

# Inequality

*by Stephen DeVoy*

Heather and Stan had been dating for several months. Heather was 17 years old. Stan was 20 years old and a college student. Heather was an intelligent girl. She was the youngest in her family and grew up the center of her daddy's attention. Her father made her feel like a princess, though she was not a princess, just very loved by daddy.

Stan was infatuated with Heather. She was beautiful and innocent. Stan, however, like most young men his age, thought about sex several times an hour. This was not abnormal. Young men tend to be that way. Perhaps it served some evolutionary purpose in our past, but things were different now. It took many years for a child to become self sufficient. Society had become highly specialized and most young adults did not finish their education until their early or mid twenties. Having children too young was not a good thing, at least in these times, and it was even worse for females because they would often find themselves stuck, alone, supporting a child.

Like most modern young American adults, Heather and Stan faced this paradox. Their bodies were already adult bodies, but their emotional and economic situations were not equal to those of adults. This is not to say that they were less intelligent than older adults. Indeed, their minds were probably keener and faster, but they lacked the experience, finances and stability that most older adults had acquired.

Heather did not think of sex as frequently as Stan. In fact, she had never had sexual intercourse. She loved men, in the sense that she wanted a man in her life, but her need was more emotional than it was sexual. Her father had always treated her with respect and affection. That is what she sought in a man. She longed to be held. She longed to share her innermost thoughts. She longed to be loved.

Stan loved Heather, but he also wanted sex. He didn't know why he wanted sex, but it crossed his mind frequently. When they were apart, even for a day or two, he'd miss her. He'd miss her conversation. He'd miss her smile. He'd miss the feeling of her nearness. However, when they were together, his desire for sex would overcome many of these more affectionate feelings and, as she sought affection, his desire for sex would become all the stronger.

The two, then, found themselves in a difficult situation. Stan was not only ready for sex, he'd had sex before. Heather was not ready for sex, at least not full, all out sex. As Stan became more and more insistent, she felt more and more uncomfortable. Yes, she wanted to please him but her needs were different and they were not being met.

One day the two traveled down to Ocean Beach Park in Connecticut. It was a day trip. They enjoyed the sun and the sand. After a day of lying next to each other in the

sun, Stan was feeling sexually aroused. Heather, on the other hand, was feeling the contentment of male companionship which, for her, was important.

As the two returned to the car, preparing for their trip home, Stan grabbed Heather and kissed her passionately. She enjoyed being kissed and the two kissed for what seemed like an eternity. When the kiss ended, however, Heather found herself being coerced into reclining in the chair and Stan began to feel her breasts. She was uneasy about this, but she enjoyed the feeling of being touched. Stan's hands became more aggressive and Heather panicked.

Heather pushed Stan away and told him to stop. Stan attempted to continue. This infuriated Heather. She pushed him away, hard, and said, "Look Stan, no means no!"

Stan returned to his senses, but was not pleased. His desire for sex was heated and he was being turned down.

"You don't love me," he said to Heather. "You don't care about my needs. Look, I'm 20 years old. It's been a while since I dated someone that refuses to have sex." "Stan, I do love you," she said. "I'm not ready for this. This is not what I want right now. This is not what I need. You say that I am not satisfying your needs. Well, what about my needs?"

"What needs am I not meeting?" Stan asked.

"Well, for one thing, I want to be held. I want to be cuddled. I want you to hold me like my father held me when I was a little girl. He'd just hold me and I'd feel happy to be warm and protected. He didn't paw me. He didn't want anything in return. He just loved me."

"Look, Heather," he replied, "I'm not your father. I'm your boyfriend. I want to be much closer to you."

"No you don't," she whispered. "You don't want to be close to me, you want to be inside of me. Closeness is not about sticking it in me. Closeness is about holding each other, talking, and sharing our feelings and thoughts. It's not about having sex."

The two were frustrated. In fact, they were very frustrated. As they drove home neither one spoke until they reached Heather's house. Heather opened the door, gave Stan a kiss on the cheek, and ran into her house, shutting the door behind her.

Stan sat there in his car for a moment. He pounded his fist on the dashboard and sped off in his car.

Heather's mother could see that Heather was sad and troubled. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing!" said Heather as she slammed her bedroom door.

Later that evening, while Heather's father was out, Heather found her mother in the living room, sat down next to her, rested her head on her mother's shoulders and said, "Men are assholes."

"Have you had sex with him?" her mother asked.

"No, I haven't. We have been close, but we've never slept together. I've never had intercourse. I'm not ready for it. I don't want to have intercourse." Heather sighed.

"He's a lot older than you are, Heather. I'm glad you don't want to have sex with him. You're young, you have many years of school ahead of you. Getting pregnant young might ruin your life. If he doesn't want to accept you the way you are, then you should break up."

"Mom, he's not much older than I am. He's only three years older. Daddy is 10 years older than you are," Heather said.

"When I met Daddy, I was 25 years old and he was 35 years old. We were both finished with our education. We both had jobs. We were much more similar to each other than you and Stan are now. At this point, after 20 years together, our difference are even fewer. The inequality between two people is not merely a matter of difference in age, it is difference in mobility, difference in experience, difference in hormones, difference in education and many other things. Stan is acting like a 20 year old young man you are acting like a 17 year old young woman. The gap between you is huge. Like all young men, he thinks about sex much more frequently than you do. He probably has very different needs than you have. That mismatch has the makings of disaster." Her mother looked at her trying to assess the reaction.

Her mother could see that Heather was beginning to understand. She looked at Heather with a smirk and said, "Besides, men his age make lousy lovers."

The two burst out laughing.

"So, should I find someone older?" Heather asked in jest.

"Heaven's no!" her mother replied. "That would be even worse! Older people know more about how to manipulate and use people than younger people do. You'd be treated like a doormat."

"So what should I do?" Heather asked sadly?

"Let's see," her mother said. "Boys your age are awkward and quirky. Boys a little older than you are like dogs trying to hump someone's leg. Older men will use you up and throw you away. Really, I don't know what to tell you. I guess the best thing

would be to date as many young men as you can and don't allow yourself to get attached until you are ready."

"That sounds like a plan," Heather said.

Heather returned to her room. She crawled into her bed and shut her eyes for a while. She cried and then became silent. The tears dried on her face and pillow. As she lifted her head, she could feel the pillowcase peel off of her face. She sat up. She felt a little better.

Heather walked over to the mirror. A picture of Stan was in the corner of the mirror. She took it down and tossed it in the trash can. She was feeling much better now.

In her closet she found a shoe box. She opened the draw where she kept all of the cards Stan had given her. They were mixed with the dried rose petals that had accumulated from the many roses he had given her. She had a habit of plucking off the petals when the flowers drooped and scattering them in the drawer. Heather scooped up a handful of petals and placed them in the box. She scooped up another handful and did the same. This was taking a while, so she grabbed the drawer, pulled it out of the dresser and turned it over letting everything fall into the box. Whatever missed was tossed into the trash.

Heather put the lid on the box. Pulled out a roll of tape and sealed it. She placed it in her closet.

That was twenty years ago. Heather doesn't know what happened to the box, or Stan, for that matter.

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