

MARY'S SELF-RESPECT

BY  
Andrea Dionisio

Fairfax High school

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

MARY, bleary-eyed with big circles under her eyelids, is lying in bed, still in her pajamas. There's a KNOCK on the door. Mary looks up, nervously.

LILLY (V.O.)

Honey?

Mary puts her books and papers away.

MARY

Yeah, Mom?

LILLY (V.O.)

Get ready for school; it's already 7:15.

MARY

I can't go to school today. I feel sick.

LILLY, 40, enters the room. She has long brown hair, and is wearing a purple bathrobe and white fuzzy slippers.

Mary forces a cough, clears her throat. Lilly walks over to the bed and puts a hand over Mary's forehead.

LILLY

You don't feel warm.

MARY

I just don't feel well, I have a headache.

LILLY

You're probably just exhausted from cramming all night. I'll give you some aspirins and after you take a shower you'll be fine.

MARY

Mom, please...

LILLY

Honey, after all the hard work you've done, you can't just blow off the English midterm.

MARY

I can always take a makeup test.

LILLY

You'll have to face it sooner or later. Might as well face it now.

Mary looks up, stares guiltily at her mom.

LILLY

Mary, I understand that your father and I have been pushing you hard to succeed in school. We do this because we love you and want you to have a great future.

(after a pause)

We believe in you. Now it's up to you to believe in yourself. Okay?

MARY

(reluctantly)

Okay.

LILLY

That's my girl. You always do the right thing.

Lilly gives her a big hug.

LILLY

Don't worry, sweetheart. Just do the best you can.

Lilly exits. Mary gets out of bed and starts to get dressed. Her eyes fall on a bracelet sitting on her night table. It's silver and has many charms such as teddy bears and hearts. She picks it up, contemplates it darkly.

Suddenly, her phone VIBRATES. She flips it open to reveal:

CLOSE ON THE PHONE

A text message has been sent. Nervously, Mary retrieves the message. It reads: "MEET ME BEFORE THE TEST. BACK OF CAFETERIA. 10:30. XXXXX BOBBY."

Mary closes the phone, biting her lip nervously. It's clear that something more than the test is troubling her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Mary meets up with her best friend JULIE, 15, pretty and petite. Julie is admiring the bracelet Mary's wearing.

JULIE

Bobby gave you that? God, Mare, you are so lucky to have him as a boyfriend!

MARY  
(sarcastic)

I know. That's what everyone keeps telling me.

JULIE

Bobby is so sweet to you! He really cares about you so much.

Nancy offers a smile, but it fades fast.

JULIE

Hey, remember when we used to think he was so shallow? Just an empty-headed pretty boy who lusted after cheerleaders? Oh God, were we wrong or what!

Nancy is lost in troubled thought as she feels the bracelet.

JULIE

Mary, are you feeling okay?

MARY

Yeah, I'm totally fine. Let's just get to class.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

History teacher MS. WOODS, 35, 5' feet tall, wears a white blouse with a gray skirt, lectures the class. Seated in the back is Mary, who isn't paying attention to the lecture at all.

MS. WOODS

Queen Elizabeth as a child read many books. She learned how to speak to the public and was fluent in many languages. The Queen was a mother to England and her subjects were very obedient. She was the daughter of the head of the Protestant Church of England.

Mary's focus is on a wall clock. It reads 10:27. As she stares at it, a voice comes into her head:

BOBBY (V.O.)

C'mon, Mary, you gotta help me here.  
 You're the only one who can. If you  
 love and really care about me, you'll  
 say yes.

At that instant, the bell finally RINGS. While the students  
 go to their next class, Mary stays in her seat. She looks at  
 the clock -- it now reads 10:30 exactly.

She gets up and approaches Ms. Woods, who is going through  
 folders of papers on her desk.

MARY

Ms. Woods, do you need any help with  
 your paperwork?

MS. WOODS

It's alright, Mary; I have a T.A. for  
 next period.

Mary just stands there to stall for time. She goes to the  
 blackboard and starts erasing.

MS. WOODS

Sweetie, you should get going. You  
 don't want to be late for your  
 midterm test, do you?

Mary lets out a sigh. She has no choice but to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

A jittery Mary is hurrying up a near deserted stairwell on  
 her way to class. Suddenly, a voice calls out which makes  
 her freeze in her place.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Yo girl, wait up!!

BOBBY, 17, tall and handsome, runs toward her from behind to  
 catch up.

BOBBY

Where were you? I was waiting for  
 you in the cafeteria.

MARY

(fumbling for words)

Ms. Woods -- she asked me to help  
 her grade some papers.

BOBBY

So it's all set, right? I mean for the test?

Mary says nothing.

BOBBY

I'll get to class first to find a desk. Then, I'll save you a seat next to me.

MARY

Bobby, I'm afraid to do this. To cheat... I've never done it before.

BOBBY

What are you talking about? You're not the one cheating. I am.

Mary does not look convinced to change her mind.

BOBBY

Baby, if I don't pass this test, I'm gonna fail English for this semester and it'll kill my G.P.A. I might even get left back. Is that what you want, a boyfriend who's a failure?

MARY

(in despair)

No.

He lifts her chin and makes her look right at him.

BOBBY

Then you'll do it for me?

Mary nods her head 'yes.'

BOBBY

That's my girl.

(kisses her cheek)

I love you... See you in class.

Bobby rushes upstairs, leaving Mary standing there, torn and confused.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The students are filing in a classroom with a sign attached to the door reading 'MIDTERM TEST TODAY!' Mary approaches the door and delays.

The English teacher MR. RAMIREZ, 6 feet tall and wearing glasses, sees Mary waiting outside the classroom.

MR. RAMIREZ

Mary, come inside please. I need to hand out these tests right away so everyone has enough time to finish.

Mary heads slowly into --

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Mary walks in, her view of the classroom obscured as the others look for seats.

As she's looking, she finally sees Bobby, who's sitting at a desk near the back of the room. He's staring right at her.

They make eye contact, and he motions with his eyes that there's an empty seat saved for her.

Mary starts to walk down the aisle in SLOW-MOTION. Like a condemned prisoner marching to her punishment. Each step getting towards there gets harder and harder.

As she walks toward Bobby, a voice pops in her head:

LILY (V.O.)

We believe in you, sweetheart. You always do the right thing... Do the right thing... Do the right thing. The right thing... The right thing.

Finally, she reaches Bobby's desk. She stops and stands before him. He moves his chair back, making room for her to sit down. After what seems like forever --

MARY

(in a whisper)

I'm sorry.

Mary walks away, finding a seat at a desk that's several seats away from Bobby. Bobby stares ahead in shock.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Kids are exiting out of the classroom to eat for nutrition. Mary walks with her classmates. She walks down the hallway, looking guarded and unsure, as if expecting a confrontation. Suddenly, a familiar voice freezes her in place.

BOBBY (V.O.)  
Yo, wait, up!

Mary just stands there as Bobby just passes her by. She watches as he heads toward some cheerleaders, puts his arm around them both and walks on as he flirts with them.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' BATHROOM - DAY

Mary enters with tears in her eyes and walks to the sink. After a moment, she takes off Bobby's bracelet and throws it down the drain, thinking he was just a waste of time.

As she looks at her reflection, seeing her face red and her eyes all teary, she smiles. Mary is proud of herself for doing the right thing.

THE END