

RED TOPIC 1

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"I will defeat all obstacles that dare enter my path", shouts Love. "I will endure forever" it resounds. Erich Segal, author of the infamous novel, "Love Story", made his intended theme loud and clear. In this novel we as readers are bathed in the notion that "Love conquers all." While love is a powerful tool in motivating many of us, and often the drive behind our determinations to face bumps in the road, it rarely does so without cost or compromise. Segal's overall theme, "Love conquers all", should be read as "Love conquers all with a little help from reinforcements". Segal addresses many significant messages throughout the book that touch on Gender bias, Race, and Class. Without the assistance from these troops and others, "Love" wouldn't even be at the front lines.

One of Segal's hidden messages falls under Gender bias. In this novel we find one sex giving up much in order to have the other. In writing this novel, although the intended audience was largely female, Segal asks us as women to recognize the fact that if we want the man and therefore a better life, we must deny ourselves. The two main characters in "Love Story" are Oliver Barrett IV and Jenny Cavilleri. Oliver Barrett IV is a student at Harvard and Jenny a student at Radcliffe. Oliver and Jenny meet at the Radcliffe library where Jenny works. Oliver is in search of books in less demand than at his school and makes such a request of Jenny. In their first meeting Jenny makes reference to his appearance, "You look stupid and rich". He attempts to deny that statement and she references that she is smart and poor. She then continues the repartee

with an enticement to get him to ask her out. "What the hell makes you so smart?" asks Oliver. "I wouldn't go for coffee with you," she answers. "Listen-I wouldn't ask you." "That," she replies, "is what makes you stupid." Within the next paragraph the two are out to coffee. Soon they are dating and what follows is a denouncement of those things important to her. We hear of her going to his hockey game, and he forgetting that she was outside waiting for him after the game. Oliver ponders, "Any way I was alone again. I let my whole pleasantly aching body slide into the whirlpool, closed my eyes and just sat there, up to my neck in warmth. Ahhhh." The thought finally occurs to him that Jenny is waiting outside in the freezing cold (hopefully) and rushes to get dressed. Who is waiting but Jenny. The girl waits in the freezing cold for the guy while he sits in a hot tub. Oliver views Jenny's friends as losers. He calls them "wonky" and they are painted as wimps, "those that neither threw nor received punches". There is barely a reference of Jenny ever hanging out with her friends. Oliver, the male, is touted as more important because of his jock status and Jenny as simple because she lives to hear the stories of his conquests over his opponents during the games.

Segal notes that Oliver thinks highly of himself and less of Jenny. We see that Oliver is appalled that Jenny would make him wait for their date while she is on the phone and sets out to 'put a stop to this usurpation of his time.' Jenny spends all her time at his place and not until the 6th chapter is there even a reference from the author that Oliver has any interest in Jenny's life outside of himself. In their conversations Jenny down plays her abilities to Oliver's stating that she plays music just "okay", not "All-Ivy" like him. One major act of self-denial comes when Jenny mentions to Oliver that she has received a scholarship to study music in Paris. Oliver pleads for Jenny to not leave him. She makes one last attempt to get him to recognize her dream. He basically responds with

"blah, blah, what about our marriage", something that he had not mentioned until there was a possibility that she wouldn't be around. The ultimate denial comes when Oliver is angry with Jenny for intruding in the feud between he and his father. He yanks the phone from her hand and the socket and screams at her to, "get the hell out of his life". In all of his anger he doesn't even realize she has run out the door. After a search of the town, he later finds her sitting on the steps of the apartment waiting for him. "Jenny, I'm sorry---" "Stop!" She cuts him off and very quietly says, "Love means not ever having to say you're sorry." The female not only gives up her friends, her interests, and her dreams to get the man, but also her self respect and need for safety and security. In other words, get ready ladies to "just be". Expect your dreams to stay buried, your friends to disappear, and your worth to go down the drain, because according to Segal, those are the costs that accompany Love.

Being female is not the only military ranking for Jenny. She also belongs to the troop, "Financial Loser". From the beginning of the novel, Segal lets us know that Jenny is poor and Oliver is filthy rich. She, after all, is the poor girl attending Radcliffe, chasing after the rich boy at Harvard. It would be socially unacceptable for the rich male to go after the poor female. The author makes constant reference to their statuses. Love is not the self-standing warrior that the author wants us to believe it is. We see that for Jenny it is a privilege for her to be received by Oliver Barrett IV. The two contrasts of social class are portrayed throughout the novel. Within the first chapter we see that Oliver's family has donated a hall to Harvard, a colossal monument to his family's money, vanity, and flagrant Harvardism. Jenny comes from a humble background. Her father, "some sort of baker guy" as Oliver refers to him, lives in Cranston, Rhode Island. His only contribution to society is Jenny and some Italian pastries. Jenny calls herself a social zero when talking with Oliver about her plans to go to Paris. The