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Lindsey Roussel  
*College of DuPage*

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## No Does Not Mean No Anymore

by Lindsey Roussel

(English 1101)

*The only thing that offset the darkness was the random cars that drove by. Every time they did I picked up my pace. I was three miles from Wrigley Field, it was four in the morning, and I was alone. My heels clicked in an even pace as I walked swiftly down the street. I was just waiting to get to Wrigleyville; I assumed it would be better. I was horribly wrong. Though I had the safety of lights and buildings, I had stumbled into the drunks leaving the bars surrounding the area. I tried to count how many men said something as I passed but the comments were so frequent I couldn't keep track. Even though it was disturbing and uncomfortable I ignored them, quickly looking over my shoulder to make sure I wasn't followed. I turned a corner to an alley way I knew was a short cut from when I used to live in Chicago, but as I checked over my shoulder I saw a man behind me.*

*"Hey baby!" he called, "What are you doing all alone? A girl like you shouldn't be alone." I picked up my pace, and he did too. I didn't respond but he kept going.*

*"The things I'd do to you," He said with a laugh, "Don't worry you'll like it." You'll like it. What he said was absolute, as if he planned on doing what ever he was thinking to me.*

*He sounded closer as I started to walk even faster. I slipped the pocket knife out of my jacket and slid it up my sleeve, open.*

*He grabbed me a few seconds later and pushed me against the brick wall.*

*"Come on baby," His hand slid to my throat, "Let's have a little fun."*

*"No," I gasped, "No get off."*

*And as his hand tightened my hand slid to his chest. Except mine had a knife in it. He stumbled back and pushed me out of the way.*

*"What the fuck? You're crazy!" He gasped.*

*"Come on baby. Let's have a little fun." I said back.*

*He jumped up, unscratched and rushed towards me. His hand knotted in my hair as I held the knife up again.*

*"I just want to have a little fun," he growled at me.*

*I touched the knife to his skin, not cutting him, but now he could feel the cold metal. He let go again and this time turned away.*

*"You're fucking psycho, you're lucky a guy even wanted to touch you, you whore."*

*I walked away with split lip and a bruise on my cheek, he walked away clean. But I am the crazy one.*

I am baby, darling, dear, honey, angel, sugar, sweet thing, sexy, lucky. I am psycho, whore, bitch, slut, tramp, crazy, rude, ungrateful, stupid, a piece of ass. I am what my body entitles me to be, I am what I wear, how I walk, and how I react. And as I walk down the street, whether its four in the morning or one in the afternoon, I am constantly reminded that I am not entitled to my own body. Apparently no does not mean no, no means try harder, no means she wants it later, no means nothing. No can come out of her mouth but her body is saying yes, right?

But not all men. Not *all* men are like that. Surely someone's dad isn't like that, surely someone's boyfriend has never done anything like that. Surely they claim they haven't. But the chances that at

one point in their life they said something derogatory towards a woman are significantly higher than them not having said anything. Not all men is what they claim.

“I would NEVER treat a woman that way.” They claim.

Because when a woman gets harassed, raped, beaten the focus isn’t on them, it’s on the man, or how men try to justify the action.

“She wanted it!”

“Did you see what she was wearing?”

“She was asking for it!”

Girls were raped and beaten in petty coats. They have been harassed because of their bodies for centuries. We teach young girls to yell “Fire!” instead of rape, because if you yell “Rape!” no one will come. Girls cry to their schoolteachers about boys pinching them and pulling their hair and they are told, “Boys will be boys.” It’s not, “Some boys will be boys.” The phrase generalizes all, excusing boys for their actions. And society has no problem with that until a finger is pointed accusingly at the whole group, then it’s “not all men.” However when a girl is walking down the street at night, keys between her fingers, looking over her shoulder every couple seconds, it is, yes, all men. She is going to be scared of every man that passes.

Rape is the only crime in America you can admit to and still walk free.

“He had such a good football career going.”

“It will ruin his future!”

“He’s has his whole life ahead of him!”

But she doesn’t. No one thinks about the girl. No one thinks: What will it do to her if we let her rapist walk free after he admits to it? What will happen if she sees him on the streets? What will happen if he seeks her out for telling? But none of that matters because she was asking for it. Right? She deserves the years in therapy, the scars on her wrist from the anxiety of going out, not being able to look at other men let alone be touched by one, not being able to hug her own father, all her friends leaving her, her family calling her a slut and shunning her, switching schools, ruining *her* future, all because no does not mean no in the eyes of today’s society.