

# Your Friendly Neighborhood Ranter Stereotypes, Ridicule, and Intolerance (Oh my!)

Considering this is my number one pet peeve, there is plenty to write about for me. In the many long years I've been in school, I've seen and endured countless, ignorant incidences of stereotyping and ridicule. Most of this ridicule is based on mundane, insignificant things. It's basically driven me to the breaking point, so I ask, why is it so amusing? I admit that I am guilty of shelling out some nasty insults and rumors in my time but all were based on knowledge of that specific person. Teens these days seem to charge blindly into a raging battle of which they know nothing about. To put it simpler, everybody seems to make fun of anything that moves or acts differently these days.

Allow me to use myself as an example. Last year my study hall was basically chaos, for I was stuck in it with two ignorant middle school kids. It was there I earned the idiotic nickname "*Devil Girl*". Why? Because I wear black. Dumb, I know. I'll have you know my real favorite color is blue. I'm also agnostic, so that ousts the religious part of being a so-called "*Devil Girl*". See what I mean? Complete and utter ignorance. What scares me is most teens pick up these habits from their parents. Seriously, if a parent can't drill the concept of tolerance into their kid's minds, who will? It's people like this who cause wars. It's people like this who murdered that poor Matthew Shepard.

I am also ridiculed by people in my gym class, usually when they *think* I am out of earshot. Heaven forbid if I'm more of an artist than an athlete. At least I'm starting to get my sporty pep back and trying for once. Honestly, put yourself in my shoes, in the place of any kid who's different. How would you feel? The number one answer I get to that question is, "*I wouldn't care what anyone thinks about me.*" And at that, I laugh. Because how can anyone know how they'd react if they've never felt it before? More than half of these people are popular, babied, pampered, and so on. I doubt they've ever been made fun of enough to let it actually get to them. I used to say I could care less of what people think of me, and I still do, but that doesn't mean it won't hurt when someone starts throwing stones. It's mentally impossible to block all of it out.

I found it somewhat funny that people who hated me before came up to compliment me after the first issue of the paper was put out. Actually, it more than proves my point of ignorance. In my articles I voice my opinion; therefore, readers tend to get to know me without actually talking to me. People who hated me before begin to think, "*Hey, she isn't so bad I guess.*" It's a smaller scale of what I like to call **The Lottery Effect**. Someone wins the lottery, and all sorts of "*relatives*" come out of the woodwork. Of course, it's not all me. I have friends who are constantly bombarded with ridicule on a daily basis. I have witnessed a fight involving a good friend who apparently did something wrong, but all he did was walk back to school with his girlfriend and me. Those people who shall not be mentioned had no other motivation than ignorant hatred. They didn't know him personally, yet already decided he's on their hit list. I could honestly ramble on and on about this, and I think I already am starting to. I just hope I've opened some eyes because the whole subject is so ridiculous. And so, my readers, I leave you with this final thought: When you graduate, all the grudges,

all the enemies, all the insults and ridicule you either dealt out or received isn't even going to matter. Saying you owned so-and-so in a flame war on a resume won't get you that promotion. Telling your boss that you were better than so-and-so in gym isn't going to get you any closer to that free cruise. Sooner or later, all the popular kids who made fun of everyone else are going to have to quit feeding off other's misery to sustain their own ill-gotten reputation and learn to actually work for a place in the food chain for once.

Now, not all popular kids are nasty little things. I am friends with more than a few. Most are very kind. It's the ones who let it get to their head who are dangerous. Remember that, because I'm not out to invoke persecution on people who don't deserve it. That's called stereotyping, by the way, and I'm sure you all know how much I hate that.

## Shadows In The Light Continues

The night before, I found myself at the entrance of lower Manhattan's most well known speakeasy. I have often wondered, "*How is it a speakeasy if it is so well known?*" I keep my thoughts to myself though. Nolan doesn't think girls have minds. Nolan likes thinking he's the sense behind our relationship. I knocked on the brick door and a metal sliding grate slid open.

"*Mr. Smith sent me,*" I said.

The door was opened, and a rough hand caught hold of mine.

"*Good evening, Miss Malloy.*"

I was escorted through a long dark passageway and entered the bar room of *Juanita's Cabana*. It was dimly lit with cigar smoke floating in the air. I looked across the room. There sat Nolan Brown.

"*So he hasn't forgotten,*" I thought. I made my way over to him without being noticed.

"*If it isn't Nolan Brown,*" I said silkily.

"*It can't be Miss Molly Malloy,*" Nolan replied. "*You look wonderful!*" He led me to a small table in the corner. "*Would you like a drink?*"

I shook my head. "*You know I don't drink, Nolan.*"

"*I had almost forgotten. It has been so long since I last saw you. What have you been doing?*"

"*I was visiting a cousin in the Witness Protection Program,*" I replied. "*Since he has been enrolled in it, it has been awful trying to organize a family reunion.*" I smiled.

Nolan gave me a quizzical look.

"*How did you know where he was?*"

"*I have my ways, Mr. Brown.*"

Nolan started fidgeting with the tablecloth.

"*Is there something on your mind, Nolan?*" I could tell he had something serious to say.

"*I was talking to Eddie earlier this evening. He's a stockbroker on Wall Street. It's going to happen tomorrow, Molly. Everyone is going to lose everything.*"

"*What is, Nolan?*"

"*It took a lot of prying into informa-*

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*tion, but Eddie told me the stock market is going to crash the day after tomorrow. The roaring twenties will be over. I have an idea about how we can escape it together."*

"*Together, Nolan?*"

"*Well, I thought we could leave for Scotland before the crash and once there, buy a castle and make it our home.*" Nolan looked satisfied, but I had another question on my mind.

"*Where are we going to get the money to go to Scotland?*"

"*I have an idea about that too.*" Nolan's eyes danced with excitement as he explained his extravagant plan. "*You know what that means,*" Nolan concluded. I nodded.

"*Would you like to dance, Molly,*" asked Nolan.

"*Why the sudden change in conversation, Nolan?*"

"*I want to clear your mind of all of this. We will be safe from the crash together and on our way to Scotland tomorrow night. Until then, let's enjoy ourselves.*"

Without another word, Nolan whisked me off to the dance floor. Besides wonderful conversation, *Juanita's* was famous for her jazz band. After all, it was still the 1920's and jazz was at its premium. At two o'clock in the morning, Nolan and I finally stopped dancing.

"*We should get going. We have a lot to do tomorrow,*" said Nolan.

"*Will you walk me to the train station, Nolan,*" I said. I had to return to my apartment in Yonkers for the rest of the evening.

We stepped onto the corner of Fifth Avenue and stood under the streetlight. The fog had disappeared.

"*It is such a wonderful evening for walking,*" said Nolan. "*The stars look like silver coins gleaming in my pocket.*"

"*It's funny how money always seems to make a man smile.*" I glanced into the shadows on my left and had the funny feeling that someone was watching me. I grabbed Nolan's arm and held on tight.

"*What's wrong? We're not afraid of the dark, now are we?*" Nolan smiled.

Gregory Maddock, Sophomore

To be continued (again!)