

The writer's BLOCK



featuring:

The Reality Behind Rory
Gilmore's Downfall PT 2.

Olympic Skaters

Double Standards in
Modern Family

The Whisperer

and more...

February Issue

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meet OUR team



Athena Basiratnia
Head Editor

This issue, she's an:
Editor, Writer, and Designer



Zeynep Sirin Sen
Head Designer

This issue, she's a:
Designer



Kevin Chen
Head Writer

This issue, he's a:
Writer and Designer



Karina Rathee

This issue, she's a:
Writer and Editor



Audrey Tsang

This issue, she's a:
Designer



Beatrice Milasan

This issue, she's a:
Writer



Lukas Rubenyan

This issue, he's a:
Designer



Louisa Zhang

This issue, she's an:
Editor



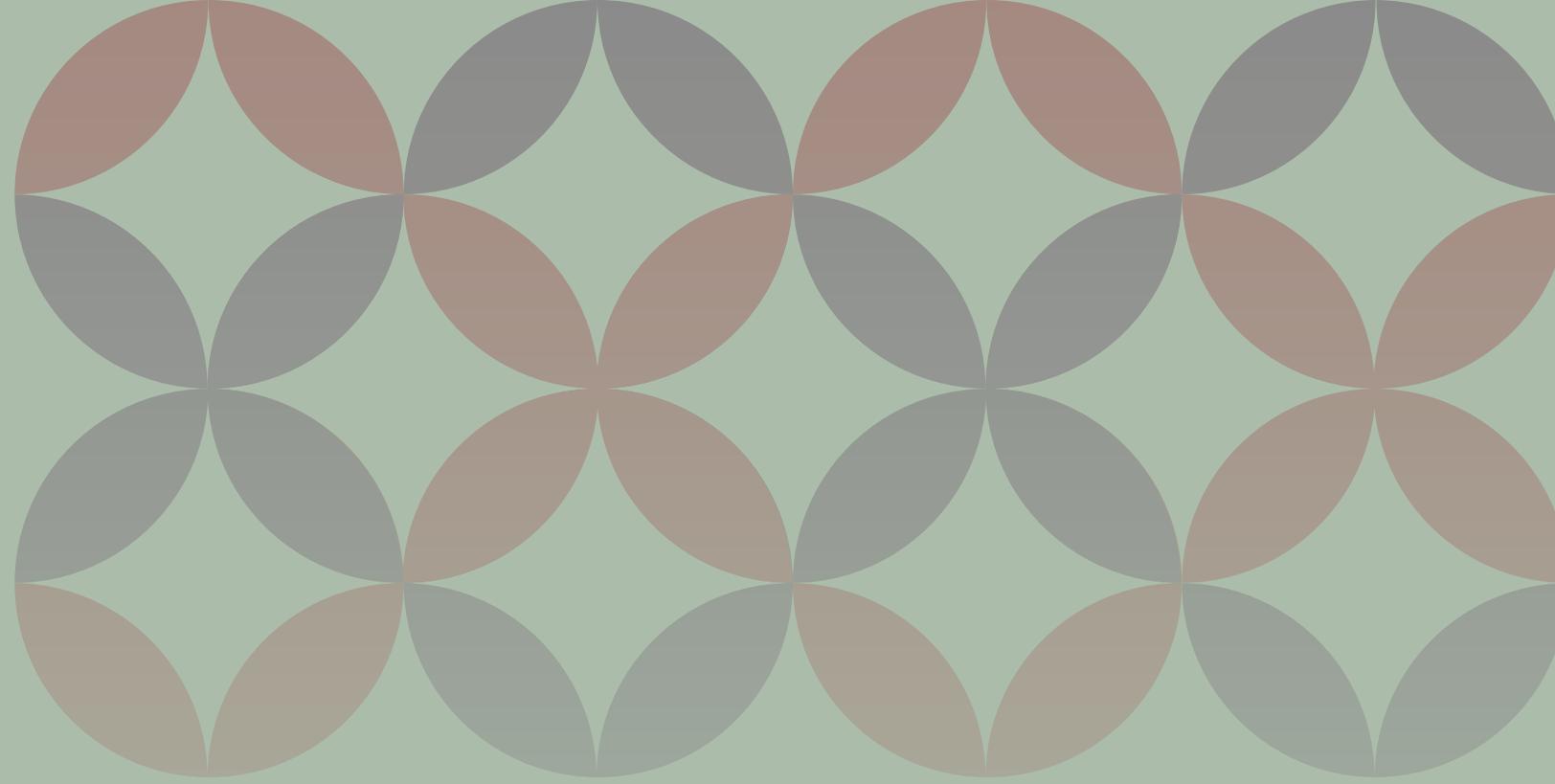
Naomi
Kongkham

This issue, she's an:
Editor



Inara Jamal

This issue, she's a:
Writer



creative pieces

CHASING FIREWORKS

Kevin Chen

“Five! Four! Three! Two! One!”

“Happy New Year!”

John used to stay up to watch fireworks from his room when he was a child. His parents would never let him stay up that late, so he would try to see the sparks through the trees in front of his bedroom window. John loved fireworks. It was something about soaring into the unknown and painting the entire sky with beautiful colours that felt so magical.

However, one new year's eve, instead of fireworks, John saw a rocket blast into the night sky, its flames setting fire to the stars. It looked just like a firework, but it was so much more. John imagined what it would look like seeing the world from that height. Everything would probably seem so inconsequential, the problems of the world would simply fade the further the rocket travelled.

From that moment onward, John became obsessed. He wanted to become an astronaut in one of those rockets. He studied and read everything he could about rockets and stars, and spent hours staring at the stars through his telescope. Then one night something caught his eye. A star that he hadn't noticed before. It shined brightly, almost dwarfing the other stars in comparison. John was extremely excited. It was probably a supernova, and he set up his camera to record this once-in-a-life-time event.

