reputation. The hookup becomes a performance of identity: proof that one belongs, that one is desirable, and most importantly, that one is free. Desire is real, but emotional economy quickly takes over. Reputation is currency, partners become metrics, and showing desire can be both attractive and shameful, a bait for social judgment.

Hookup culture is never just about pleasure; it’s about presentation. Each gesture, glance, and text is part of the choreography of managing how one’s seen, asserting one’s status, and curating one’s image. Yet, removing these mental barriers, to fully engage with someone one has just met, is easier said than done. Unlike other animals, humans are self-conscious about their

impulses. Awkwardness, insecurities, turn-offs, and fear of judgement all interfere, turning what should be an act of connection and fulfillment into one of calculation.

A closer look reveals gendered asymmetries in how men and women are taught to express desire. Both perform roles centuries in the making: men are usually the pursuers, women the gatekeepers—each trying to appear effortless while silently calculating risk, reputation, and desire.

While nerves affect everyone, men and women navigate the stages of a hookup differently. What follows

control: the perfect playlist, flawless makeup, an outfit that “hugs all the right places,” and Instagram-ready photos. At the party, that control is challenged. She filters potential partners through safety and social cost: too drunk, too short, too sweaty, too loud, too many girls hovering. Her selection is less about “who do I want?” and more about “who is worth the night and the story that follows?” When she lands on someone she can’t dismiss, her panic isn’t just from attraction. It’s the awareness that wanting carries consequences.

Eye-Tag

Once aware of each other, the natural next step is shifting glances between one another, the red Solo cup in hand, and the floor. A slight smile every few glances may appear—enough to be noticed but not so much as to scare the other off.

For men, eye contact is a test of confidence and control. They are taught from a young age that looking is both an act of power and a risk. A well-timed glance can charm; a glance held too long can intimidate. Years of subtle practice, on escalators, in classrooms, condition men to use fleeting eye contact to their advantage. One mistimed look, however, can shift the mood from intrigue to discomfort.

The Approach

Now motive becomes action. Someone must take the proverbial leap. Being the initiator carries both risk and reward: rejection is brutal, but nothing begins without taking that first leap.

For women, initiating is often framed as empowerment, but with risk to image. A man striking out is business as usual; a woman who does faces judgment. Every move is a performance of casual indifference, proof she can play the game on her own terms, but the paradox remains: claiming agency while appearing effortless, unaffected, and desirable.



is not a guide to hooking up but an exploration of the mental choreography behind the so-called “casual.” Defining the stages and the constant calculations they entail reveal just how uncasual a hookup really is.

Acquiring the Target

The first stage of a hookup is selection: a quick, instinctive scan of a crowded room to identify a potential partner. Attraction is filtered through judgment, calculation, and circumstance. It’s not love at first sight. It’s a strategy disguised as spontaneity.

For women, preparation is

The First Line

Before contact, each person has already imagined the other, building an ideal companion out of glances, lighting, and wishful projection. The first exchange shatters that fiction. The moment hangs in the air, music blurring at the edges, sweat on the drinking cup, too-bright lights cutting through the haze. Every move is a small test of possibility. Here, any clear “icks” or turn-offs not perceivable from across the room are deduced, and the process can get cut short before any regrets can be formed.

For men, the first line is a test of survival. Confidence is key: a vague compliment paired with further questioning, friendly yet non-threatening. Beneath the calm exterior, fears race, becoming “that creep” or accidentally saying the wrong thing. If it works, the foundation is laid to advance.

The Test

Here, the interaction moves into romance territory.

For women, this stage is about subtle cues: a brief touch, a laugh at the right moment, lingering eye contact. These gestures gently nudge the moment forward, testing the waters without openly stating desire. Each signal is an intentional push toward the next level; a subtle way of advancing the moment without saying outright.

Yet, every cue is open to interpretation, one person’s friendliness can be another’s flirtation. Gender scripts complicate the exchange: women are taught to suggest, not state, while men are conditioned to read suggestions as invitations. Miscommunication becomes inevitable. The same glance meant to test interest can be seen as confirmation. Every move teeters between connection and confusion, where desire is performed, perceived, and often misunderstood.

The Exit

The moment of decision: stay, leave, or escalate. Flirtation becomes action.

For men, this is about execution under pressure. They offer a vague excuse to leave together, walking a line between interest and restraint. Desire is shadowed by the fear of appearing

wrong or presumptuous.

Are we doing this?

The final pause before crossing the line. A word, look, or laugh that signals the contract called “consent.” Diplomacy ensures that both choose this moment together.

For women, consent is rarely simple. When she doesn’t want it, she feels the quiet pressure to say yes, to avoid disappointment, stay polite, and stay safe. Refusal can feel dangerous, or at least socially costly. And when she does want it, another kind of pressure sets in: to say yes the right way. Confident, but not eager. In control, but never too forward. Women are taught to please, protect, and perceive before they can simply feel.

The paradox of consent is that women are expected to be both autonomous and accommodating: free to choose, yet conditioned to please. Even when saying “yes,” they must navigate what that yes might mean, to him, others, and themselves. What should be a straightforward question of “are we doing this?” becomes a negotiation between agency, desire, and expectation.

Hanky Panky

Use your imagination.

The Aftermath

The hookup doesn’t end when the lights go out. Retelling, rationalizing, and rewriting follow.

For men, the morning after requires composure. Relief turns into bravado; vulnerability disappears, replaced with humor and control. Sex becomes validation, and the story transforms into proof of competence rather than connection.

For women, the aftermath is reflection. She edits what happened: softening or hiding moments. Leaving may become the “walk of shame;” staying risks attachment. What was mutual in the dark becomes gendered in daylight: he gains credibility, she manages consequences.

And then the story leaves them. It circulates through friends, group chats, gossip, and social media. A passing comment or single post online can tilt reputation, reframe memory, and rewrite consent. Social media becomes

the new town square, where validation and judgement coexist. Everyone participates: laughing, liking, forgetting, and retelling. The individual stories fold into a collective one that reaffirms the same old double standard.

That collective story perpetuates the narrative that he walks away experienced, while she walks away seen. Experienced means that he has gained skill, confidence, charisma, and maturity. His identity remains intact, if not enhanced. Seen means that she’s exposed, vulnerable, and surveilled. A woman’s body and choices become not only visible to her hookup partner, but also to others. To be “seen” here is not to be acknowledged, but to be scrutinized. Society’s gaze turns her private experience into something public, material for conversation. What was once intimate becomes reputational, feeding the narratives that harden into social norms, and those norms, in turn, shape the culture itself.

