‘I’m just a girl’
How women were tricked into demeaning themselves

By VIVIAN GAGE
Associate Opinion Editor

I guarantee that at some time in the last few years you have said, or have heard a woman say, “I’m just a girl,” normally after making a mistake or admitting a personal “flaw.” I say it all the time, usually when I’m stressed about my workload. I mean, why would my professors give me so much work to do “when I’m literally just a girl?”

When you stop to think about it, though, doesn’t it sound a little suspicious?

As a self-proclaimed feminist, I know I’m not “just” anything. I am certainly a lot more than my gender. Why the hell would I associate my mistakes or shortcomings with girlhood, when it is my wholehearted belief that women are without a doubt capable of doing anything they want?

I am fully aware that being a woman is never, ever, a weakness. And on second thought, why am I infantilizing myself willingly when society is working so hard to do that already?

I never like to consider myself one to purposefully contribute to the patriarchy, and yet, here we are. I have fallen victim to “I’m just a girl,” happily announcing my incompetence as an inherent fault of my gender whenever I do something wrong. So, how did this happen, and why are so many women comfortable saying it?

Online, women usually post “I’m just a girl” videos with the rock band No Doubt song “Just a Girl,” playing footage of them crying over spilt makeup, struggling to understand or contribute to politics, hitting a curb or generally any time they attempted a task and it didn’t go well.

The saying, tied to the No Doubt song, started gaining traction on TikTok around 2022. The infamous sad hamster with a bow became associated with it around 2024, according to the Daily Dot.

Supposedly, the saying began ironically among women to avoid accountability on the basis that they’re “just a girl,” embodying stereotypical ideas of girls being innocent, ditzy and naive. Some have said the phrase is meant to counteract “boys will be boys,” which is normally used unironically to excuse men for their poor behavior, such as boys pulling girls’ hair in elementary school or roughhousing.

If women were actually using this phrase ironically in a feminist act, to flip the script on things men normally get away with, I wouldn’t be mad. But sadly, this is not the case.


ILLUSTRATION BY SYDNEY DUNN-KRAUS

Just like the phrases “girl dinner” and “girl math,” the phrase has become a way for women to belittle themselves, like making fun of their inability to sustain a healthy diet or make smart financial decisions.

When you make a mistake and then blame it on your gender, you inherently associate being a woman with being less than. The saying “I’m just a girl” starts to sound a lot more like “if only I were a man,” and frankly, that’s unacceptable.

Singer-songwriter Gwen Stefani wrote “Just a Girl” as a critique of a male-dominated society, according to a Genius article. The hit ‘riot girl anthem’ was a call to arms for women frustrated by persisting gender stereotypes, and was “written from the perspective of the ‘little girl’ who ‘needs’ protection.”

Stefani wrote the song after her dad got mad at her for driving alone late at night, and the song is obviously facetious. It contains lines like “Don’t you think I know exactly where I stand?/ This world is forcing me to hold your hand” and “Oh, I’m just a girl, all pretty and petite/ So don’t let me have any rights.”

Observer called it “one of the most prominent feminist anthems of the 90s,” and many women who’ve heard the song would agree.

I’d claim that Stefani would be ashamed of how we’ve used her “feminist anthem” to repeatedly demean ourselves, but her right-wing rebrand may suggest otherwise.

Between marrying conservative country music star Blake Shelton, promoting the evangelical Hallow prayer app and publicly expressing enthusiasm for an interview with media personality Tucker Carlson, she might actually be in support of women promoting the patriarchy.

A Dear Media article went as far as to suggest that Stefani never really cared about being a feminist at all, saying “The real issue isn’t what Gwen chose—but that fans mistook her for something she never claimed to be.” The “camo-wearing, cowboy-boot-strutting country girl peddling an image straight from a Bass Pro Shop catalog” is, at the end of that day, a white woman from Orange County, who never explicitly claimed to be down for the cause.

Knowing this only makes me more enraged and more skeptical that “I’m just a girl” can be used satirically. Some say the phrase is a way for women to express that they’re “merely uncomfortable in male-dominated areas that (women) have historically been excluded from,” like going to the mechanic or doing manual labor, as discussed in an article by journalist Ariana Dell through Lancaster University.

While it would, admittedly, be great if women were using the phrase to express anger that society did not prepare us for traditionally “male” jobs, I simply don’t believe the majority of women are thinking that far into it.

“I’m just a girl,” in the way it has been used in the past few years, feeds into the notion that women can avoid accountability, and pushes the idea that there is someone (a man) who can ‘save’ us from our struggles. Women, myself included, have been using the phrase unthinkingly, mistakenly connecting it with girlhood instead of what it really is; a way for us to demean ourselves and devalue our own abilities is a society where men are already doing that every day.

It is time to stand up and throw this phrase away. I don’t care if it had feminist origins or if it is supposed to be satirical. It is doing more harm than good, and deep down, I think all women know they’re a lot more than “just a girl.”

Bobcat Buzz


ILLUSTRATION BY FAE HULL

The dining hall isn’t that bad

By ADRIANA CERBONE
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Coming to Quinnipiac last fall, I was a little worried. I wasn’t worried about meeting friends or leaving home, but about the dining hall.

If you’ve never looked at Quinnipiac’s Facebook parent page, it basically tears apart our dining hall, calling it “disgusting” and “the worst food ever.” Don’t get me wrong, our dining hall isn’t a five-star restaurant, but it’s tolerable.

Coming into college, you shouldn’t expect amazing food. As I said, it’s a dining hall.

Unfortunately, if you have dietary restrictions, good luck at this school. But for someone like me who has no restrictions, it’s not that hard to enjoy a meal here.

I’m also on the picky side. I have a long list of foods I strongly dislike and I still like the food here.

My mother is very Italian, which means growing up with three delicious meals a day, plus homemade snacks in between. So my standards for food are high. I definitely miss her homemade cooking when I’m at school, but I have my favorites here that I rotate between.

And if you’re someone who hates the dining hall but you get the chicken tenders and fries every day, please stop. Obviously, you’re gonna hate the dining hall if you’re getting the most boring meal on Earth.

You have to get a little creative, or things get very repetitive. There’s a lot I like here, but I still try new things so I don’t get tired of the food. Granted, by the end of the semester I’m tired of the food here, but that’s what Uber Eats is for, right?

Just in the deli section alone, you could probably get 20 different sandwiches. If you really think about it, there are a lot of options.

The main dining hall has multiple sections, including grilled foods, a deli, sushi, bagels and more. The Bobcat Den also has a deli section and Mexican food. Best of all, we have Starbucks, the Sleeping Giant Cafe and an acai bowl/smoothie place.

On our York Hill campus, there’s another dining hall with really good pizza. Next to the dining hall, there’s On the Rocks (OTR), a student-run restaurant where we can use our meal points. It’s open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 10 p.m. Also, if you are 21 or older, you can drink.

The vibes at OTR are always good, with pool games, sports on TV and events like bingo and karaoke.

If that’s not enough variety, there are also market sections in the dining hall where you can grocery shop.

At least once a week, I’ll get fruit, yogurt, eggs, snacks and frozen meals. If I don’t feel like eating at the dining hall, I’ll make something. And it’s all basically free because I use my meal points.

So, is the dining hall the best food I’ve ever had? God no. Is it good for a dining hall? Well, I think so, but maybe it’s just me.