



Restless Virgins: Love, Sex, and Survival at a New England Prep School

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An honest, intimate look at the lives of today's teens—told through the true experiences of friends at a New England prep school

Established in 1798, Milton Academy has a proud history of achievement. It has educated artists and CEOs; it has produced a long line of distinguished scholars and dignitaries; and it has shepherded students through the world of high-pressure academics for generations. Since its founding, the public face of Milton had always been one of integrity and pride . . . until a sex scandal rocked the campus and made headlines in the spring of 2005. The offense? Teenagers doing no more than what others had done before them—except this time they got caught.

Restless Virgins is the riveting real-life story of a group of seniors who were there as the "incident" (as it came to be called) unfolded: Whitney, the athletic and sensual beauty every girl wants to be; Annie, who craves acceptance but is torn between the desire for peer approval and musical success; Jillian, the smart one who is sick of high school drama and desperate to go to college; and Reed, a "hockey god" who has it all but whose charisma masks a secret insecurity.

From "friends with benefits" to STDs, today's teens face a wider array of social and sexual opportunities—and pressures—than ever before. Through its eye-opening yet sensitive depiction of a group of normal kids with normal struggles, *Restless Virgins* offers an important look at contemporary adolescence no teen, parent, or educator can afford to miss. And it is written by two recent Milton graduates who know this world—and these students—like no others.

Restless Virgins: Love, Sex, and Survival at a New England Prep School Details

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From Reader Review *Restless Virgins: Love, Sex, and Survival at a New England Prep School* for online ebook

Stephanie says

Why did I read this whole book? I thought that it was going to go somewhere, that there would be some point to it. Sadly, I didn't find that, and I wish I had listened to earlier reviews and skipped the book altogether.

It was educational to hear about the cultural and social norms at a New England prep school. It's sad to hear how easily young girls are letting themselves be, even begging to be, used sexually by older boys. It would be one thing if they felt affection for these boys, or even seemed to enjoy the encounters on a physical level, but that did not seem to be the case.

Overall, the book seemed like it had enough material MAYBE for an article, but it was dragged out endlessly with day-by-day accounts of how each student was thinking, communicating, acting, etc. In the end, nothing terribly interesting or profound emerged. Even the usefulness of the book as a documentary seems limited by the fact that the authors were not observing events or interviewing the participants as they occurred, but rather based the whole book on limited interviews conducted well after the year was over. So not only is the book way too detailed, but I question the accuracy of those details.

Even the title is misleading -- "virgins" is not the word I would use to describe the teens in this book.

Elaine says

Trashy, and not even all that interesting. Just a week after finishing it, I can't even recall what the scandal -- the story's supposed climax -- was all about. Also, the authors didn't succeed in making me care about the characters' outcomes. But then again, maybe that wasn't a goal of theirs. After all, they're reporters, not necessarily storytellers. And this book pretty much reads like an unedited retelling of everything that transpired at the school in the 2004-5 academic year that may or may not have been relevant. It's as if the reporters transcribed the many, many hours of interviews they did, sorted them roughly chronologically, and stuck them together with some notably ineloquent connecting or explanatory sentences to call them a book. They made especially sure to quote the most insipid conversations and text chats verbatim.

Sure to become a classic!

Lize says

I have no idea what draws me to keep reading about what happens at prep schools, unless it's my deep-seated working-class longing to press my grubby face against the window and peer in at these golden gods and goddesses, who truly do run the world. Whatever.

It's partially an account of the "Milton Scandal", which I'd never heard of--back in 2005, five hockey players were expelled from Milton Academy in Massachusetts for receiving oral sex in the locker room [en masse:]

from a 15 year-old female student--and partly a 'slice of life' study about some of the overachieving, highly-privileged students who were there at the time; the pressures and insecurities and longing for love (and the casual sex they get instead).

It's written by two former Milton students, both of whom (naturally) went on to Ivy League schools (one to U Penn and one to Dartmouth) and both have written for the Atlantic Magazine. (And both are eerily identical, according to the book jacket photo--their same-length hair is even parted in the same place.) With such exalted pedigrees I expected great things in the writing department...boy was I surprised. The book is entirely a collection of short, choppy sentences, like dried peas plinking into a cup:

"Junior year Brady's girlfriend claimed she hated his friends and dumped him. He understood why. He was a true guys' guy and couldn't dream up a better night than one with Church, Quinn and the rest of the crew. The guys shared similar characteristics: They were attractive, athletic and preppy."