Hookup culture markets itself as liberation, but beneath the glitter of “no strings attached” lies an old story, one still bound by gender, social judgment, and fear. Men and women enter the same encounter but play by entirely different rules. What’s called “casual” is anything but. Until we stop treating desire as something to defend, disguise, or perform, even fleeting encounters will mirror gender norms and social conditioning. Maybe the act of naming the awkwardness, fear, and choreography itself is where freedom begins. To see hookups clearly for what they are, to admit that they aren’t all shimmer, nonchalance, and ease, is to loosen their hold and make them feel, ironically, more casual and free.

KATHERINE CHUNG '29
(KATHERINECHUNG@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
AND PHILIPOS ALEBACHEW
'29 (PHIPOSALBACHEW@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
PROBABLY THOUGHT ABOUT
THIS WAY LONGER THAN
ANYONE INVOLVED IN AN
ACTUAL HOOKUP EVER HAS.

GRAPHICS BY ANNABELLA
BURTON-BOONE '29

Photography and set design team: Jordan Wasserberger '27, Mia Tavares '27, Sophia Gonzalez '28, Alex Mullen '29,
Osariemen Unuigbo '29, Wallace Selph '29, and Sascha Cavell '29
Photos taken and edited by: Jordan Wasserberger '27
Written by: Mia Tavares '27

A special thanks to the residents of Greenough for allowing us to use their space.

In the Harvard Independent's 2021 Sex Issue, we
The original intent of the piece was to address people's discom
They wrote, "We started by trying to take so
We ended up realizing that what we thought was offen
Four years later, we want to pay homage to the piece that redefin
The photographed scene that we've created do
While Harvard has always been in the spotlight, we have recently found ourselves under even gr
It seems the whole world is desperate to catch a glimpse of
They are the outsiders, looking in, disru
In this light, we hope the creation of this work and its proliferation will inspire a rebellious spirit so often ass
Our stories, our experiences, our opinions, and our passions are as



WINDOW

e published a photo series titled “Blow(up) Job.”
nfort with sex, but the artists ended up finding a deeper truth.
omething taboo and push into the daylight.
sive to other people actually wasn’t. It was beautiful.”
d how the Independent incorporates photography into our issues.
eals not just with sex but also with voyeurism.
reater scrutiny from entities such as the Trump administration and various media organizations.
the lives of Harvard students and impose its power on us.
rpting the intimacy of our community.
ociated with sex, promiscuity, and action—a reminder that a peek into a window can only tell you so much.
complex as the sex positions these dolls have found themselves in.

UNDRESSING



Kinks 'n' Houses

Imagining what kinks fit each Harvard House.

BY FUNNY FETISHIST '27

Thanks to the Indy sex survey, we all know which houses fuck the most. But do we know how they fuck? I've taken it upon myself to determine what kink revs the engine for each house based on vibes, what they're known for, and my own personal experiences. Enjoy!

River Central

Smack dab in the middle of all the action, River Central gets a lot of play. A late-night booty call to Lowell or a walk of shame back from Adams has never felt so sweet, especially when you're required to pass through the facey-ist part of campus. Yet, as run-through as these houses might be, they always manage to leave their partner satisfied.

Adams: Piss Play

This one is pretty obvious—we all know Adams is a kinky house. The “pool room” that oozes “Fifty Shades of Grey” dungeon room? C'mon. Not to be too on the nose, but I think the gold tower room would be fitting for a golden shower.

Lowell: Orgasm Denial

Although this House may feel vanilla, it's got a secret gooner side. That's right. Not only is this House the loudest in bed, but Lowell also loves edging. How else could its bells get so blue?

Quincy: Temperature Play

Quincy is beloved by the people for one, and only one, reason: hot breakfast. Naturally, it would be the House associated with heat in the bedroom, and I don't just mean dirty talk. Quincy loves to light a candle and feel the melted wax drip down its shaft.

River West

West-side is a little decrepit and overrun by pests, but it's on the up. What they lack in nice facilities, they make up for in passion. Who needs shiny new toys when they've got the perfectly working old-fashioned thing right here?

Kirkland: Pet Play

The rats run Kirkland. Need I say more? This house may be sturdy, but we all know it's the animals that are truly in control of it.

Eliot: Financial Domination

Word is, Eliot spends over \$40k on fête every year. If I didn't know any better, I'd think it gets off on losing money to its mistress. Though it's historically the richest house, after these renovations, I'm not so sure it'll be able to keep up with these kinky practices.

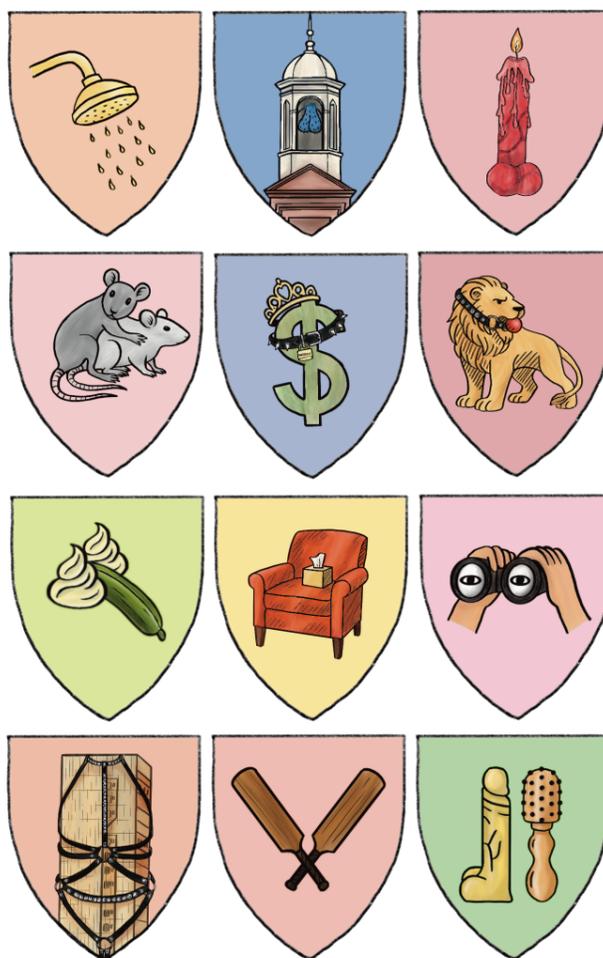
Winthrop: Predator/Prey

The lion does not concern itself with silly kinks. Except for when the kink is being a lion. Growling and going a little crazy with the bite marks is quintessential Winthrop.

