



**TEACHING RESOURCES FOR KS4**



**SIMON &  
SCHUSTER**



# LESSON PLAN: CONSENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

## QUESTION TO ASK AT THE BEGINNING:

What is consent? What does it mean and how does it work in a sexual context? Can we compare it to other types of consent to help us understand it?

**WATCH:** Tea and Consent video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavNQ>

*Shannon shrugs. 'She said she'd been making out in a bedroom with some guy and it was all moving really fast and she thought it was what she wanted but then at some point she panicked and changed her mind.'*

*– The Trial, p. 168*

*Read: p. 167-p. 170 From 'I was with one of the Duke girls...' to '... doesn't say any more'.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are the different views of the group about consent?
- Who do you think is right and why?
- Why do you think Shannon has found it difficult to tell anyone about what happened at the party? Why did she decide to take the actions she did instead of just telling the truth from the beginning?

**CREATE:** Design a poster to illustrate one of the following facts about consent:

- Someone can't consent if they are incapacitated by drugs or alcohol or asleep.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time.
- Not saying 'no' isn't consent.
- You need to get consent every time, not just once.

*...he needs this to be true for everything to stay the same. All the moments of his own past that will suddenly look different. The future that he will need a new map to navigate. It would be so much easier if Shannon would just say 'Yes, I knew what I was doing.' And the world he has always known could stay the same. '*

*– The Trial, p.237*

*Read: p.236-p.239 'You're talking as if Shannon was ambushed' to 'What did she think was going to happen?'*

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- Why does Shannon think that she isn't the 'perfect victim'?
- Should our ideas about consent be affected by who the victim is?

### **REVISIT ORIGINAL QUESTION:**

What is consent? Has today's discussion changed your mind?



# LESSON PLAN: **SEXISM, COMPLICITY AND RAPE CULTURE**

## OPENING DISCUSSION:

Can you pick out 5 examples of sexism from the novel? Are any of these examples you can relate to? What kinds of sexism have you seen or experienced in your life?

## SEXISM AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the novel, the girls talk about the many little actions they carry out automatically to try and keep themselves safe. These aren't things that have occurred to the male characters.

*'We go to the bathroom in groups if we're out,' Hayley puts up the five fingers of her right hand and starts ticking them off, one by one. 'I carry pepper spray. I never wear headphones when I jog, so I can hear if someone comes up behind me. I cross the street if I see a group of guys up ahead. I check behind me before I put my keys in the lock.' She folds down her thumb, leaving a fight fist.*

*'Shall I go on?'*

*– The Trial, p.241*

*Read: p.239-241 From 'I just hate this idea' to 'it's our whole lives'.*

## ACTIVITY

Divide a whiteboard or sheet of paper into two halves. On one half, write down all the different things the girls in the class do to keep themselves safe (eg. Not walking alone after dark, holding keys like a weapon, texting when home safe, going to bathroom in groups, crossing street to avoid groups of men). On the other half, write down all the things the boys do to keep themselves safe. Compare the two sides. What do we learn?

**WATCH:** CNN coverage of the Steubenville rape verdict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvUdyNko8LQ>



*"[This] will haunt them for the rest of their lives", the commentators say, about the perpetrators. But nobody mentions the impact on the victim who was raped. What does this coverage tell us about how our society responds to perpetrators of sexual assault, particularly when they are star athletes?*

### **TALKING ABOUT RAPE CULTURE:**

Rape culture' is a term used to describe a society in which rape and sexual assault are common and media, social attitudes and cultural messages often joke, make light of or commercialise the idea of sexual violence.

**DISCUSSION:** Do you think we live in a rape culture? Why?

*'That? it was just me and a bunch of the Duke guys messing around,' Brian says, uneasily. 'Just banter, you know?'*

*– The Trial, p.213*

*Read: p.213-p.215 From 'What were you and the Duke guys joking about...' to 'Brian mumbles'.*

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- What impact do jokes like Brian's have in a society where rape and sexual assault are common?
- Shannon feels that what happened to her at the party wouldn't have been so likely to take place without the atmosphere created by Brian's jokes and how willing others were to laugh at them. How far do you think Brian bears responsibility for what happened?