I began to play 'spot the semicolon' by page 14. The authors even manage to make the numerous graphic descriptions of 'hook ups' seem dull, and that takes a degree of skill. One thing is certain, though, things have really changed since I was in high school, and no amount of money (or promises of Harvard) could make me go through it again the way it is now.

I couldn't help but compare this to "The Overachievers" by Alexandra Robbins, which I read last year. It covers much of the same ground, but is far and away a more enjoyable read if you're interested in this topic.

Monica says

Ugh. Uninspired expose about spoiled rotten prep school kids, written by grown up prep school kids. Lots and lots of florid descriptions of the underground high school sex scene. Don't bother.

Meredith says

Female students at Milton Academy give way too much head, I would like to have seen more background on the girl who gave the infamous lockerroom "head"; and the five boys who received said "head". But instead we got way too much info on a handful of other students, and no real contemplative input on whether these activities have been going on since, say, the authors themselves were at Milton, AND has it really changed since, AND how about every other New England prep school, is this the currency of popularity, does it continue to be, and why do we as a society allow it to occur if so? The book still left me wondering what the hell was going on.....and is it still?

Sarah says

I'm constantly fascinated by how much (and yet at the same time how little) has changed since I was in high school in the early 90s. Sure, people had sex in high school but it almost always occurred when people were in monogamous relationships. Of course we went to parties and experimented with alcohol and drugs. But random sex encounters were rare and were looked down on as something that occurred between people who didn't respect themselves.

From what I understand, the stories in this book are not exclusive to Milton Academy. In schools nation wide girls as young as 12 are using sex as a means to 'have a boyfriend' and they mistakenly think that by having sex the guys will love and respect them. So what has changed since the early 90s? I think Candace Bushnell and Sex and the City had a bigger impact on America's youth than people realize. Young girls looked up to Carrie and Samantha, adult women who held prestigious jobs, were well educated and financially well off. Women who sterotypically had sex like men and were able to own their sexuality without the repercussions of losing respect or degrading themselves. But they were adults.

Girls in high school are not yet emotionally ready to have sex with no consequences. Giving blow jobs to five lacross guys at one time in order to be 'liked'? It breaks my heart. And I have no solutions to the problem.

I thought this book was an eye opening read. Definitely something I would encourage teenage girls to read and have conversations about. Knowledge is power.

Daniel Sheerin says

As I was once a restless virgin at a New England prep school, I thought this book would be interesting. It is not. I'm so glad I didn't hang out with the norms. Norms are so incredibly boring, not even scandalous blowjobs could keep my attention. Correction, not even a lamely written book about scandalous blowjobs could keep my attention. I'm not a TOTAL weirdo.

Erin says

This book was relatively redundant. If you have been a student or a teacher (or both) at an elite prep school in the past decade or so, none of the information presented in the book will shock you. If you read the Boston Globe around the time the story broke, you are probably familiar with the general details about what happened during the 2004-2005 school year at Milton Academy. That is not to say that similar inappropriate behavior did not happen in years prior or years since - only that the students involved this particular year got caught. The authors are graduates of Milton Academy and they really did a poor job of doing much more than stringing together the individual stories of the students involved.

Leanne says

A vile book. Trashy, poorly written. Certainly some truth to the stories, and a realistic look at privileged youth, but a book that I was embarrassed to read in public. It was written by spoiled rich kids, about spoiled rich kids, who thought that their story was the most important one in the world, when, in truth, this story was in and out of the papers, and the locals' minds, right after it happened.

The only time I have ever given unsolicited advice in a book store was when I saw a woman pick this up and head to the register.

Sarah says

This book was horrible. As a Milton Academy alum, I'm more ashamed of the quality of writing that went into this book (written by MA alums), than I am of what went on. I couldn't even finish the book, it was that bad. Talk about a waste of a good opportunity to expose the current state of American high schoolers in relation to sex. Womp.

Jess says

What did the authors intend with this book? Did they want to titillate? Scandalize? Make some sort of social statement? Cater to the *Gossip Girl*-watching crowd?