The Quad

Ubering to a slink in the Quad is a uniquely depressing experience. And yet, the Quad still finds a way to rope in countless victims from the river every weekend. These houses aren't afraid to be in the scene or to keep the party going in their singles, as removed as they are. While they might not be the kinkiest, they certainly get the job done.

Currier: Food Play



Currier is always getting glazed for its above-par d-hall and frequent food drops. Why not join the two together? I'm not just talking whipped cream and chocolate; Currier gets experimental with cucumbers, cake, and honey in the bedroom.

Cabot: Cuckolding

To be in Cabot is to spend your whole college experience on the outside, looking in. Wishing you were on the River, wishing you were pfucking in Pfoho, or at least cumming in Currier. Instead, you are relegated to the metaphorical cuck chair that is the west side of the Radcliffe Quadrangle. Sorry, I don't make the rules.

Pfoho: Exhibitionism

Let's be real. The Pfoho dining hall is fundamentally voyeuristic. It's got floor-to-ceiling glass doors and a balcony that allows you to see anyone eating below—and for them to enjoy visions of you. You cannot dine in Pfoho without being seen. And

that's sexy.

River East

What they don't tell you about going out East is that it is really fucking far if you don't have a scooter. And if you're going out East, it's probably your bae that has the scooter. At least the walk over is nothing compared to the energy you'll expend trying to find their dorm in one of these massive houses (or the calories you'll burn rawdogging on a twin XL).

Mather: Chastity Cages and Bondage

Mather's a two-for-one, like its high-and-low-rise buildings. Considering how it looks like a glorified jail, I'd say that both of these kinks fit its vibe pretty well. Makes you wonder about what's really going down in those secretive concrete singles...

Dunster: Fisting and Spanking

Dunster's a pain slut. Living so far away just to fall asleep in a hallway double is inherently masochistic. The suites are packed soooooo tight and feel just soooooo full. Spanking is a given—I hear using paddles on the squash courts has become all the rage.

Leverett: Double Penetration

Leverett's got two big, hunky towers. No elaboration necessary. I would. Wouldn't you?

Off-Campus Honorable Mentions

Dudley Co-Op: Gangbanging

It felt wrong writing about kinks without including our campus polycule. With so many people living together in “community,” I'm inclined to believe they must get down and dirty as a group on the regular. Naked brunch must be code for bukkake.

1075

Does paying for a prostitute count as a kink?

THIS ANONYMOUS AUTHOR HAS TAKEN THE BDSM KINK TEST A LOT—THEY'VE GOTTEN 100% BRAT EVERY TIME.

GRAPHIC BY CARA CRONIN '28

ONE (ASS) TAP AWAY

An original screenplay about dirty laundry.

BY ANONYMOUS

INT. ADAMS HOUSE LAUNDRY ROOM – NIGHT

The newly renovated Adams House laundry room. It sits empty in all its fluorescent, cluttered beauty. We are well into the witching hour. SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER enters the laundry room and begins to switch her laundry from the washer to the dryer. Shortly after, MALE ATHLETE enters with a trash bag full of his laundry. The bag reeks, but he's shirtless and has a great body, so it's fine. MALE ATHLETE is taken aback by the sight of such a beautiful, talented woman in a Brandy Melville pajama set this late at night in the laundry room.

MALE ATHLETE (awkward)
Hey....

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Hi?

MALE ATHLETE
I didn't expect to see anyone else doing laundry this late.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER is sick of men being this fucking weird when they try to talk to her, but she's a little wine drunk and her poem was just accepted for publication in [generic online lit mag], so she's riding a high.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Oh, yeah, I can't sleep.

MALE ATHLETE
Me neither. I was too, uh, excited...

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
...excited?

MALE ATHLETE
About the new free laundry. So I had to come try it out.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
I think the free laundry thing starts next semester.

MALE ATHLETE
Yeah, I knew that.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Okay.

Awkward, extended silence ensues. MALE ATHLETE brings his nasty trash bag of laundry to the washing machine right next to

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER's, even though every single other washer is open. She gives him a weird look.

MALE ATHLETE
Crazy that they haven't fixed any of these washing machines yet.

MALE ATHLETE then completely unnecessarily reaches right into SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER's personal space with a handful of his dirty laundry. He slightly brushes her arm with the edge of a sweat-stained t-shirt, which, surprisingly, sends a pleasant shiver down her spine. She turns to give him a nasty look, but notices that he has really great arms. Like, really great. Perfect biceps. She lets her gaze wander to his six-pack. Then the shape of his muscular calves. Then to his passably good-looking face. Hmmm... MALE ATHLETE raises his eyebrows at her. SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER smirks. MALE ATHLETE leans in to kiss her.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Hold on. I'm not done switching my laundry.

MALE ATHLETE (dripping with sexual desire)
I'll wait.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER leans wayyy into the washing machine to get her last sock.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER (wiggling her ass a little)
Oh my god! I'm stuck.

MALE ATHLETE
Holy shit.

There is a long, extended period of awkward silence.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER (wiggling her ass even more)
Okay. Get on with it, then. Fuck me!

MALE ATHLETE
I'm sorry, it's just, um—

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Spit it out.

MALE ATHLETE
—You couldn't think of a more unique porn scenario?

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
What the fuck? The meta-commentary is my thing. Get out.

MALE ATHLETE
Wait, no! Please no. Please. You're so hot. Please please please please—

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
You're lucky I like it when they beg.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER gets out of the washing machine.

MALE ATHLETE
You're so hot. I can't believe my luck.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Yeah, I was gonna write this piece about Zohr—

MALE ATHLETE silences her with a kiss.

MALE ATHLETE
Can I please just fuck you already?

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Yeah, sure.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER suddenly sheds her nonchalance, pulling MALE ATHLETE in by his waistband. The two passionately make out. Things heat up. MALE ATHLETE lifts SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER against the row of washing machines. Soon, circular imprints of their doors and One Tap Away QR code stickers adorn her back. By this point, her Brandy Melville pajama set has been swallowed into the laundry room's graveyard of crusty towels and lint tumbleweeds. Things heat up even more. SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER is down to just socks, and one of them isn't even hers. Eventually, she actually does get trapped in a washing machine. MALE ATHLETE is rocking with the trope at that point and takes full advantage. It's super hot. After about three hours of nonstop, incredibly passionate fucking (MALE ATHLETE is on Wellbutrin), the two lie naked on the cold ground, admiring the washed-out curvature of each other's bodies under the fluorescent lights.

MALE ATHLETE
That was the best sex of my life. When can I see you again?

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
Oh, sorry. No thanks. I have a girlfriend.

