

Blame

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Gwendolyn Valles

(Lights on) An ominous alleyway is dimly illuminated, and a young female quickly dashes across stage in tattered clothes, her red heels fly off. (Lights off)

*The sound of a heaving woman and a dial tone ring out from stage. *

Operator: 911. What's your emergency?

Woman: (Heaving) Help me. I'm scared... (choking up) I'm lost...I don't know where I am, and I'm being followed.

Operator: Can you spot any street signs to help us locate you.

Woman: It's dark...wait *phone static*(whispers frantically) I think they're still following me!

(Shouting) Kentucky Ave!

Operator: Can you tell me any landmarks? Help is on the way! What are you wearing, to help spot you?

Woman: It's too dark to make anything out. (loud car screech and phone static) ...black dress and I'm barefoot!

Operator: Help is on the w- [call gets cut off]

(Lights on) *Next day* 11am Saturday morning at a table in Atherton Union on Butler University's campus.

Evi: Man, I love the bagels here! Did you see the Dawg Alert last night? It said a student was abducted and to watch out for a 2001 green Odyssey with tinted windows.

Sasha: Yeah. I got the alert at like 2 in the morning. She must have been at a party or something off campus to have gotten abducted.

Maya: No! I heard she was grabbed on the BUPD side of Ross Hall!

Evi: No way!

Maya: YEAH! I read an article this morning about how when the cops found her she was like half naked. Her “dress” was basically straps of fabric barely hanging off her body.

Sasha: Well she must have fought the abductors to get away and they might have ripped up her clothes in the fight.

Evi: All I know is that my mom would not stop calling me last night to check up on me.

Sasha: You say that like it’s a bad thing.

Evi: I appreciated it but I’m not the one dressing like a skank on Friday nights and heading out to parties. I’m a responsible law-abiding freshman. I mean nobody told her to go underage drinking.

Sasha: So, you think she was drunk?

Maya: I mean just by looking at her victim’s picture it wouldn’t take much to get her tipsy, she has a small frame.

Evi: Yeah and you know what they say, “the lighter you are the easier for kidnappers to snatch you up!” They always said that at school while I was growing up.

Sasha: That’s messed up.

Evi: But it's true! And last night was even more evidence. Man like she would have been fine if she had just stayed in or not dressed like a slut.

Maya: (freezes in the middle of eating cereal) So, you're blaming her?!

Evi: No! Well... she does have partial blame. Women must be smarter with how they dress and act because if they don't then stuff like this incident happens.

Sasha: (puts down toast) HOW!? How is she at fault for anything that happened last night!?

Evi: Well she chose to go out that night! Nobody was forcing her to go and flaunt her body at some senior house and get so drunk out of their mind that they can get abducted! She chose to dress the way she did, and she basically made herself an easy target! She has some of the blame.

Maya: That's a sick mentality. That's like shaming a woman for basically having freedom of expression. The way she dressed that night should not be any of your concern. Society is so fucked up that clothing- a piece of cotton fibers- gets sexualized the moment it hits a woman's body.

Sasha: That's so true. Society is getting so oppressive and judgmental with what women should wear all the time it makes me feel like I'm living in the "Islamic revolution" and the next step society will take is "to force all women to wear veils to school"¹ or whenever we leave our dorms! This woman was a victim of abduction, she could have raped or murdered and you (points at Evi) want to pin the blame on her. That is so upsetting...I think I just lost all my appetite. We really need to work on spread awareness on Butler's campus on how women are not sex objects.

Evi: Look, women just must be more careful is all I'm saying. We just aren't as strong as men, so we need to be extra careful. It was a cause and effect situation. There had to be consequences for her actions. She had free will and look where that got her.

¹ (Satrapi 1)

Maya: Enough! Can you just shut up? That abducted student could have just as easily been anyone of us coming back to Ross Hall from studying late at night. She has suffered enough, and I don't need to sit here listening to you blame her for the sick actions of some criminals! She fought and ran for her life and you don't get to demonize her. You're just like the trolls who spam women on social media telling them "fuck you"² and calling them "cunts" or to "get back in the kitchen."³ Your statements only fuel men's power over women, which is dumb because (speaks slowly but with force) YOU ARE A WOMAN.

Sasha: Yeah, we should really check up on her and show her that her community cares for her safety and well-being. As a fellow human being, I want to acknowledge her humanity before villainizing her for her gender or what she was wearing when the crime happened. She is a fellow student and she deserves respect and compassion right now-- not your judgement. Evi, I think addressing and altering your mindset is the first step to reaching gender equality because it's about goddamn time for women to start uniting instead of shaming each other.

Evi: You're just a bunch of crazy feminists. Do me a favor and lose my number. (gets up from table and leaves)

Sasha +Maya: Thank you!

Sasha: I'd rather be a crazy, "happy feminist"⁴ than a narrow-minded idiot.

(Lights off) End.

² (Valenti 194-196)

³ (Valenti 193)

⁴ (Adichie 1)