As a prep school alum, I can certainly believe the events of the book transpired more or less as described. But I can't figure out what purpose the authors thought they'd serve. Much attention is paid to girls who reduce themselves to objects in the hope that male attention of any kind will gain them the respect of their peers, but in their description of the book's central event, the authors basically reduce the girl involved to a faceless, personality-less object. If the authors intended to make a value statement about the event, reinforcing it by failing to give any attention to the girl's side of the story doesn't help.

Also, finding a productive and self-aware student to interview in the "core group" who didn't buy into any of the social structure the authors claim is so pervasive...that would have helped the narrative along immensely - I know they exist (and if everything else has changed about prep school since the mid-90s, I am certain that this has not).

Readers hoping to get some insight into real prep-school society might do well to skip this and instead check out the anthology "Casualties of Privilege" (while dated, most of it's still very relevant), Lorene Cary's memoir "Black Ice," or Curtis Sittenfeld's oft-referenced novel.

george says

Somehow I missed the whole Milton Academy sex scandal that occurred in 2005. After the incident (that apparently made national news), two Milton grads attempted to uncover the sex lives of Milton students, what the scandal means, and what teenagers are really doing. They write about four girls and three boys who were seniors at the time of the scandal. Milton is one of the oldest prep schools in the nation and reeks of old money and entitlement. Therefore, the scandal was shocking. To most people, anyway. The book is more about the actual lives of these seven students than the scandal that made headlines--but these students have their own scandals and many of them are not pretty.

I went to a prep school. I even went to a boarding school. I've been both a day student and a boarder, but my school was all-girls and I desperately wished to go to a co-ed boarding school. In hindsight, it wouldn't have been such a great idea, but when you're 16 and surrounded by girls and only girls for the majority of your time... well, a girl can dream. The thing about this book is that it's not shocking. The authors do this big lead-up to the actual event, and I'm expecting some huge gang-rape, or orgy or SOMETHING. But it's really not that exciting. And it's not surprising. For some reason the general public has this idea that prep schools represent the best of America. That the students are better-behaved. When in fact the exact opposite is true.

You've got rich kids with unlimited resources living on their own in high school with members of the opposite sex in the next building 50 feet away--what do you think is going to happen? The book is a good insight into the sexual lives of teenagers, but this is a very select group and I'm not sure that looking closely at any school that adequately describe the lives--sexual or otherwise--of all American teenagers. It's an interesting book in that it's a good look into the inside of a prep school (many of the traditions and rituals brought back similar memories of my own experience). It shows real-life Gossip Girls. And it shows how teenage girls are seen by the opposite sex and by themselves. And that is the worst part of all. It's depressing that the girls will do almost anything to be with one of the "it" boys. And it's disgusting how the boys treat the girls. Worth a read, I think.

Meera says

This was like reading an episode of the OC or Gossip Girl.. except MORE! This is the true life story of the students that were rocked by the scandal at Milton prep school, and I have to say that I felt like my teenage years were very innocent in comparison. Pretty scary stuff if this is what kids today get up to.....

Nancy says

An interesting but disturbing look inside the sexual and social choices of boarding school teenagers. A "true" story set at Milton Academy during the 2005 hockey team incident involving five sophomore and junior boys and a freshman girl. If the stories told are remotely true, then things have really, frighteningly changed since I was in high school...

Susan Bazzett-Griffith says

1.5 stars. A few years ago, I read Anita Shreve's Testimony and loved it- found it fascinating and horrifying and just really gripping. I saw this book, realized it was about the true story that Shreve pulled inspiration from for her novel, and decided I must read it. Unfortunately, it was pretty bad. I would actually give it only one star, BUT it kept me interested enough to keep reading and I usually reserve one star ratings for books I either can't finish or truly don't want to finish, so that's something I guess. The writing in this book is awful; I'm pretty sure I had some students in my freshman English class who could have done a better job. The tone seemed to try to be objective, but it wasn't- the authors clearly favored some of their interviewees more than others and seemed to put way more emphasis on the students who "sided with" the hockey players involved in the 1-girl-5-boys incident that made national headlines. The main problem I had with this book, though, was the fact that though these kids at school seemed to accept their prep school society as just their reality, their world, that no one, not each other, not their teachers, and with a few exceptions shown in the text, not even their parents, really, ever talked to them not about sex, but about RESPECT, for themselves, for others, for ANYONE. The real moral I was able to find in this book was, "Kids who go to seriously expensive boarding schools are both sheltered from real consequences and don't have enough adults in their lives to make sure they don't turn into completely crappy people."