However, every night that John came out to grow brighter but larger. It wasn't until it it that John started to wonder if what he was saved his recordings to a flash drive and agency.

check on the star, it seemed to not only completely covered the stars surrounding seeing was even a supernova at all. He decided to send it to the nearest space

John never received a reply but over the next few days the space agency explained what was happening over the news. It wasn't a supernova or a star, but an extremely reflective asteroid heading straight towards Earth.

The asteroid was less than 1km big but it was enough to destroy entire states. Space agencies and governments around the world began coming up with evacuation plans for everyone in North America. Then, by some stroke of luck, John and his family were chosen randomly by the government to leave Earth in the worst case scenario that the asteroid does wipe out most of North America.

The next few weeks flew by in a daze, and finally as the rocket began preparing for blast off, John realized that he did in fact achieve his dream of being in a rocket, but this wasn't how he imagined he would do it at all.

As the rocket climbed higher and higher, he watched everything he had ever known shrink from outside the window, until he could see the entire world before him.

That was when he saw it.

The asteroid drifted through the darkness ahead of them, its surface catching the sun and bursting into a blinding glow. For a moment, John couldn't breathe. It looked exactly like the fireworks he used to watch from his bedroom window.

Except it wasn't fading.

As the rocket climbed higher, Earth grew smaller and quieter below him. From up here, everything really did seem inconsequential. Then, a timer flickered on the screen, counting down the seconds until impact. Without thinking, John began to count along.

“Five. Four. Three. Two. One.”

A Hymn To Becoming

Beatrice Milasan

You need not battle the cosmos,
Nor hang up the stars in the sky,
Nor dance the tightrope of expectation,
You string up so high.

Your cards are your own,
Play them as you please,
No fate but your own courage,
Decides your decrees.

The forest of becoming,
Need not be hidden by fog of regret,
Do not let the canopy of could-have-been,
Eclipse the path you've yet to set.

Never call your blistered soles unworthy,
For they have brought you far,
And far you will continue to go,
Beyond every once-impossible star.

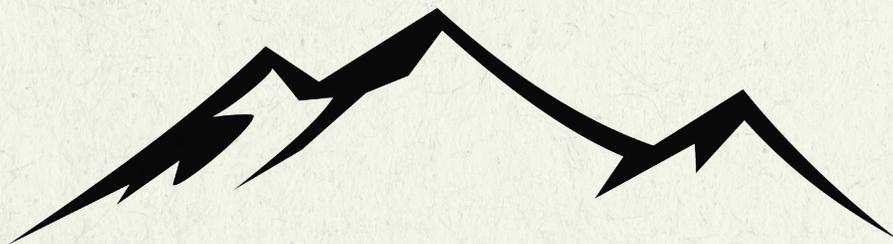
Unbridled spirit, you have my permission,
To forage, storm forests,
Rather than simply accept,
The reality that is written.

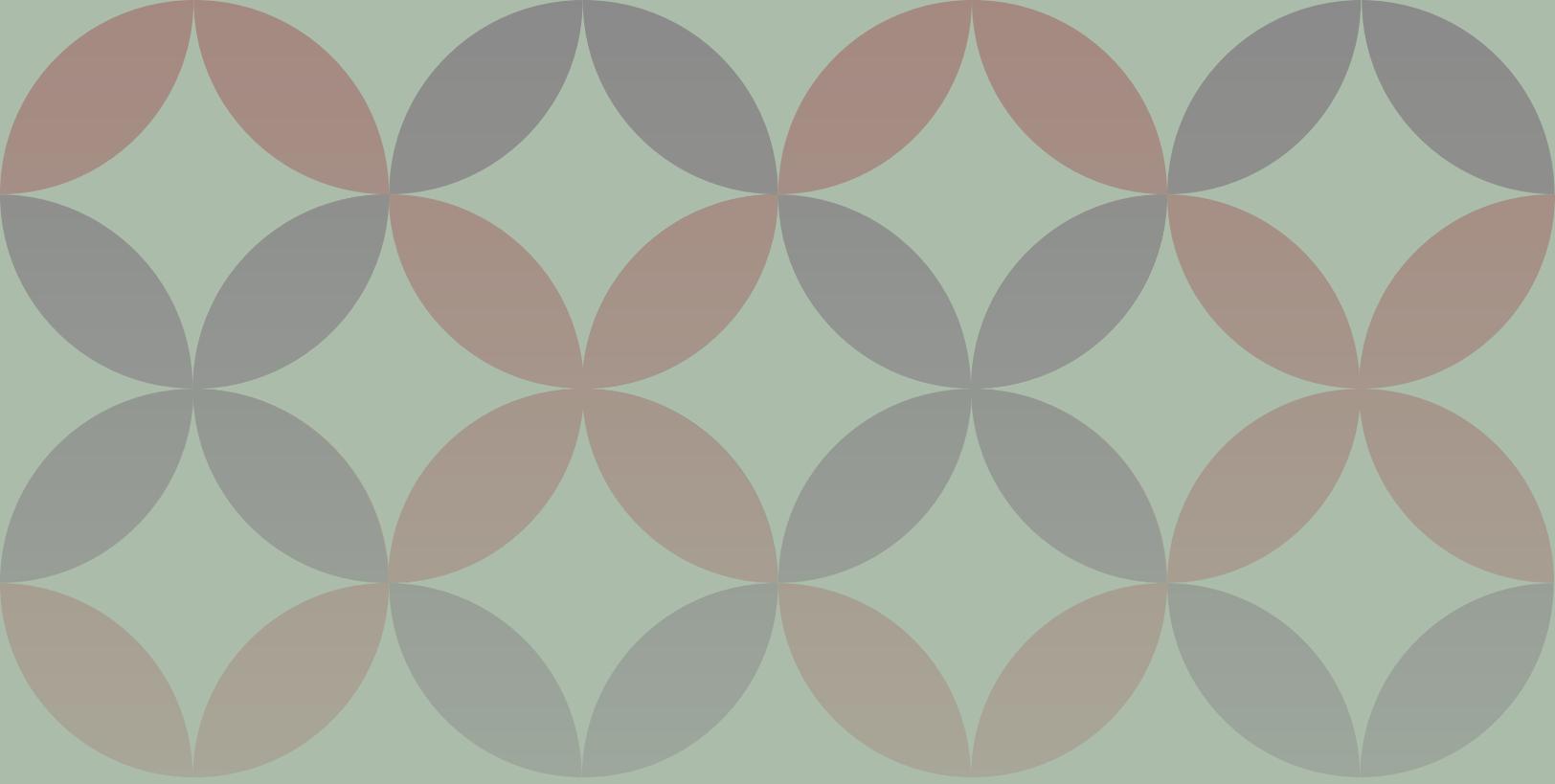
Though they beckon you,
With dull whispers in the night,
Beware of the woods' trickery,
These are fireflies devoid of light.