MALE ATHLETE
Wait, what? So you—

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER
None of your business.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER suddenly goes to stand up, craving the comfort of her own bed, before realizing this guy is probably expecting a goodbye.

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER (CONT'D)
Goodbye!

SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER kisses MALE ATHLETE softly and delicately on the forehead, like a mother would, just to fuck with him. She knows finding her Brandy set in the laundry room is hopeless, so she gets up and prances back to her dorm completely naked, like no one can see her. Like a sexual ghost of Christmas past. MALE ATHLETE, heartbroken, searches high and low for her boyshorts—hoping to use them as some freaky perversion of Cinderella's glass slipper. He digs through every lint trap, every hamper. But all he finds are used dryer sheets. MALE ATHLETE never sees SEXY FUTURE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER again, doomed to yearn for a woman that esoteric and freaky forever.

END.

WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY MIA STEWART '29



Willy Wank-a and the Rose Toy Factory

A creative twist to every girl's favorite toy.

BY ANONYMOUS

When the news first broke out, women all over the world stopped in disbelief. For the very first time, Willy Wank-a was opening the gates to his world-famous Rose Toy factory. 30 years after the creation of the life-changing sex toy, Rose Toy fanatics would now be able to see the production process and meet the man behind the magic. Among the new shipment of different colored Rose Toys, Willy Wank-a planted three golden Rose Toys. The three customers fortunate enough to open their box and discover the golden roses would win an inside tour of Wank-a's Rose Toy factory. It was only a matter of days before the three lucky winners were announced...

...

When Hannah first saw Instagram posts about Willy Wank-a's contest, she went ballistic at the chance to find a golden one. Her Rose Toy origin experience was quite similar to most girls around the world. During her sophomore year of high school, she took sex-ed only to spend the class daydreaming about the senior lacrosse player who sat in front of her. One night, she lay in bed and incognito mode-d his YouTube channel. She put on his lacrosse highlights—a poorly edited reel with Kanye West's "Power" playing in the background—while trying to put what she had learned in sex-ed to use.

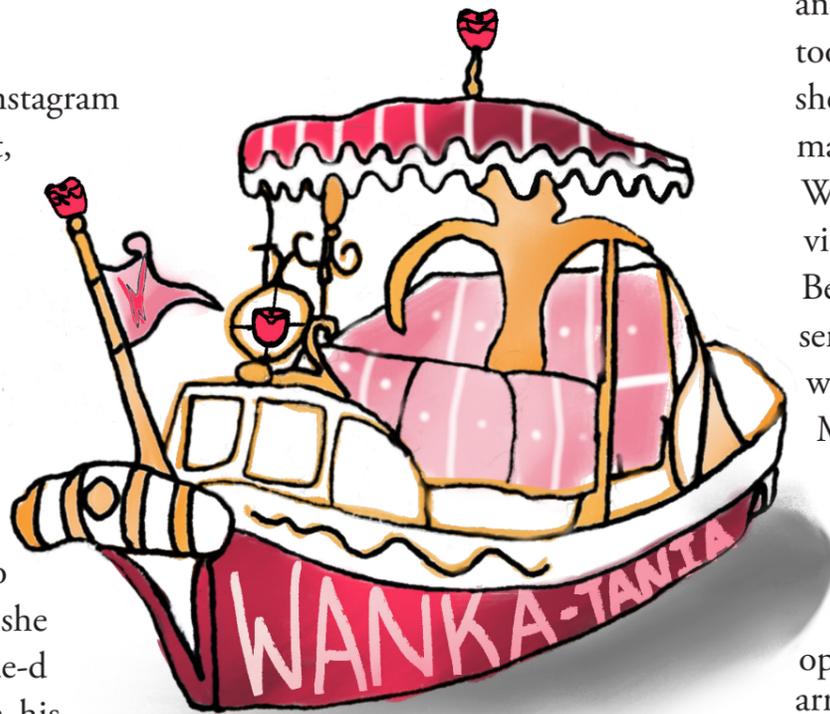
Watching him play with his stick got her juices flowing, but she could never finish the job herself. Losing patience, one night she finally turned off the lacrosse porn and went back to doom-scrolling TikToks. After watching her fourth "Trying weird snacks from Five Below" video, she was hit with a TikTok Shop ad for a vibrating Rose Toy. Thinking it was a sign from her FBI agent watching her struggle each night, she ordered it immediately.

She spent the next few days tracking the package closely, so that it wouldn't be able to fall into the hands of her parents when it finally arrived later that week. After all of eight seconds with the Rose, all of her sweaty lacrosse boy fantasies came true. So, when Wank-a announced his hunt for

the golden rose, Hannah got to the TikTok shop and spent all the summer job money she had. The moment she opened up one of the boxes to find a golden Rose Toy inside, she was so excited she almost came.

...

Lori was on her fifth glass of wine when inspiration struck to find her golden Rose Toy. She was middle-aged, recently divorced, and the only thing that made her feel the slightest tingle was watching Patrick Swayze in *Ghost*. But, when the credits came on, the sad truth of being alone in her king-sized bed hit her as she poured herself another glass of wine. Her children



encouraged her to get on dating apps, but the only person she was really listening to those days was Mel Robbins. She didn't know about Wank-a's competition. But she did know that Mel Robbins would want her to get out of bed and start living her life.

The next night, Lori decided she was going to swap her red wine for a red toy. She drove herself to the nearest Romantic Depot and was extremely flattered when the worker asked her for her ID to make sure she was 18 or older.

Lori grabbed the first thing off the shelf. Taking the Rose out right when she got home. "Hmmm, gold, weird..." she thought to herself.

...

Betty had just celebrated her 80th birthday. While the rest of her body was catching up with her, she felt just as horny as she did fifty years ago. Unfortunately, her beloved husband Richard's machinery was nearing its expiration date. Betty's grandchildren insisted on getting her an iPad so that she could play Wordle and FaceTime them. Betty also used the iPad to do her QVC shopping, as it was her favorite leisure activity.

When accidentally clicking on a suspicious website during her online shopping time, a seemingly innocent ad for a pretty little Rose struck her. It didn't matter if it was a diffuser or a new skincare contraption to add to her robust, borderline hoarder collection—it was cute and she was going to buy it. When she took the golden Rose out of its packaging, she realized the grave mistake she had made. Or was it a blessing in disguise? When Richard fell asleep that night, the vibrating sounds drowned out his snoring. Betty was grateful her aged body wasn't sent into cardiac arrest after her first time with the Rose. She couldn't wait to meet Mr. Wank-a.

...

