

# Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September

Ways that I, Kat Evans, am going to be an excellent feminist this term:

1. I will organise a \*small\* bit of activism on the first day – *tiny* – just to ease us in. A bit of red spray paint never hurt anyone, right?
2. I will make the switch to a menstrual cup henceforth becoming a model *eco-friendly* feminist.
3. I will definitely ask Miss Mills about writing a weekly feminist column on the school blog called Feminist Friday, and not just spend the whole term thinking about it and doing nothing.
4. I will also keep this diary EVERY DAY because all the top journalists and writers say this is a Good Thing and definitely not something I will look back on and cringe about in approximately five minutes' time.
5. I will thusly become a BETTER FEMINIST and a PATRIARCHY-SMASHING JOURNALIST. Think Emmeline Pankhurst with a smartphone.

# Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September

8.45 a.m.

*The main playground, where Krishna Anand once made Dave Edwards snort a sherbet fountain and he had to go to hospital because they couldn't stop the sherbet bubbles coming out of his nose*

'Who the BLOODY HELL is TIM?'

Mr Clarke, our head teacher, roars at us, striding across the grey tarmac like an angry bald buffalo. We all scuttle into a line and try to look like brave and intrepid feminists.

Me and my two best friends, Sam and Millie, are dressed head to toe in black. Each of us have a small black veil covering half our faces, film-noir-style, and a slick of red lipstick.

Although it's a bit of a departure from our usual maroon uniform, the outfits are clearly not what Mr Clarke is referring to. The thing he's pointing to and appears to be most upset about is the giant, bright red **#Tim** painted on the playground.

It was obviously supposed to be **#TimesUp** but he's caught us before we've finished, so it's stuck at **#Tim**. Something creepy Tim Matthews in our year will definitely enjoy. I don't know anyone who's ever believed his *'The more you feel them the bigger they get'* spiel and yet he still rolls it out at every house party.

We decided to be feminists a few weeks ago after an incident

with a staunch feminist, some hummus and a very expressive carrot (more on this later). Feminism's basically equality for men and women, and an end to all the patriarchy bullshit (I think – the carrot was a little vague here). Anyway, it felt apt for our first point of business to be something supporting #MeToo and the Time's Up movement.

The plan was to look just like the glitzy celebs arriving on the red carpet dressed in black at the Golden Globes to announce Time's Up. Though in the picture we posted on Insta this morning I looked more like a goth who'd been at the red wine. Already an old lush at fifteen.

'We're protesting in solidarity with the #MeToo Time's Up movement, sir,' Millie says with authority. 'We want men to know that time's up and we won't stay silent any longer.'

'And yet I've never known you three to be particularly silent!' Mr Clarke rages.

Millie doesn't look like a lush – she looks glamorous and poised like the Hollywood celebs, fitting for someone who wants to be an actress. And Sam, she looks like an actual catwalk model. The lipstick colour suits her perfectly and seems not to have fallen off her beautiful full lips the way it has with mine. But now I think of it, are feminists allowed to look nice? Isn't the thing that we no longer conform to the idea of looking pretty and girly? Surely, I'm a better feminist because I look a bit weathered? Like I've been actually protesting (with wine)?

Or maybe that's unfeminist of me and women should be allowed to be pretty if they want to be pretty? Being a feminist

seems to be quite confusing, actually.

I tune back into the conversation just in time to hear Mr Clarke tell us to clean off our lipstick. In my case it won't be hard as it's mostly on my teeth and chin by now anyway.

'It's an artistic representation of menstrual blood, sir. A symbol of the struggle women go through every day, all over the world. We bleed and yet we carry on. We can't clean it off unless you're against women menstruating, sir. Are you?' Sam stares at him questioningly while his face goes bright red. He looks confused and like his head might implode. I guess he wasn't expecting to talk about the female reproductive system before 9 a.m. on the first day back at school.

'G-g-g-girls ...' Mr Clarke is spluttering, trying to regain control of himself. It's not pretty. 'I think we've lost sight of the point here. You cannot go around defacing school property, no matter what the cause. You'll be cleaning it off in after-school detention.'

'You can't silence us, sir. We're fighting years of this kind of oppression and control from men. You're the patriarchy and we're going to take you down!' I rage.

'Wonderful, I'll be sure to tell the department of education of your plans to bring down head teachers. I must have missed that part of the Time's Up movement when I read about it in the news. I'll see you back here at three-thirty for detention.'

'This is a dictatorship,' Sam huffs.