Memories are not alters,
We need kneel before,
Our wounds not shrines,
Nor gods to adore.

Trust the changing of the tides,
They have weathered the most violent storms,
Rest comfortably in the fact,
The sea always comes back to shore.

Though the waves may look different,
The trees around you sage with their years,
Let the dawn of a new day envelope you,
And soothe your mountainous fears.





opinions



Olympic Skaters

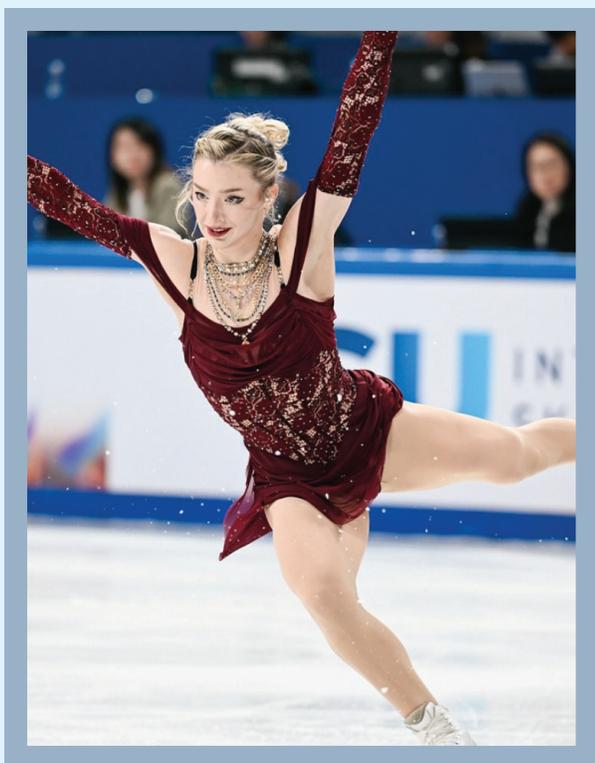
By Athena



Intro

The 2026 Winter Olympics are fast approaching, starting on February 6th in Milan, Italy. Which sports are you watching? Is it tobogganing, snowboarding, or cross country skiing? Well, how about you tune into some figure skating as well? It's artistic while also being as physically challenging as any other sport. It requires precise movements, stability on skates, and strong emotional performance. The sport is so incredibly competitive that even I, a certified figure skating fan, have no clue what the ladies skaters podium will look like.

However, I do realize that it's hard to watch a sport for the first time with no one to root for, so I took it upon myself to introduce a couple of my favorites. Without further ado, here are some female skaters to keep your eye on this Olympic season:



Amber Glenn



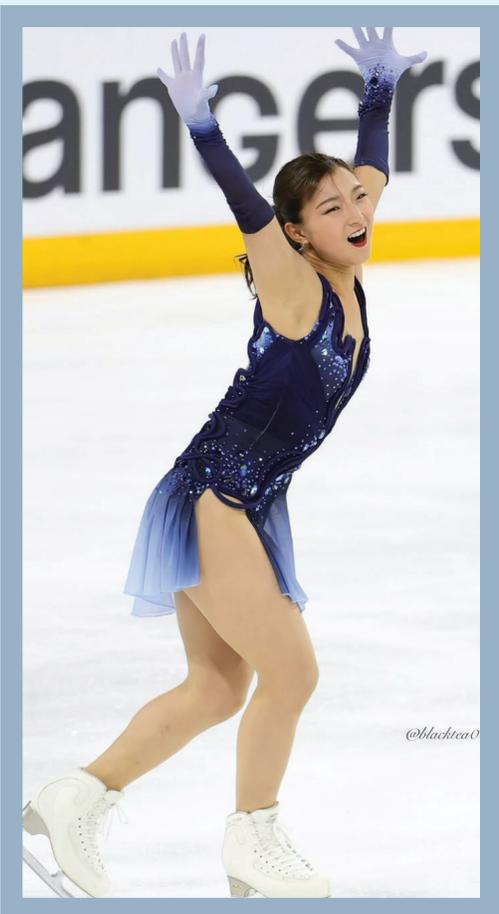
- 26-year-old skater from Texas, USA
- Grand Prix champion 2024
- Grand Prix Final 4th place 2025
- 3X U.S. National champion 2024-2026
- U.S. women short program record (83.05)
- Consistently lands triple axels, one of the most difficult jumps in figure skating
- Known for having fun gala programs, skating to popular songs like HOT TO GO!

By Chappell Roan and Vampire by Olivia Rodrigo

- Is the first openly queer skater to win the U.S. championships and loudly supports LGBTQ+ voices
- Took a break from skating early in her career due to pressure and mental health struggles. Since coming back, she has been a big advocate for the mental health of athletes
- Personal Best Short Program: 78.14 (Grand Prix de France 2024)
- Personal Best Free Skate: 148.93 (World Team Trophy 2025)
- Personal Best Overall: 215.54 (Cup of China 2024)



Personal best scores are based on ISU competitions! Doesn't include nationals.

