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The Crux

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Twelve

Women can't never be on top.

Who's a powerful woman in pop culture? The pink Power Ranger? Christina Aguilera? Yeah, she's the goddamn queen, right? Her skirt hiked up so you can see those red panties? There is such a thing as being sexually powerful, true, but what about when she's in the shower with all of those other girls? If it had been my MOM in the shower, I'd understand, but I don't remember Christina being a lesbian. So is she dancing in the shower with half-naked girls for our benefit? The benefit of men? Sounds like it, doesn't it? And doesn't that sort of make her a stripper? And isn't that sort of a silly contrast to her boxer persona?

I don't remember Madonna doing any of that crap.

A lot of the time, women are supposed to look powerful when they're wearing leather boots and corsets, or corset-like outfits. When we see Catwoman, we're not thinking about how strong and agile she is. We're looking at her tush. And the only reason those claws are scary is that we're afraid our sexual attraction to her will overpower our better judgement. How come there are no female villains that we're actually afraid of? We think, "wow, she's pretty intimidating, for a girl."

The only exception to this that I can think of is Maleficant, from *Sleeping Beauty*. She is terrifying. There's nothing about sex or beauty or anything. You don't fantasize about her tying you up, or whipping you, or anything. Doesn't even cross your mind.

And in porn? When women are on top, the men hold them by their waists and move them up and down. As if she can't handle being in control for just one second.

And in conversations, too. Guys are always deciding stuff, you know? I guess I like sex as a metaphor, because it really carries over to social interactions quite well. Girls don't often ask for what they want both sexually and emotionally. Not that guys are too articulate about their needs either, but when guys can't ask for things, they just take them. Girls, on the other hand, tend to try to live without them. I see a lot of couples, young and old, with women who despise their male partners because their needs aren't getting met. Women aren't trained to ask for what they want, and men aren't trained to inquire about others' needs. Boy Scouts and ballerinas. The former pins medals to his jacket, and the latter is only noticed when her toes aren't pointed.

Of course, there are always surprising exceptions. Some men don't feel powerful at all, so they act out a more frantic struggle for self-worth, as opposed to the annoying laid-back self-assuredness of many guys. Yes, these inadequate men never feel powerful, no matter how many rats they nail with BB guns, no matter how tall they get. Even if they're just downright lanky. Even if they become the principal of a high school. Excuse me, co-principal.

I think that this feeling of inadequacy is also what drives rapists and wife-beaters. When I say that, I am in no way trying to imply that Mr. Wehrli is either one of those things, in fact, I can assure you he isn't. Partly because you can just tell from talking to him, and partly because I feel just as inadequate as he does, if not more, and I would never hit a woman.

Anyways, these feelings of inadequacy, mixed with anger and a general lack of self-control, can make men feel a need to hit their wives, so that they won't feel so inferior. It's also what makes men hit each other. Which is something else, I assure you, that Mr. Wehrli doesn't do (I'm pretty sure I don't have it in me, either).

Here's what I do think about Mr. Wehrli. I think that he has a tendency to lose sight of what's really important to him, and I think he ends up fighting smaller scale battles than he really wants. I think that he responds with anger and punishment when he shouldn't, and I think he does this because there is a ghost sitting on his shoulder, constantly evaluating him. The ghost makes him jump through hoops, and when he doesn't display his fake strength and power, the ghost pinches him on the ear or calls him a name or gives him a cold look, or whatever his parents did to him when he was little. Mr. Wehrli is so busy jumping through hoops for this cold, scrutinizing ghost that he never gets to display his real strength. I don't know which one of his parents didn't like him. I know my mother really got me, and something about Mr. Wehrli's boyishness tells me that his mother got him, too. And Mr. Wehrli does have real strength, even if we've never seen it. I would never try to rob him of that potential. In more formal words, I promise all of you that I will never try to put a leader of our school in a position of powerlessness. All he ever had to do was make one joke, and he'd win our hearts. He could still do it. He might lose the support of the community, he might lose his job,

I think that there's something about the act of frequently having to literally look up to a man while he's talking that reinforces the feelings of debt and powerlessness in many girls and women. And if that's true, then there's gotta be something going on in boys' and men's heads when they look down on shorter females. This wouldn't be a problem in a relationship if it was established early on that the boy and the girl are equals, but as things stand, that usually doesn't happen.

but he'd win our hearts, and the ghost would choke on its own tongue, and roll off of his shoulder and break its neck on the tiles. Yes, I hate the ghost, because Mr. Wehrli loves it, and he won't sacrifice anything to kill it. It doesn't seem fair, with me on the steady path to expulsion and all. I guess I just think anything would be worth having empty shoulders. And I'm pretty sure Ms. Hannigan just needs a big hug.

Three Important Things to Think About

- 1. Okay, what's funnier... this, or The Graphic? What's more interesting... this, or The Graphic? Whose staff, taken as a whole, is more sexually attractive, this... or The Graphic?**
- 2. You know, some teachers are afraid that I'm going to bring guns to school and start taking people out? Oh, puh-lease. You think I need guns? Haven't I done enough already?**
- 3. I failed English. I thought you might find that amusing. (My dad sure didn't. He got so mad he called me a... well, you know what he called me.)**