On the morning of the factory gates opening, Hannah, Lori, and Betty all arrived early. Hannah told her parents she was going on a class field trip. Lori told her friends she was taking a self-care day. Betty told her husband she had won a free shopping spree at Bloomingdale's. As the three ladies waited impatiently outside the gates, a crowd of women began to grow behind them. Signs read, "THANK YOU, MR. WANK-A" as cheers for the Rose Toy inventor roared. Suddenly, the majestic, golden gates began to open. Cheers came to a halt as the crowd became entranced by the gigantic, magical factory. Hannah, Lori, and Betty held hands and walked inside the doors.

Inside the Rose Toy factory, the lighting was dim. The ceilings were tall, and the eerie hallways felt interminable. The women had anticipated the innards of the factory to be bright and ecstatic. But the women were now feeling more anxious than orgasmic.

"Welcome. I've been waiting for you," a deep, hearty voice suddenly called out from the depths of the hallways.

A man stumbled out of the darkness. He was about 5'8", scrawny, and he definitely looked like he'd be better off with a chocolate factory than a Rose Toy factory. The women were now in front of him. Mr. Wank-a continued, "When I opened this factory, I had no idea that the Rose Toy would take the world by storm. At first it was a blessing, but it soon became my greatest burden..." The women were confused by Wank-a's depressing sentiment but had no time to respond as Wank-a swiftly led them further into the factory.

Mr. Wank-a opened the doors that read "NO PEOPLE ALLOWED," inviting the women to see just how the Rose Toys were made. There was not a single sign of life within the room. Robots and machinery fell into a hypnotic pattern of pumping out silicone molds and creating the technological inner workings of the toys. The process was over in the blink of an eye. Hundreds of thousands of different colored Rose Toys were packaged and ready to be sent off in a matter of seconds.

Hannah couldn't believe her eyes. She had collected every single color Rose Toy on the market. Wank-a pointed to the apparatus, "I will be rolling out a brand new sparkly Rose Toy within the next year." Behind him on the conveyor belt stood a glowing Rose Toy coated in the most beautiful sparkles. Hannah was entranced. Every teenage girl collected something, but Hannah was fixated on acquiring every Rose on the market. In the blink of an eye, Hannah leaped past Mr. Wank-a and jumped onto the conveyor belt.

She tried to pull the sparkly Rose Toy off, but it was stuck to the belt, and now so was she. She reached down to yank it off, but she missed, her hand getting trapped in between roses. As Hannah screamed for help, Lori and Betty looked horrified. Lori yelled, "Mr. Wank-a, aren't you going to help her?" Mr. Wank-a shook his head. "Hannah needed to learn that she must spend more time studying for her pre-calculus exams than using my Roses the hard way. She will be fine. Her parents are coming to pick her up. Let's move along now."

Lori and Betty followed Mr. Wank-a out of the production room and into what appeared to be a science lab, leaving Hannah behind. Full of fear, the women listened to every word of Wank-a's closely. "Here is where I create different vibration rhythms for the rose. As I'm sure you ladies know, this is what makes the Rose the Rose. Recently, I've been experimenting with other ways to give your body those same vibrations, but not necessarily through the toy. I present to you the Rose Gummy." Mr. Wank-a picked up a tiny gummy Rose off the table and squished it between his fingers.

Betty was amazed. Her doctors have been telling her to lay off the butterscotch pudding, but what was one gummy going to do? She couldn't withstand her sweet tooth impulses. Betty grabbed the gummy from Wank-a's hands and ate it. Lori's hands flew over her mouth, and Mr. Wank-a erupted with laughter. "You really shouldn't have done that," said Wank-a.

Suddenly, Betty's body started convulsing. Her hands were clenching, and her toes were curling. "Is she—" asked Lori. "Yes," said Wank-a as he began to help settle Betty into a chair. "The Rose Gummy causes everlasting orgasms. I'm still

working on the recipe. Betty will be fine after a few hours. Let's just let her enjoy the ride in privacy."

Now, Lori was really freaked out. It was just her and Wank-a alone in this creepy Rose Toy factory. And yet there was something so compelling about it all. She wanted to find out the truth.

Mr. Wank-a proceeded, "Lori, our tour here is done. You can go home now." But Lori was furious. "That's it? There's no way, I am not leaving. I've barely got to see all the ins and outs. And where is everyone, Mr. Wank-a? Surely there have to be people working for you. Or did you scare them off, too?" Tears began to form in Wank-a's hidden eyes. "You don't understand what it's like, Lori."

"So make me understand," Lori begged as she went to grab Wank-a's hand. Wank-a flinched. "At first, I felt on top of the world. I had created a device that pleased all women. One man struggles to please one in their lifetime. But with fame and fortune came darkness. Day after day, I started receiving more hate mail from men all over the world. The Rose Toy became the scapegoat for their failing relationships. I was blamed for their girlfriends dumping them and their wives leaving them. I've been told to choke on my Rose Toys and threatened to have my factory shut down. I've lost friends and even family. I have no one."

Lori was touched. Mr. Wank-a had let his guard down. Lori went back to take his hand, and this time Wank-a let her. "I can be your someone," whispered Lori. Suddenly Wank-a burst into a joyous cheer. "You did it, Lori, you won the prize!" Lori was puzzled but intrigued, "What prize?!" Wank-a turned her body in towards his. "I based the Rose Toys' vibrations on my human skill. I now get to show you that you don't need a Rose Toy after all. You've just needed me."

For the first time in a long time, Willy Wank-a and the Rose Toy factory came alive that night.

**WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR
THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY CHRISTY
ZEMBROWSKI '28**



Timing is Everything: The Best (and Worst) Times to Have Sex

Not all hours are created equal, so what's the real G-spot of the day?

BY MONA LOTT

There are 24 hours in a day and, sadly, you can't spend all of them fucking. So, to determine what times of day are optimal for trips to Pound Town, I've created a ranking based on energy levels, convenience, and, most importantly, vibes. Sometimes, everything just falls into place and a certain moment just feels right: you're fired up, your libido's high, time's on your side. The real question is: when is that perfect overlap between horniness and convenience?

6:00 p.m., Before Dinner: #1

What better way to work up an appetite than some bedroom cardio? You don't have to worry about bad breath or a full stomach, and you've still got energy to spare. This time of day gives you hours to build the anticipation: secret dirty texts, special lingerie, and the teasing foreplay that peaks right before a meal. It's the perfect balance of arousal and practicality, with obligations resolved and pleasure on the doorstep. Just be mindful of the effort you've put into getting ready—no pre-supper facials. Backshots work best here: easy, sultry, with a few sweet nothings in your ear. And if you want more than a quickie before a date, it's better to be fashionably late anyway.