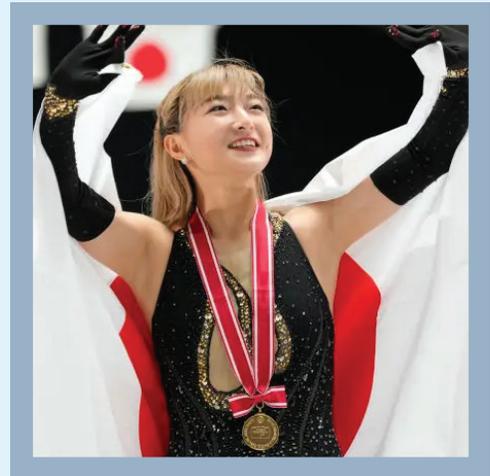


Kaori Sakamoto

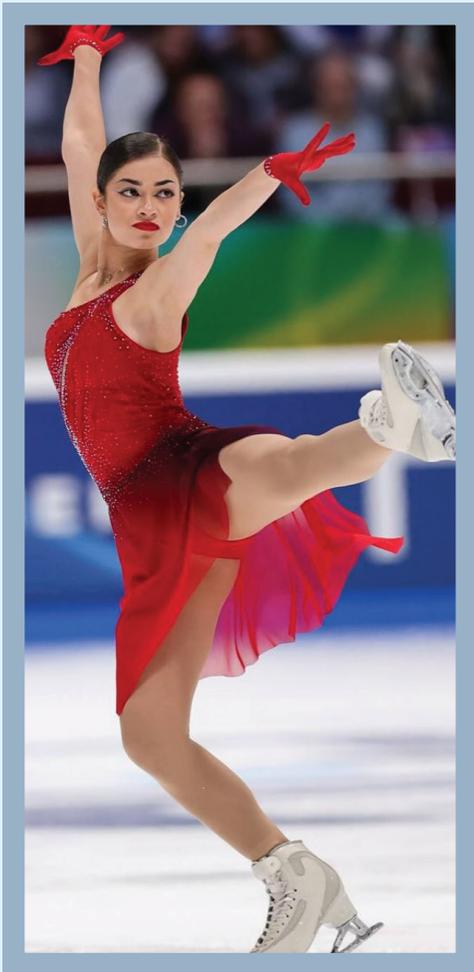


- 25-year-old skater from Kobe, Japan
- Bronze medalist at the 2022 Beijing Olympics
- 5X Japan National champion 2022-2026
- Grand Prix champion 2023
- 3X World champion 2022-24
- Has a grand slam (won all major international competitions excluding Olympics)
- Will be officially retiring after the Olympics
- Kaori is a huge fan favorite, winning viewers over by her textbook technique, clean skating, and positive attitude. She does not rely on ultra-c elements (high-scoring jumps) like triple axels and quads to amass points. Her programs are equal amounts of technical jumps and emotional artistry.

- Personal Best Short Program: 80.32 (World Championships 2022)
- Personal Best Free Skate: 155.77 (World Championships 2022)
- Personal Best Overall: 236.09 (World Championships 2022)



Adeliia Petrosian



- 18-year-old skater from Moscow, Russia, with Armenian heritage
- 3X Russian champion 2024-2026
- 3X Russian Grand Prix champion 2023-2025
- First female skater to execute a quad loop in competition (2022)
- Russian athletes have been banned from all international competitions since February 2022 due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Adeliia, along with other young skaters, have not had the chance to compete at a higher level. For Milan, the International Olympics Committee has allowed one Russian athlete per discipline to compete under a neutral flag, and only if they haven't shown support or are affiliated with the war or Russian military
- Being chosen to skate at the Olympics has led to an insane amount of pressure on Adeliia's shoulders. She has to live up to the 2022 Beijing Olympics, which was a Russian ladies 1-2 win (first and second place)



- She is known for her execution of difficult ultra-c elements, including triple axels, quad toe loops, quad loops, etc.
- Personal Best Short program: 70.86 (Ljubljana cup 2021)
- Personal Best Free skate: 140.91 (Milano Figure Skating Qualifiers 2025)
- Personal Best. Overall: 210.57 (Ljubljana cup 2021)

Outro

Trust me when I say that this year's Olympics are going to be a bloodbath. There are so many experienced and talented skaters competing this year, and any one of them has a chance at the gold. Take Alysa Liu for example, the “comeback queen”, who recently came back to skating after a two year break and has already broken records and won major titles. Canada's very own Madeline Schizas has been the face of Canada's ladies discipline for four years, and qualified alone for her second Olympics. Japan had up to seven strong female contenders to send to this competition and could only choose three.

Nonetheless, all these athletes have put their hearts and souls into what they do. They have trained hours, days, weeks, and years for this moment. They're giving it their all, because for some, it may be the only chance they ever have at the Olympic gold. That's why I will be watching and supporting them on February 6th, as should you!



Look at the mascots. They're adorable. They're stoats.

THE REALITY BEHIND.

RORY

Gilmore's

DOWNFALL PT.2

Karina Rathee

Back with the second analysis of our favourite nostalgic TV show's least favourite character: Rory Gilmore. Last time, we talked about Rory's academic downfall; Rory drops out of Yale and in *A Year in the Life*, she is unemployed and definitely not the Rory who studied non-stop in high school. But Rory's character development doesn't only go sideways when it comes to her academic motivation. Rory begins some questionable decisions.