'Yes. Welcome back to my dictatorship, ladies. Have a great day.'

I kind of knew this would happen as soon as I saw the red paint, but you can't go at feminist activism half-hearted. When you think about it, a detention isn't *quite* as bad as what the suffragettes went through. Although it *is* really hot today and I haven't brought sunscreen.

*10.30 a.m.*

***The science block toilets – our toilets***

*No one else really uses them as they're so old and out of the way. And smell of decades-old urine. Lovely.*

Sam, Millie and I have been best friends since our first day of nursery, when we all showed up to school with the same weary expression, completely unconvinced that whatever was waiting for us here would be better than CBeebies at home. We were right, and the shared experience of being betrayed by our parents has bonded us ever since.

Today's the first day of Year Eleven, which means we've been together now for twelve blissful years. And, as of today, eight detentions.

The three of us stand at the three sinks, staring into three mucky, old, cracked mirrors in a pink toilet block which was painted in the nineties – the last time it was acceptable to do the whole 'pink for a girl, blue for a boy' thing.

'Sorry about that, guys ...' I mutter as I try to sort out my smeared lipstick in the equally smeared mirror. I'm a bit

sheepish because this was my idea, but I think we all knew it would end in detention ... I hope we all knew that anyway.

‘Oh, pssh!’ Millie says, swatting a hand at me while brushing her hair with the other at the sink to the left of mine. ‘We all knew that was going to happen. Didn’t we, Sam?’

Phew.

‘We did! But it was worth it ... well, almost ... if we’d have got the whole thing on the playground ... or if we’d have Snapchatted it ... or done any kind of social media ... to show what we were trying to do ...’ Sam says, looking at Millie from her spot at the third sink to my right, where she’s putting on mascara without even doing that open-mouth concentration face.

‘Oooh, that would have been a great idea!’ Millie says, turning away from the mirror blinking to look at us both excitedly.

I’m staring at Millie. Sam’s staring at Millie. Millie has not remembered that social media was supposed to be her job.

‘I did post this really cute selfie on the ’gram, though. Do you think you can tell what you two are doing in the background there behind me?’ She thrusts her faux-fur-covered phone in our faces. On occasion I have mistaken this cover for a rodent and screamed.

You can literally only see my hand and one of Sam’s feet behind her beaming filtered face.

‘Millie, do you remember how I was the artistic director, Kat was the operations director and you were the *social media director* for this little feminist adventure?’ Sam says,

half laughing.

‘Oooohhhhhhhhhhhhh.’ Millie looks at us, hand in front of her mouth. ‘I just ... there’s a new Snapchat filter that turns you into a llama and I ... sort of got distracted.’

‘That’s OK. Probably for the best that we didn’t immortalise the bit where we wrote **#Tim** on the playground really, isn’t it?’ I say, turning back to the mirror to make sure I haven’t still got lipstick on my teeth.

‘Yeah. Definitely,’ Sam agrees.

‘And at least it’s distracting me from having to wait to find out whether I’ve got Juliet,’ says Millie, scrolling through Instagram absentmindedly. ‘They’re releasing the cast list at lunchtime. FINALLY.’

When she found out that she would have to wait until the new school year to see if she got the part in our school’s production of *Romeo and Juliet*, I thought we were going to have to get an exorcist in. She went full head-spinny, possessed by rage and stress.

Millie really wants to be an actor and she’s good at it too. Of course, as a staunch feminist (as of nearly a whole month now) I’m a hundred per cent sure that wanting to be Juliet is in no way affected by her life-long crush on Nick Deans in the year above. The boy who will, without a shadow of a doubt, be cast to play Romeo. That definitely has nothing to do with it, even though she’s on record as having said that the nurse was the best character and WHY would anyone want to play ‘simpering, wet’ Juliet. But it’s completely, absolutely, got nothing to do

with Nick D. Sure.

‘How do you feel?’ Sam asks.

‘Confident!’ Millie sings, which is good because it’s been swinging one way or the other all summer.

‘Atta girl!’ says Sam, walking over and patting her on the back.

‘Who else would they give it to anyway? No one else is half as good as you,’ I say, and I mean it – she’s amazing.

‘And if they do give it to someone else ... an accident can be arranged ...’ Sam says, flexing her hands.

She’s joking, by the way. We’re not bad people. There are some in our school, but we’re not them.

Sam’s phone buzzes in her hand and her face lights up. ‘Dave says that he really enjoyed our disruption this morning. Says we looked great!’

