



It's Not Just Cougars After Young Boys. Meet the "Hyenas": Teen, Mean and on the Prowl

Teenagers are having sex earlier and with less emotional attachment than ever before, and this means life isn't getting any easier for their parents—or for the teenagers themselves.

Consider Steven. Here he is, describing the loss of his virginity. "I was at a party and had too much to drink. One of the girls decided she wanted a thrill and pulled off my pants and made me get a hard-on and had sex with me...Everyone watched. Some friends even took pictures of us on their cell phones. I don't remember a lot of it. But I regret that I lost my virginity like that."

Suddenly the sixties and seventies look innocent. "We've reached an age when 'like that' is sometimes de facto rape," says Jennifer Austin Leigh, PsyD., an expert on teenage girls. "Teenage sex has gotten significantly more predatory, and girls are doing an equal amount of the preying."

Indeed, Leigh, known to her clients as "Dr. Jenn," has coined the term "hyenas" to describe the new phenomenon of sexually aggressive girls, taking as her model the female spotted hyena, which is far more aggressive than its male counterpart, right down to sexually explicit taunting. It is now not uncommon for girls to strong-arm boys for sex, and that includes oral sex. Some teenage girls even collect "V cards" (virginity cards) to keep score of the number of boys they've deflowered. It's a growing trend. Girls like the power and thrill of being a guy's first, even if they don't have any feelings for him.

As a result, boys feel more vulnerable and dismayed than ever. "Thirty percent of the guys I interviewed were depressed, anxious and some even reported self-mutilating after giving up their virginity to a girl who didn't value it. We do our boys a huge disservice by not talking about male virginity or their romantic, tender emotions about sex," says Dr. Jenn. "Our boys are more than just their plumbing. Parents need to address their boys' hearts and souls when they discuss sex with them."

Dr. Jenn is not anti-sex (she has described certain aspects of the abstinence movement as "downright creepy"), but she does want to bring respect back into relationships. This is the focus of her practice, and of her new book, *Laid or Loved? The Secrets Guys Wish You Knew About Being a Dream Girl Instead of a Just-In-His-Jeans Girl*. For parents, who tend to be "oblivious," Leigh wants to make them aware that girls are acting out in more traditional male roles, with damage being done to both sides.

"I had a mother call me in a panic because she was worried her daughter was drinking too much and might get taken advantage of. I gently suggested that her daughter may be drinking in order to work up the courage to prey on a guy, or to have sex and not feel guilty about it. Girls often blame their sexual behavior on 'one too many.' "Girls are told to be 'good girls' and not have sex and at the same time they are told they are valued for being sexy and hot. That's crazy-making," says Leigh. Boys don't have to deal with that pressure.

Indeed, sexually aggressive girls may simply be acting out at the confluence of two opposing currents: new equality between the sexes and the old sexual double standard that makes a promiscuous boy a stud and a girl a slut. Leigh finds that girls are objectifying boys as never before, and learning in the process that this negatively reflects back on them, just as it has on boys all along. "It all starts with self respect," says Leigh. "Today's teenage girls are dealing with pressure from texting, computer networking, and especially a sex-obsessed media that pushes sex to the point of degradation. That's what's new: the absolute pervasive pressure to be sexual. And *that's* what we need to address."

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For more info, visit www.drjennforgirls.com or contact Amy Logan: (415) 419-5557 or amy@amylogan.com.