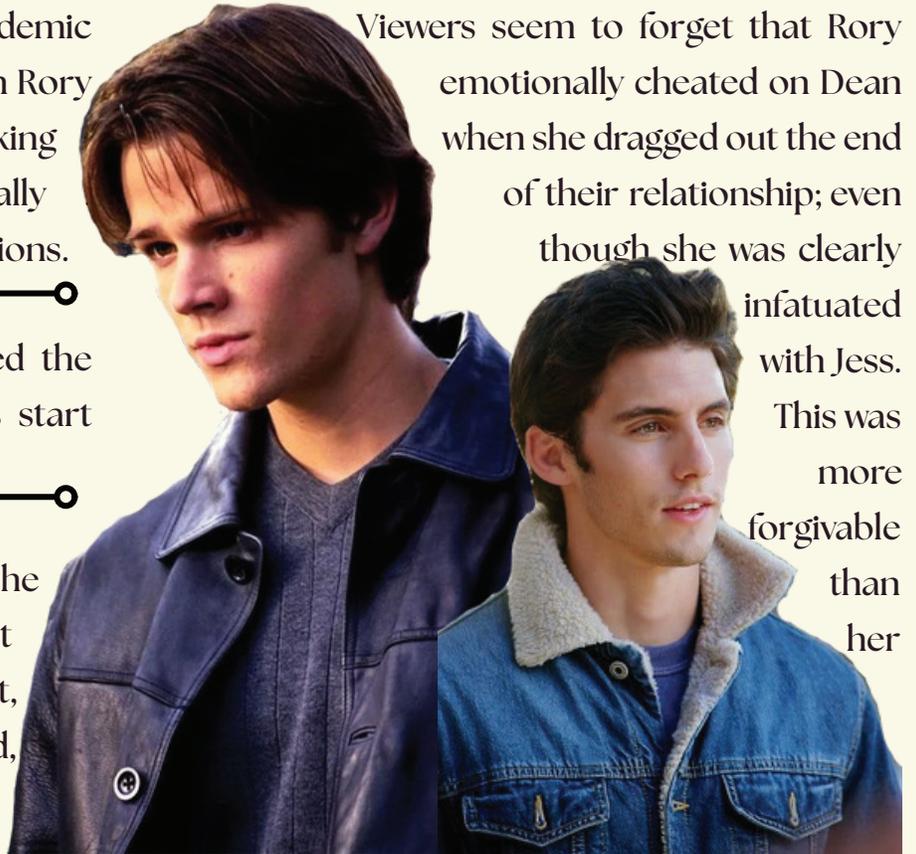


done something wrong. This shift from the sweet teenager we first meet, to an adult who avoids accountability is pretty much why many viewers love to hate the older Rory. But really, Rory wasn't always perfect; though her mistakes were less drastic, Rory, like all of us, made mistakes in her teenage years too.



Like last time, if you haven't watched the show, or haven't finished it, spoilers start now!

When we first meet Rory in season 1, she is shy, kind, and a little awkward. But in season 7, Rory has stolen a yacht, attempted to steal someone's husband, and consistently presents herself as the victim, even when she has clearly



Viewers seem to forget that Rory emotionally cheated on Dean when she dragged out the end of their relationship; even though she was clearly infatuated with Jess. This was more forgivable than her

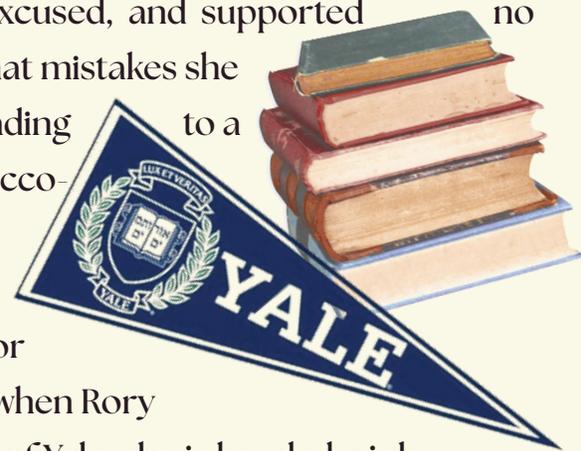
future actions, as Rory's problems grew larger, so did the magnitude of her mistakes. I think we all expected Rory to grow emotionally as she aged, and forgiving teenage Rory is much easier than adult Rory, who still makes the same emotionally unintelligent mistakes.

When Rory decided to pursue a relationship with her ex-boyfriend-who-is-now-married, Dean, it was quite literally because she believed that he was "not a married guy" but was "[her] Dean". This was probably the start of Rory's decline in judgement, but even though Yale Rory made some VERY questionable choices, I think this was just the tip of the iceberg. When we reconnect with Rory in *A Year in the Life*, she is arguably



even more morally corrupt, as she pursues a relationship with another ex-boyfriend-who-is-now-engaged, Logan (did she not learn from the first time!?), while cheating on her actual boyfriend who she constantly forgets about. I think this moral decline comes from the shower of praise that protected Rory from consequences throughout her life. From her mother and grandparents, to liter-

ally everyone in her town, she is consistently praised, excused, and supported no matter what mistakes she makes, leading to a lack of accountability for her actions. For



example, when Rory drops out of Yale, she is handed a job by her grandmother, allowed to live in her grandparents' pool house, and disregards her mother's feelings by blocking her out of her life. She likes to avoid conflict, and by doing so, her morally questionable actions become driven by selfishness. As we see in season 5 with Dean, Rory doesn't really see the harm in cheating, because she believes



that Dean loves her, which is all that matters in her eyes. Similarly, in *A Year in the Life*, Rory still doesn't see the error in her relationship with Logan, because she thinks only of herself, and not of all the other people she is hurting. Rory isn't evil or intentionally trying to hurt people, but she is a product of



her upbringing, and a reflection of someone who doesn't know how to own up to her mistakes.

But, despite Rory's many (many) flaws, it is important to remember that though her character changed for the worse, whether or not Rory corrected her morally corrupt ways after *A Year in the Life* is unknown. Everyone loves to hate on Rory, but I don't agree with the majority. I feel like Rory's character development made her all the more interesting and realistic, reflecting how privilege, pressure, and praise can prevent personal growth.

