

GIRL UNEMPOWERED

Written by

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EXT. PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND - MORNING

First day of school, LACY, (4 yo, black, pants and glittery shirt), waiting her turn at the swings. As another child gets off the swing, she moves towards it, only to halt as somebody else races in front of her, sitting down.

BOY
(mockingly)

Too slow!

LACY
(outraged)
Hey! It's my turn!

BOY
I got here first.

He starts to kick his legs to swing.

Huffing, she crosses her arms and stomps to the TEACHER (30 yo male) standing a few feet away. She looks up at him with frustrated tears in her eyes.

LACY
He took my turn.

She points back to the boy happily swinging. Teacher looks down at her to give a sympathetic smile.

TEACHER
You'll just have to wait until he's done.

He looks up towards the swinging boy.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
James, five minutes and then it's Lacey's turn.

The boy nods and shoots a snarky smile to Lacy. Begrudgingly, she walks back to stand beside the swings to wait her turn.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK - DAY - 7 YEARS LATER

Dressed in gym clothes, Lacy, races past her P.E. TEACHER (40 yo white female), holding a stop watch.

P.E. TEACHER
Good time, Lacy!

Smiling and sweaty, Lacy walks towards the water fountain.

After slurping up the cool liquid, she turns around as JACK and BRADY approach, both wearing the same gym outfit. Jack eyes her with an evil amused look.

JACK

Hey, Brady. You ever see a girl run
as slow as Lacy?

Brady laughs, playing along, and Lacy's face falls.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to Lacy)

I think my sister runs faster than
you, and she's five.

Brushing past them, Lacy heads towards the locker room. The boys follow, hot on her heels.

JACK (CONT'D)

Look, Brady, she's going to cry.

Angry, Lacy whips around to argue.

LACY

Am not!

Both boys laugh as they continue to follow her towards the big building.

At the "Girls Entrance," she heaves the heavy door open as a Jack slams a hand on the surface, causing her to lose her grip, the door slamming closed again. Angry tears running down her cheeks, she shoves him out of her way.

The moment his butt touches the ground, an outraged voice sounds.

P.E. TEACHER

Lacy! Report to the principle's
office. Now.

Outraged, she huffs and runs away from the locker room building, messy sobs heard in her wake.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL MATH CLASS - DAY - 3 YEARS LATER

A fan mounted to the wall in the corner above the door, oscillates. Sitting in the middle of the room in a standard classroom desk and chair, Lacy chats with her friend, NORA (Latina girl, 16) beside her.

LACY
Did he text you last night?

Her friend, NORA, smiles wide, cheeks blushing.

NORA
Yes. Right before I went to bed.

LACY
What did he say?

NORA
At first her just asked me what I was doing. Then--

FEMALE TEACHER
Lacy.

The girls' eyes look up at their teacher standing over them as the bell rings. The room starts to quiet, other students taking their seats.

FEMALE TEACHER (CONT'D)
Do you have a different shirt you can wear today?

Frowning, Lacy looks down at the bright yellow tank top she's wearing. Then looks back up at the teacher.

LACY
(cautiously)
No.

A disappointed look crosses the teachers face.

FEMALE TEACHER
In that case, I'm afraid you'll have to report to the office and call your parents. See about getting them to drop one off for you.

LACY
What? Why?

Looking around the room at all the eyes watching, Lacy notes a couple boys wearing tank tops.

FEMALE TEACHER
I'm afraid you're breaking the dress code.

A snicker is heard.

Embarrassed, Lacy slowly gathers her backpack and slides off her chair. Quietly, she leaves the classroom.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY - 7 YEARS LATER

In conference, a six people, men and women, sit at a table. Stuck in her own thoughts, the conversation around her is muffled and far away.

MAN 1
(drowned out)
Lacy.

Lacy stares down at the table, her gaze blank, unhearing.

WOMAN 1 beside her gently jostles her arm. Lacy finally jerks herself back to the present, smiling to the others apologetically.

WOMAN 1
You alright?

Lacy bobs her head and shrugs.

LACY
Just thinking. Sorry about that.

She looks over at Man 1 as he continues to speak.

MAN 1
As I was saying, the numbers aren't terrible but we need to brain storm on how to get them up by next quarter.

INT. LACY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Stepping through the door, Lacy hang's her coat and bag on the hook on the wall, toes off her shoes, her eyes searching the living area cautiously all along.

LACY
(searchingly)
Charlie?

The empty space meets her with silence. Relief sighs out of her lungs, making her shoulders fall. Quietly, she pads through the small living area to the kitchen.

CHARLIE
(through the dark)
You're late.

Jumping in surprise, Lacy places a hand to her chest. Swallowing, she takes a moment to calm her nerves, her eyes picking CHARLIE (mid 20s, white, trim) out of the dark. Sitting at the small dining table in the corner of the kitchen, he wears a white button down dress shirt, open at the collar, sleeves rolled up and tucked into gray slack. A matching suit jacket is hanging on the chair beside him.

LACY

I'm sorry. My boss had us working
on a plan for the Baker account.
And --

Charlie slams a hand down on the table, cutting her off and making her jump again.

CHARLIE

(yelling)
No more excuses!

Shoving out of his chair, she takes a step back, just one. Then stops. There's no where to go.

Eyes wide with fear, she stands still as he slowly draws closer. Her fingers uncurl from her palms momentarily, then return to tight fits. She stands still, waiting, as he lifts his arm and swings hard, backhanding her on the cheek, sending her sprawling to the linoleum floor.

She stayed her, her face hidden under her hair, as he stood over her, breath heaving. After a few moments, a look of sorrow etches his features.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Christ.

Frustrated, he stabs his fingers through his hair.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Look what you made me do again,
Lace.

Face still obscured, she replies.

LACY

I'm sorry, Charlie.

He nods, understanding .

CHARLIE

Just...get dinner started, huh?

She nods, her cheek rubbing against the floor, her hair falling away to expose the red and already swelling mark on her cheek.

After he walks away, she doesn't move until the sound of the television turning on sounds.

Slowly, she drags herself up, opens a low cupboard to pull out a skillet, setting it on the stove.

She continues to moves about the kitchen: finding a pot, filling it with water at the sink and opening the fridge to pull out vegetables.

ON THE SCREEN

Per the CDC - About 1 in 4 women have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.

Over 43 million women have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

ON THE SCREEN

When we devalue their voices, we silence them.

ON THE SCREEN

Listen to them. Make them heard. Empower them.

FADE OUT