8:00 a.m., When You First Wake Up: #2

Rise and grind! Is there any better start to the day, or anything more intimate, than waking up tangled with your lover? Maybe you're self-conscious about your less-than-ideal morning breath, messy hair, or line of drool along the side of your face, but once the sleepy kisses start, it's hard to stop. Building to a climax is the perfect way to ease into your day, leaving you glowing and satisfied. It's also the best time for multiple rounds—testosterone levels peak around then, so if any of you have morning wood, you're primed to perform. In the words of Jack Johnson: "Wake up slow." Better yet, wake up with sex.

10:30 p.m., Before Bed: #3

Basic but brilliant. Realistically, at this point you're either about to rub one out or rummage through your nightstand, but a classic "U up" text adds some variety. Maybe it's utilitarian—no attachment is necessary, it's all hormones anyway. After an orgasm, your stress levels decrease, your relaxation rises, and suddenly

your pillow looks even more comfortable. You'll either kick your visitor out to preserve your bedtime routine or fall asleep in each other's arms, maybe waking up to (or wishing for) an empty bed. Good or bad, it's a staple.

2:00 p.m., Afternoon Quickie: #4

In the middle of your day, as you're racing between classes or meetings, you manage to find time to pencil in a quickie. No time for foreplay; it's straight to the point, clothes optional. No time for aftercare either; you're back to business. The quickie allows for locational experimentation if you're in a rush and know the passcodes to the right bathrooms in the Square, or if your roommate's in section, leaving the dorm empty. It's not particularly romantic, but it scratches the itch and adds something new to the classic rotation.

1:00 a.m., Middle of the Night: #5

It's dark. You're drifting into sleep, spooning your partner, when a wandering hand starts to slide across your body. Is this real, or a wet dream? Well, you're not in dreamland anymore. Suddenly, you're in a slightly groggy but hot and heavy makeout. There's something about sex when everyone else is asleep that's exhilarating, but it doesn't always work if your partner prefers a balanced circadian rhythm. It's lazy, a little clumsy, and a good test of how into each other you really are—we don't abandon beauty sleep for just anyone. But anyway, what's wrong with sacrificing a bit of shut-eye for some witching-hour wanking?

3:00 p.m. After Class: #6

The stressful day is over, and your bed has never looked more inviting. Time for a nap, or time for a fuck? Dealer's choice. Honestly, the one thing that might beat sex is a fat nap. Still, it's nice to have something physical to look forward to when you've crossed the finish line of your classes and meetings. Unfortunately, most of us aren't sex gods from Olympus who can end a busy schedule with a mind-blowing, day-altering orgasm. Who wants mediocre sex to wrap up an average day?

8:00 p.m., After Dinner: #7

It sounds romantic in theory, but in practice, it's pure regret. Your stomach is full, you're in a food coma, and the last thing you want is to be thrusting and busting. Definitely no butt-touching at this time; double-stuffing isn't as fun after Thanksgiving dinner.

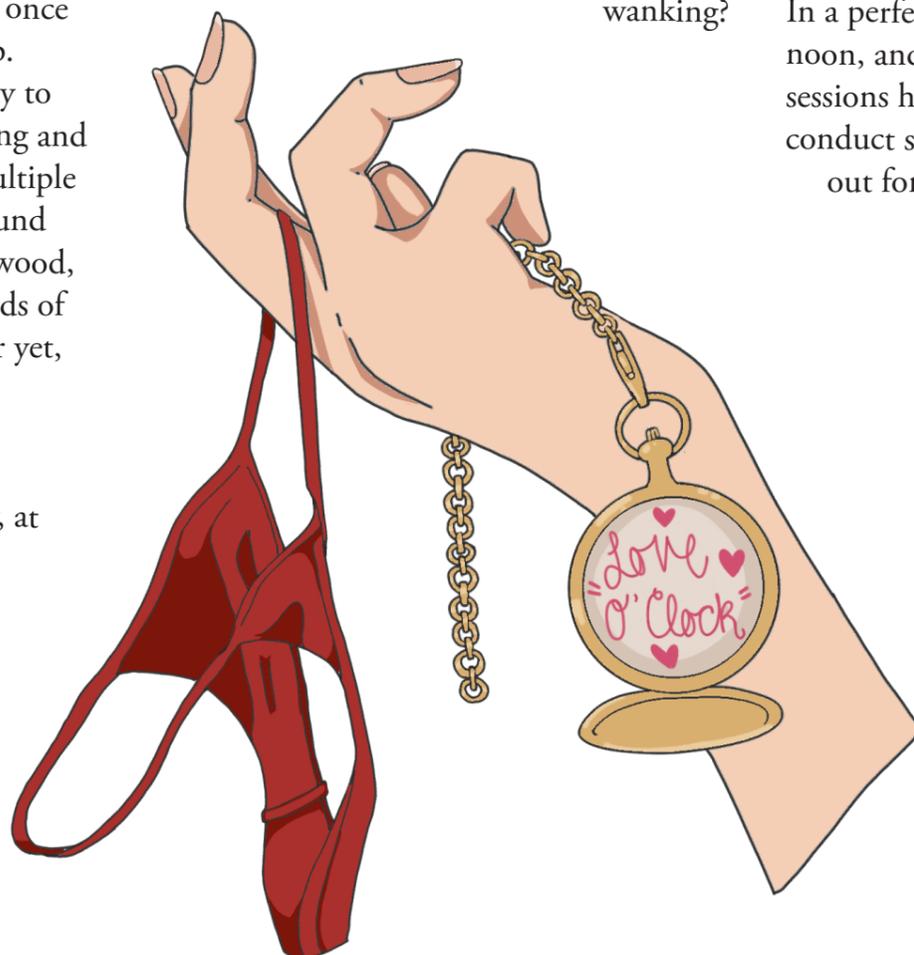
Final Ranking

1. Before Dinner
2. When You First Wake Up
3. Before Bed
4. Afternoon Quickie
5. Middle of the Night
6. After Class
7. After Dinner

Every guy I've talked to claims there's no bad time to get it on—except for after dinner; of course, it's hard to argue with that. Sex, though, isn't always about the big O, but about the pleasure we find along the way. In a perfect world, we'd be going morning, noon, and night. But even then, not all sessions hit the same. So go on, dear readers: conduct some hands-on fieldwork and find out for yourselves.

MONA LOTT HOPES READERS HAVE FANTASTIC SEX IN THEIR BEDROOM RESEARCH.