I think what makes Rory's ending all the more upsetting was how kind and innocent she was,



and watching her go from an almost perfect

character to becoming unlikeable and extremely flawed. Still, the level of hatred Rory receives, the hundreds of Tiktoks, articles and Youtube videos, feels out of proportion when you compare her to male characters with similar behaviour. Ask yourself the question: would Rory be as universally hated if she were a man?



DOUBLE STANDARDS IN MODERN FAMILY

WHY HALEY MUST "EARN" MATURITY WHILE LUKE IS DESTINED TO EVENTUALLY GROW

Warning: Spoilers!

By Inara Jamal

Everyone knows and loves *Modern Family*; it's a comfort show to many (like me...), relatable to audiences of all ages, and is a perfect blend of humour and heartfelt emotion. However, sitcoms often rely on dramatization and humour to reflect real family dynamics, and *Modern Family* is no exception.

The show is praised for its diversity, inclusivity, and emotional depth, but beneath its humour lies a persistent pattern of gendered double standards, particularly in the portrayal of siblings Luke and Haley Dunphy. Haley Dunphy begins the series as a 15 year old teenager, depicted as the "dumb party girl" who cannot even do simple addition. In the first few seasons, she is portrayed as a shallow, self-centered, and vain girl. Her younger brother, Luke Dunphy, starts the show as a sweet, but rather dull young boy who seems to be curious about everything around him. But comparing a 10 and a 15 year old is just nonsense. Let us skip a few seasons and level them at the same age.



At 15, Luke starts to become increasingly creepy; spying on girls through their windows, watching porn, and making oddly sexual jokes. As both characters grow from teenagers into adults, Haley is repeatedly expected to prove her maturity through responsibility, sacrifice, and motherhood, while Luke's immaturity is excused as temporary and harmless, with the assumption that he will eventually grow into his potential. Though I am sure the show did not intend on doing so, *Modern Family* reinforces a harmful double standard: girls must earn respect and adulthood, while boys are allowed time and forgiveness.

Most often, we expect the societal standard for basic humanity is that all humans should be respected unless they do something to lose that respect. This expectation is clearly not applicable to Haley Dunphy, as her own family barely sees her as a human being, but rather a lazy and unemployed individual. They constantly make shots about her intelligence throughout the series, whereas Luke is seen as just a dumb kid who has “other talents”. Phil frequently reassures him, and himself, by insisting that “Luke’s mind just works differently”, a line that encapsulates how Luke’s shortcomings are reframed as hidden strengths. Despite being openly disrespectful to women, highly sexual at a young age, and often crossing boundaries by spying on girls, Luke’s behavior is brushed off under the disappointing and familiar excuse of “boys will be boys.” His lack of emotional intelligence is rarely treated as a serious flaw; instead, it is portrayed as comedic.

Even when Luke struggles academically and ultimately attends community college, this outcome is never framed as a failure. Rather, his future is left open-ended, with the consistent implication that he has untapped potential and will “figure it out eventually.” In contrast, Haley Dunphy is subjected to relentless judgment from her family and the people she surrounds herself with. When Haley faces significant challenges, such as disordered eating and insecurity about her intelligence compared to her younger siblings, these struggles are often played for jokes or dismissed.



Remarks about her intellect are often framed humorously, and reinforces a hierarchy where Haley is permanently positioned at the bottom. Unlike Luke, whose failures are met with reassurance, Haley’s mistakes are treated as evidence of her moral and intellectual inadequacy. Although Haley demonstrates real initiative and creativity through blogging, interviews, and building a career in fashion and photography, she is consistently portrayed as lazy or unserious.



Her expulsion from college and arrest become defining moments that mark her as irresponsible, whereas Luke’s academic underperformance is normalized. Phil tells Haley when she is caught taking part in underage drinking and facing expulsion from college, “Just stop. Just stop talking, Haley. You’re not the victim here. You’re the one who screwed up!”. She victimizes herself and argues that everybody else was doing it, and that she was the only one to get caught. This action changed the way her parents saw her; no longer was she the vain, dumb, party girl - she was now the bored, unfulfilled, and unmotivated college student who didn’t seem to care about her future.

This disparity becomes even more apparent in how the show handles each sibling’s romantic relationships. Haley’s relationships with significantly older men, such as Rainer Shine and Kenny, are framed as evidence of her “daddy issues,”. In contrast, Luke’s long-term relationship with a woman older than his parents is treated as awkward, but amusing, generating misunderstandings rather than moral judgment. Luke is allowed curiosity and exploration; Haley is burdened with shame and responsibility.

Perhaps the most telling double standard emerges in how *Modern Family* defines maturity. For Haley, adulthood ultimately becomes synonymous with motherhood. Her pregnancy and decision to raise twins are portrayed as the moment she finally “steps up”. The implication is clear: Haley’s worth and maturity are validated only once she becomes a mother, sacrificing her career aspirations in the process. Luke, on the other hand, is never required to undergo a comparable transformation. His maturity is presumed to arrive someday, without a clear milestone or sacrifice. Luke is allowed to remain a “dumb kid with potential”, while Haley must prove herself through responsibility and self-denial.