### **EXPLORING COMPLICITY**

Nobody on the island raped Shannon. But she feels that everyone present played some part in what happened to her. What role did each character play in making it more likely she would be assaulted, or making it more difficult for her to report what had happened afterwards?

**CREATE:** public awareness campaigns have historically focused on telling women to avoid sexual assault (eg. Suggesting they don't wear short skirts, or get too drunk). Design a poster focused instead on the behaviour of men and boys.



# LESSON PLAN: STEREOTYPES AND GENDER ROLES

## INITIAL DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Who does which kind of jobs when the characters first crash land, and why? How do traditional gender roles show up on the island? Do they help or hinder the students' survival?

## ACTIVITY: DESERT ISLAND SURVIVAL

Imagine you have been stranded on a desert island like the students in the book. In small groups, brainstorm what your priorities would be and how you would divide up your group. Who would do what? Who is in charge? Why?

*'I'm sorry,' May gasps, trying to catch her breath, 'I'm sorry. But it's just... has it not occurred to any of you guys that you have a group of people here with the exact skillset you need?'*

*– The Trial, p.93*

*Read: p. 93 – 96 'I'm sorry' to 'arms outstretched'*

- Why don't the characters realise earlier that the girls' skills would be well-suited to coconut gathering?
- What do the characters' different coping mechanisms tell us about how we are socialised to cope with stress according to our gender?
- How do we as a society treat athletes of different genders differently (eg. Jocks and cheerleaders) even when their sport requires similar levels of athleticism and skill?

**WATCH:** Top 10 terrible relationship lessons we learned from movies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWcaw7GfBml>

**CREATE:** Women's magazines often offer flow-chart style quizzes designed to help women decide if 'he's the one', or 'what kind of romantic' they are. Can you instead create a similar quiz designed to help people work out whether their relationship is healthy or unhealthy?



*'I felt grateful. And stupid. I didn't know why I kept making so many mistakes. And I felt lucky Jason was there to help me.'*

*– The Trial, p.251*

*Read: p.249 – p.251 from 'Jason Angel. Jason always shines so bright' to 'most of the time at least'.*

## **DISCUSSION:**

- Until this point in the book, did you think Shannon and Jason's relationship was a healthy or unhealthy one? What signs were there that contributed to your answer?
- Others think Shannon is very lucky to have a boyfriend like Jason who seems to care about her so much. Why haven't they noticed that Jason is behaving in a way that makes Shannon feel unhappy?

## **ACTIVITY: UNWRITTEN RULES**

Our society has a lot of unwritten rules about how we should or shouldn't behave, dress etc. according to gender. Although nobody ever teaches us these rules, we all know them. Write 'Boys' on one side of a whiteboard or piece of paper and 'Girls' on the other side. For each item on this list, write on each side the kind of words that might be used to describe a person who behaves in this way. What do you notice about how different the two sides of the paper are? Why do we treat people very differently according to gender, even when their behaviour is identical?

- Wears make up
- Has a lot of relationships/sex
- Cries
- Plays a lot of sport
- Wears a skirt
- Needs help with a physical task like opening a bottle

## **EXTRA RESOURCES:**

- Is your relationship healthy? Women's Aid Love Respect resource aimed at teenagers <https://loverespect.co.uk/questions/>
- Disrespect nobody campaign – with videos, information and quizzes for young people on healthy relationships and consent <https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk>



# QUESTIONS ON WRITING AND LANGUAGE

- How does the author create the different characters in the novel? Which character do you most relate to and why?
- Laura Bates is an activist and campaigner on issues like rape and domestic abuse. Why do you think she wrote this book as a fictional novel instead of writing a newspaper article or non-fiction book about the issues?
- Read p.4 ('It happened so suddenly') to p.5 ('then darkness'). How does the writer use language to bring the plane crash to life for the reader? How does she create a sense of panic and chaos? Can you find examples of metaphor, personification and onomatopoeia?
- Read p.79 ('A silver flash' to 'the tip clean'). How does the writer create imagery in this passage?
- Read p.61-62 ('So they fall on the pile' to 'the last scraps of flesh'). How does the writer bring the characters' hunger to life and create a sensory experience for the reader?
- Do you find the ending of the novel satisfying? Why do you think the writer chose to end the book in this way? Write your own alternative ending finishing the story in any way you like.