GRAPHIC BY CAMERON BERNIER '29



Satire: Top Six Sex Locales on Campus

A list of the best campus spots for fun.

BY THAYER J. Y. GAULDIN

With all of sex's health benefits, it's only natural for students on campus to want to engage—after all, the mental toll from classes (however easy according to Claybaugh) and the physical deterioration from dining hall food needs to be compensated for somehow. However, student accommodations restrict the ability to stay healthy; from the cramped feeling of “workouts” on a twin bed to your weird pre-med roommate who spends every hour studying under harsh lamp light, sex in dorm rooms seems near impossible.

In the dorms' place, students must outsource to other areas on campus. Unfortunately, I've heard too many sad, devastating tales of desperation referencing sex in the Stacks, despite the plethora of gemmy spots to “get some.” It's a travesty. So, I have taken the liberty to compile the best places on campus to stay healthy.

The A.D. Scaffolding

Ditch the stuffy, claustrophobic Harvard singles and explore the skies. Born too late to uncover the Earth and born too early to discover the stars? Don't worry, you were born just in time to have sex in an active construction zone. Talk about needing a hard hat. For all the sophomores whose punch season was less than ideal, get the last laugh by making your mark on the A.D.! Enjoy the nice breeze that's sure to cool you down during and prompt some cuddling after.

Law School Library

While Harvard Law School has a marginally higher acceptance rate than the College, the competitive atmosphere means students must take every advantage possible for a leg up on their peers. Just as the College has its own traditions for high-school students hoping to attend (touching the John Harvard statue's shoe), HLS has its own practice to give students good luck on their application: sex next to their copy of the Magna Carta. Yes, it is intimidating. Yes, it is practically silent in there. Yes, it has that musty old-book smell. But it's all worth it to become the next Harvey Specter. Fortunately, the library has plenty of couches and cushions, so it'll definitely be more comfortable than your dorm room!

Annenberg Classrooms

Locked away behind a horribly-placed elevator are the classrooms above Annenberg. While most know the building for its nutritionally-lacking meals or where tourists conveniently ignore the “No Visitors” sign, I know Annenberg as the perfect place for a midday quickie. These classrooms are perfect, located right above a central hub of campus, guaranteed to be between wherever you're coming from and wherever you're going to, and even better, just close enough to a mass of students to heighten the excitement and adrenaline. Need to decompress after a stressful Chem 17 exam? Head to Berg! Need a post-game meal? Just go downstairs! Bonus points if you sneak up there during Ec 10A...

Under the open sky, in red mood lighting, and away from all the STEM students going to office hours, the observatory is a great place to ignite the next Big Bang.

The Catholic Center Courtyard

The Bible is littered with references to sex and procreation. Whether it be hymns of intimacy in “Song of Solomon” or allusions to incest in Genesis's story of Lot, one could argue that sex is an integral part of Christianity. On campus, many centers allow those of similar faith to come together and practice, such as the Catholic Center. Part of their space is a huge, fenced-off courtyard that makes the perfect place to “practice your faith.” For all the exhibitionists out there, what better audience than God Himself!

Lowell Belltower

The infamous bell tower of Lowell dominates the Harvard skyline, acting as a north star for lost tourists. Each Sunday, students in the river houses are blessed by the weekly cacophony of clangs that are supposed to resemble a song. But beyond being the worst alarm clock on campus, the bell tower can serve as a great place to make your own noise. Try your hand at bell-ringing by banging against the bell! And, the *Harvard Independent* has a great sex playlist that has the perfect queue of songs to ring along to!

This list reflects only a fraction of the spaces on campus that one could fornicate. Indeed, the best places are the ones that we accidentally stumble upon in our endless search for a sneaky link. And, like traditions, these spots are passed down from year to year. In uncovering these gems, we also realize that life (and sex) is meant to be fun and exciting. After all, it's about the journey, not the destination—though the destination does determine how good a time you will have.

THAYER J. Y. GAULDIN IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURIES OR CHARGES SUSTAINED WHILE FOLLOWING THIS GUIDE.

GRAPHIC BY JUSTIN MA '29



Loomis-Michael Observatory

In addition to the lecture halls and labs, the Science Center also hosts the Loomis-Michael Observatory, allowing students to explore the great unknown. After examining the stars, examine each other's bodies in the spacious dome of the observatory. According to its website, there is a “10-inch refractory telescope for educational and recreational purposes,” but I can think of another (and arguably better) 10-inch device used for recreational purposes.

The Making of a WAG: Sexualization in Sports

A look inside the culture that treats beauty as proof of victory.

BY WHITNEY FORD '28 AND OLIVIA LUNSETH '28

The wives and girlfriends of professional athletes in the most popular and well-paid men's sports can gain just as much fame as their significant others, for better or for worse. This begs the question: why is it that the same phenomenon does not exist among the husbands and boyfriends of professional female athletes?

The obsession with WAGs originated in the early 2000s British soccer culture when Victoria Beckham, or Posh Spice, started dating world-famous soccer player David Beckham. Following the initial excitement over their relationship, her persona quickly became intertwined with his athletic performance. Despite her own fame, her potential to “distract” her husband from the pitch became the public's primary concern, as any mid-match slip-up was quickly attributed to her.

Tabloids followed Victoria's every outfit, vacation, and sideline appearance, cementing her as the prototype for the modern WAG. Her influence helped turn the partners of male athletes into public figures in their own right, with style choices and personal lives scrutinized as much as the games themselves. The remarks did not just stop at fashion commentary; Beckham became a frequent target of sexist mockery and sexualized taunts, both in the press and from crowds at matches. One chant even included the line “Posh Spice takes it up the ass.”

By the mid-2000s, this fascination exploded into a full-blown cultural phenomenon. Since then, it has spiraled into an industry in itself, as WAGs use TikTok, Instagram, and even reality television to highlight their luxurious lives in the VIP box. Fans often treat them as an extension of the team, creating social media accounts dedicated to tracking what they wear, where they travel, and how they act at games. A sideline kiss or a supportive comment can become headline news, showing how every aspect of a WAG's life is transformed into a public spectacle.

Yet this visibility comes with a cost. WAGs are seen more as accessories than people—comment sections, news articles, and fan accounts comment on their bodies, style, and temperament. For male athletes, having a WAG often feels like the final marker of success—the ultimate symbol that they have

“made it.” No matter how impressive their stats or achievements, public perception consistently rewards the player who has an elegant, youthful, and conventionally attractive partner. “Good” WAGs are often seen as quiet, elegant, and supportive, and, of course, must have the body of a supermodel. When a WAG does not seem to fit these standards, the public is quick to criticize.