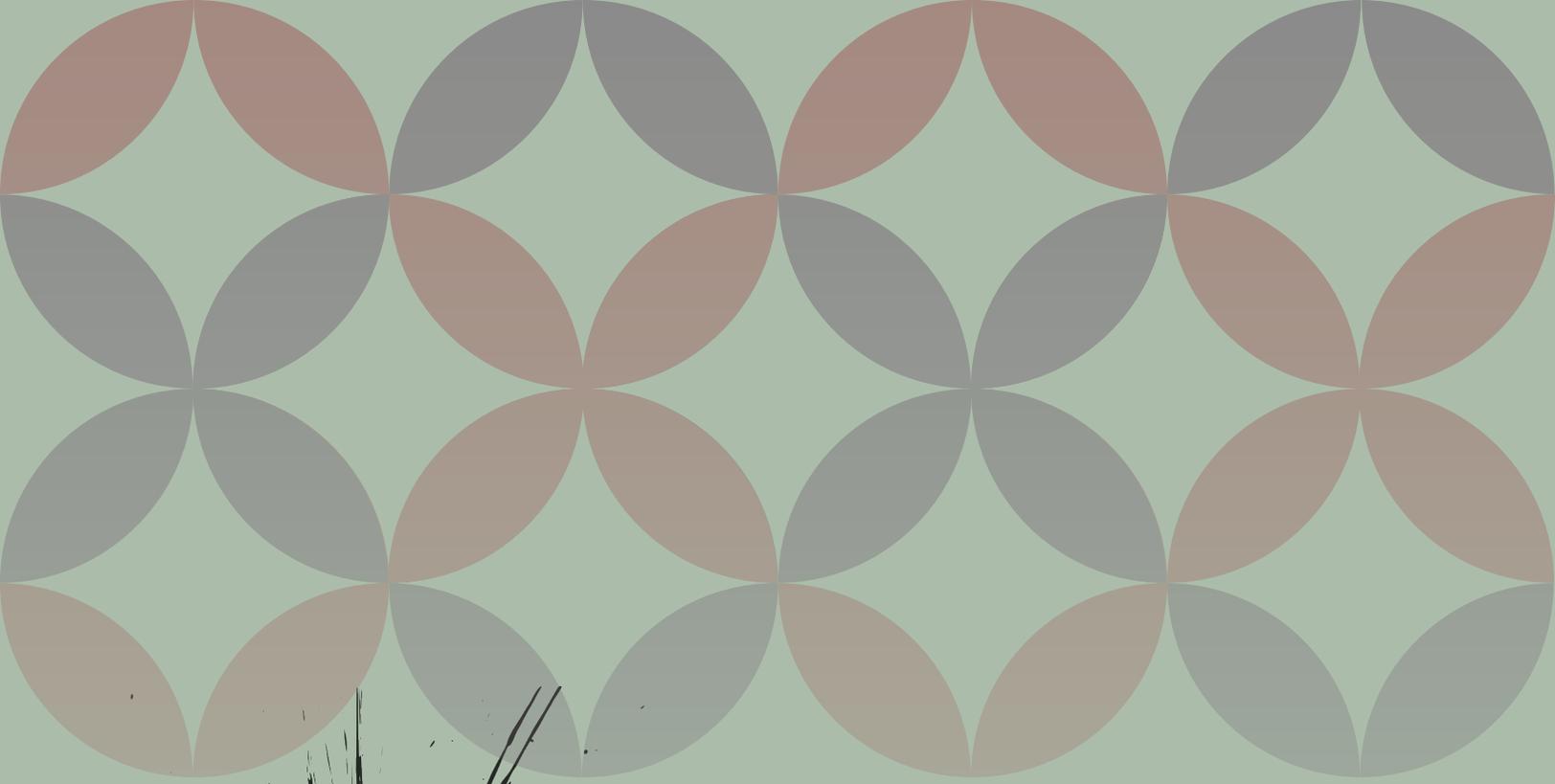
Even when comparing the siblings directly, the show reinforces these unequal expectations. Both Haley and Luke fall below traditional American academic and career standards, yet they are framed very differently. When Luke causes chaos, the family laughs. When Haley does, she carries guilt - even being made to feel responsible for disrupting her father’s friendships and relationships by acting “promiscuous” around them.

Ultimately, *Modern Family* reflects a broader societal issue rather than an isolated narrative flaw. Haley’s story mirrors the real-world experience of many young women, whose mistakes define their intelligence, while young men are granted patience and optimism. The show unintentionally reinforces the idea that girls must mature early and perfectly, while boys are allowed time to fail.

Although *Modern Family* succeeds in challenging many traditional norms, its portrayal of Haley and Luke Dunphy exposes a persistent and harmful double standard: maturity is something girls must earn or are granted when they become a mother, while boys are simply expected to grow into it. This unjust representation is not merely unfair; it is unethical. It exemplifies that the path to women’s maturity only has one end: motherhood. In doing so, the show exposes a disturbing truth: maturity is less about growth and more about the traditional and societal expectations of women.

“EVEN WHEN COMPARING THE SIBLINGS DIRECTLY, THE SHOW REINFORCES THESE UNEQUAL EXPECTATIONS”





the whisperer



THE WHISPERER 19

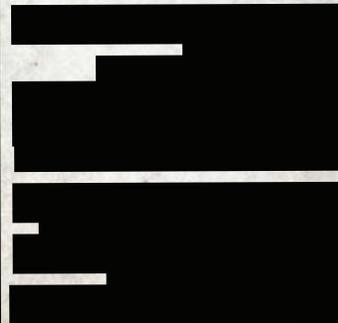
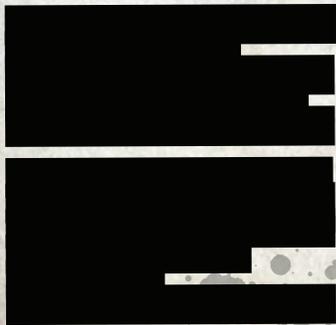
CLASSIFIED

THE WRITER'S TIMES

THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER

BREAKING NEWS

**INTERNATIONAL JEWEL THIEF AND SCOURGE OF EDITORS EVERYWHERE
HAS FINALLY BEEN BROUGHT TO JUSTICE**



1:12 am, [REDACTED] 25.0° N, 71.0° W

I am stuck sticking in a black nothingness of a room. My whippy self is deflated. It's been a very long time since I talked to (harassed) the editor. Danielle wouldn't stand for this inhumane keeping of me

1:14 am, [REDACTED] 25.0° N, 71.0° W

I asked the voices for a jasmine milk tea light ice 50% sugar cold foam with coffee jelly chilled to 4 degrees. They brought it. it was chilled to 3. This torture is not enough of too much to handle. I must block Gracie Abrams.