In 2024, Lauren Fryer, the long-term girlfriend of Arsenal footballer Declan Rice, was driven to wipe her social media accounts of their content following a frenzy of negative comments. Despite their heartwarming childhood-sweetheart storyline and the birth of their young son, Jude, fans urged Rice that he “could do better” and had “low standards” for being in a relationship with Fryer. This exact scenario has occurred time and



time again, further demonstrating that the majority of a WAG's value comes from superficial factors; her beauty and sexual appeal are treated as a reflection of her partner's status. In this way, the sexualization of women is not just a byproduct of WAG culture; it is the foundation of it. Their visibility is dependent on how well they embody a specific, glamorous ideal, one that turns their identities into status symbols rather than individual people.

While WAGs have become inseparable from the image of male athletes, the reverse simply does not exist. The husbands and boyfriends of top female athletes rarely attract the same level of media or fan attention, let alone

develop entire followings. There is no shorthand for “HABs”; they do not live in a world where their fashion choices or public appearances are obsessively tracked. This hinges on the fact that society does not glamorize men in proximity to powerful women the way it glamorizes women in proximity to powerful men. This imbalance reflects the broader inequity in sports: men's leagues dominate the money and media attention, while women's sports still fight for basic recognition.

This imbalance also reveals how both men's and women's sports are built to cater to the male gaze. In men's sports, WAGs are glamorous extensions of male success and in women's sports, the women themselves are sexualized. Female athletes' talent is often overshadowed by commentary on their looks, outfits, or bodies. Because women's sports already view women as objects of desire, there is no need to sexualize their male partners.

The dynamic that turns a WAG into a public figure depends on a hierarchy where men's success elevates the women beside them; that structure does not work in reverse. The public has little interest in idealizing men as accessories or symbols of a woman's power, because sports culture continues to treat women as objects of desire.

Ultimately, the WAG phenomenon exposes how the power dynamics of professional sports are deeply gendered. What began as a tabloid curiosity has evolved into a system that rewards the sexualization of women while simultaneously sidelining female achievement. Until sports culture values women for their presence on the field beyond their beauty beside it, the WAG will remain less a symbol of glamour and more a reflection of inequality.

WHITNEY FORD '28 (WFORD@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND OLIVIA LUNSETH '28 (OLIVIALUNSETH@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE SPORTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26

Indy Sportsbook: The Odds of Getting Laid

A Harvard bettor's guide to getting in their pants.

BY PROMETHEUS

The choice of foreplay in the form of dinner, an activity, or simply a text is a time-honored tradition of the college hookup. While the quality of each can work in your favor, the chances you can seal the deal at the end of the night are significantly different. All that being said, make your move wisely, and do what you can to make every part of the parlay hit. Below, we at Sportsbook have set lines for the Harvard classics.

Dining Hall Date: +5000

There is truly nothing sexier than a dining hall date... Well, maybe there are a couple of things. While this is not automatically a deal-breaker, it's hard to get in the mood when seeing Jaq and Gus chewing through a lamp cable. That being said, location is key. Don't venture to Dunster if you are afraid of seeing any ex-situationships that happen to be athletes. I also wouldn't recommend the Currier dining hall, unless you want to make a grand gesture for your Quad hookup. Often, your best bet is the overlooked Mather House: breathtaking views of the river and secluded from the chaotic life of Harvard Square.

Take your situationship there for a low-key dinner, and you've done about everything you can do to try and score.

A Walk Along the Charles: +1500

If you are looking for a setting outside the publicity of a Harvard dining hall, the scenic Charles River offers the perfect backdrop for a non-romantic meet-up. Throw some weed in the mix with a setting sun over the water, and your partner won't be able to contain themselves; there is no better wingman than a joint. If your meet-ups before this have only been physical, maybe don't pick this if it will cause you to inadvertently profess your suppressed feelings...not that it's out of experience, but weed seems to have this effect. C'mon, dude, it's just casual.

P-setting in Their Dorm: +1000

This is a Harvard classic, especially if you met in section or office hours. Make sure to clean your room before they arrive! There is nothing more unattractive than walking into a room where you can't see the floor because of the mess. Now, to set the mood, turn your LED lights on and light a candle. Offer them a spot on your bed while you take the chair, eventually moving up there when you "need a better explanation" to understand how to solve a problem. Once you make it onto the bed, cozy up, and move the conversation away from homework, to try and seal the deal. A word of advice: only jump into bed if you can deal with the academic fallout when it goes up in flames.

The Late Night Pickup: +500

One of the highest risk/reward plays around is the "u up?" text. If you want to take it one step further, then consider "__ has requested your Uber ride." It's the perfect combination of confidence and flattery, especially when it comes completely unprompted. The only challenge that remains is convincing them to actually get in

the car. Once that is accomplished, you are home free. Our words of advice: excessive compliments and texts about how badly you want to see them. Whether they are coming from a Currier ten-man party or a night spent watching Sex in the City, there has to be an element of desire that gets them out the door. Don't underestimate the power of a good sneaky link.

Going to Boston: +300

Trying to run into your hook-up on a night out inconspicuously, your best bet is to head into Boston. Better yet, try to figure out exactly which of the five Fenway locations they will be going to and accidentally bump into them while ordering a drink. It's an easy way to have a good night, regardless of whether you end up with your initial target. The beauty of Boston nightlife: the existence of other college students. If you are really down bad, flash your Harvardness to a student at another college, and there is a chance they are so impressed that they immediately want to take you home (and probably to a nicer dorm).

Take our advice or don't. We just want you to have the best possible end to your night. This may involve sending a risky text or putting your flirting skills to use in public. Or, it could look like trying to turn a platonic dinner into something else (best of luck with that one). In the end, do what you can to get laid and hope your situationship is in the same mood. After all, we at Indy Sportsbook know that you miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

**PROMETHEUS HAS FALLEN
VICTIM TO AN UNEXPECTED
UBER NOTIFICATION.**

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF DESIGNERS BELONG ONLY TO THE CREATOR AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE INDEPENDENT

ALL AROUND

SEX ACROSS, DOWN,

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
BREAK ♡ ME



Crossword by Fred Klein '28, design by Chau Nguyen '29

ACROSS

- 1. _____ Goldberg, actress and host of "The View"
- 4. Skill of deceit or evasion
- 8. NYC mayor-elect
- 9. Low-friction peanut butter

DOWN

- 2. Like a rhino, also wants to engage in this issue's topic
- 3. Jargon
- 5. On the rise
- 6. Rear end
- 7. Peanut butter + extra nut

Katie Merriam *Kayla Le* *Angie Li*