A boom echoes in vibrations of the hollow eternity I am trapped in. A door opens at the end of the hallway shining light loudly. French jumbles words into my ears and I spit them out. I must review one star on Google Maps the words don't taste up to to par I didn't order this. The officer steps into the light. I realize I've seen this very protector of the law before ah yes Madame Kraus. The usual enforcer of irregular verbs asks kerfuffling questions.

"Qu'est-ce qu'est ce que vous aurez faire avec le peinture du lune oh la la la lune est tres beau ce nuit j'aime les songes du nuits d'ete"

I couldn't identify the words in my palate but I can't focus when-

Pitter patter.

when-

Pitter patter.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

I was sane once. They locked me in a galvanized steel room with rats.

The rats didn't make me sane but sane was the mind of i.

More footsteps materialized. The bonds between this person's shoes and the ground appeared to get shorter as she threw more shoes on the ground.

Ms russell walks in. Her badge read employee number 6.0221408x10²³ wow they're so overstaffed here. she skipped the pleasantries and the review from last class and quickly lit a piece of magnesium directly infront of my eyes.

immediately, blinding light shined in my face but because of my astigmatism i was immediately struck by the christmassy beauty of it all. i still remember my last chrimus i spent it with my girlfriend the mop but now she's dead anyways as i remembered her long mop shaped face. The titration level 100 boss slams her hand on the table making the earth's crust fracture and 22.4 moles emerge and skitter on the floor causing me to whippersnap back to each of my six senses.

she picks up one of the moles and places a blue hat on it with ears. What a beautiful hat. I do ponder daily of an alternate reality where I too adorn that hat and sit upon a sharpboard speaker 24/7 and stare upon chemistry students dancing for a fraction of a bonus mark.

"My moles know what you did" [REDACTED]

"I was framed!" [REDACTED]

"I didn't even tell you what you did!" BANG another earth shattering slam sends shockwaves at 2.998×10^8 meters per second through the galaxy.

"You never finished your collab did you, whisperer."

My heart drops like an organ harvester took it. Madame Kraus who was previously reading a yearbook now lowers the annuaire.

"That's not why you're here" she says in French and the words buzz and hum in my brain and out they go again whoopsiedaisy.

i squint my eyes concentrating on the vowels and syllables and enter my lexicon of knowledge. inside I see a blue baguette and a red baguette. A bald guy with glasses extends these two baguettes in his hands. You take the blue baguette, this tale shall cease to exit. You take the red baguette and I shall display for you the wonders of this world. A heavy drop of sweat walks down my face. the choice what if i make the wrong one? he places the blue baguettes and the red baguette on the table, leaving a space in between. What is the space for I ponder then he places a white baguette in the center. Blue, white, and red light flood my vision. The man est now gone, dissipated into plein air. But i can feel it in the air i have acquired la francophonie. now I am back seated on this uncomfortable metal chair. I hear with perferumptious crispiness like this tricolored french flag baguette the Madame's francais sentences.

"What do you know about the painting the starry day?"

"I only know of dawns being starry and evenings, what are these preposterous questions."

"Hmm I see. How about the Moana Lester"

I give her an expression that is neither a smile nor a frown.

█ "Perhaps this one is just uncultured" Ms. Russell supplies.

"Just hold on a second." she pulls up a screen and plays security camera footage: A woman in a glittering dress appears on screen. "well, I'll be darned, it's garlic flavored!"

"Oops sorry, wrong channel from Medea's mansion" she clicks on a configuration of buttons on a remote and suddenly it's the Louvre Museum. A silhouette is seen stealing an enormously crown.

"Tell us where Martie Ant One's crown is now! █

"That's not me." █

"Are you quite certain?" she said, questioning me in a more questioning manner. Pleading with my eyes, I look over at Mme. Kraus, begging her to translate.

"Il ne veut pas parler, je pense que nous devons lui voler ses pouvoirs" she said cryptically. Unfortunately i could not speak neither french nor chemistry, and so i was left in the dark with my frostbitten boba (mmmm i love boba).

waitaminute i dont speak baguette but i do know the word "pouvoirs" that means "poubelles" that means "porquoi" the question why? why do i have my powers of whippersnappery i do not know but i do know that i do not know they are trying to steal my powers. What havoc would they wreak what pain could they cause with the power i do not know.

and yet part of me wishes to avoid it, all of me wishes to escape because i know who betrayed me in the previous issue, i know who framed me. it was someone i trusted, someone i knew all too well,

the yellerer.

█

█



for now, my biggest concern was flippering on outta here. i turned around in my chair and immediately realized that the coppers had made a dreadful mistake. for one, copper is a very malleable metal which meant the handcuffs could be easily removed and so i eased. my next problem was escaping unseen by ms russel and mme kraus and their all-seeing and all-photographing yearbook moles. I heard a whimsical noise behind me he's right behind me isn't he and I turn around. It's a man with a wizard hat that awoke when I expertfully used my boba straw to unlock the door.

"It's Conrad. Mage Conrad." He Conrad's.

We slip through the slippery basey jail, dodging skittering moles. Sparkley sounds sound when Mage Conrad swirled his staff that understaffed the place. No more was the coppers or diggers of the ground. They're all on lunch break so we walked through the open front door. and thats how i did it, how i skeddadled out from over the questioning law.. with any luck, i wont be off for too long after this but i fear i may have to go on the run for a while. unfortunately the cross country season ended awhile ago but ah well I swim away from the Bermuda triangel instead.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the writer's block

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Bayview Glen Independent School

85 Moatfield Drive

Toronto, Ontario M3B 3L6

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