‘Looking great is SO NOT the point!’ I groan, ignoring the fact that I’ve been staring in the mirror for the past ten minutes.

‘But we do look pretty fantastic. HAVE YOU SEEN US? What’s happening with Dave now?’ Millie asks. Dave is THE Dave Edwards I mentioned earlier, snorter of sherbet, but also fancier of Sam.

‘I don’t know. We talk a lot I guess,’ Sam says.

‘Yeah! He likes you! How come you don’t just get together?’ Millie asks.

‘I dunno. I think he’s just messing around. Don’t think he likes me that much,’ Sam says shyly.

He does. We all know he does.



11 a.m.

### **History class**

I can't believe I'm back in this hell-hole so soon. School is the only place where you can sit next to a huge open window and still feel claustrophobic. I find myself leaning more and more towards the window because someone in here appears to have *really* discovered aftershave over the summer and it's combined with the general ... agricultural smell to make the school atmosphere even more oppressive than usual.

The whole room is tinged with an air of disappointment. Even Mr Crick doesn't look like he's really come to terms with us being back as he drones on about 1800s America.

I'm not even in the same classes as Millie and Sam this morning which is just torture. I hate it when they're in classes without me, I worry that they're going to become better friends and start leaving me out of things and eventually forget about me altogether. I mean, they'll both definitely be working on the play together – Millie will obviously get Juliet and Sam's going to be working backstage to build the set.

Sam's amazing at art and anything creative. Her mum once took her to a life-drawing class and she came back with something so realistic it was borderline pornographic. Even though Sam said the guy was so old his danglies looked like pug faces.

It makes me uneasy that there'll be a whole huge part of

their lives I'm not going to be involved in. But I worry a lot about stuff like this.

I also worry that no one else worries quite as much as I do. I don't think my friends do, and I don't know why I worry so much more than everyone else.

Sometimes I worry that worrying is my greatest talent.

**12.30 p.m.**

***The bench outside the drama block noticeboard, anxiously waiting to FINALLY find out if Millie has the part***

Millie's notably less calm than she was earlier and keeps twitching every time someone walks past. I get it, though, she's been waiting to find out for so long, it feels cruel that they're dragging it out even longer. The suspense is ridiculous.

Our school is kind of a mish-mash with one main playground and other little hidey-holes between blocks where different groups hang out/hide out. So the music kids hang out by the music block, mathletes by the maths block, athletes by the sports field (also frequented by anyone looking to get frisky although I personally have NEVER been very athletic) – and the drama block is where the smokers hang so they can sneak out to the alleyway next to it and make an absolute holy mess of their lungs. You can tell as well, it's really smoky over here and we're all struggling to stay cool.

'Oh my god, there she is!' Millie squeaks, grabbing our hands

as the head of drama appears round the corner.

'Congratulations, Millie,' Ms Withers says, pinning the list to the board and then walking away.

'Oh my god, I can't look!' Millie says dramatically.

'She has LITERALLY just told you that you've got it,' I say as Sam and I both roll our eyes.

'OH MY GOD, I GOT IT!' Millie says, reading the list with a theatrical gasp.

'Congrats!' Sam and I say together, grabbing her in a group hug and jumping up and down. Millie's taken it to the next level, though and started dancing, except calling it dancing is really a bit of a stretch. It mostly looks like she's trying to be a chicken, only less coordinated. I guess she's excited.

I'm sure that as a feminist she's still absolutely not even a little bit bothered that Nick Deans is playing Romeo, but I can see him approaching, watching her 'dance' and I feel like I need to find a way to warn her as she may look SLIGHTLY ridiculous right now.

'Ahem! Romeo,' I mutter, hoping for subtlety and trying to make her stop being so dramatic before she hits mortification stations.

'Oh my god! Yes! Nick is playing Romeo! Finally, he'll have to notice me! Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, HOT SEXY ROMEO!' she says, dropping down to one knee before pretending to faint with her hand across her forehead.

'You must be my Juliet then!' Nick Deans says from behind her.

Millie falls the short distance left to the floor with shame.

*12.45 p.m.*

***Emergency toilet debrief***

‘DID HE HEAR ME?’ Millie is crying at us in such despair that a lost Year Seven girl has just scuttled out in fear. ‘What’s he even doing here? The Sixth Form don’t start until next week!’

‘He definitely heard you, but it might not be that bad?’ Sam says.

‘I’ve made a complete twat of myself already, haven’t I?’ Millie asks.

‘I’ve done worse!’ I say cheerfully. I’m kind of a walking disaster for this stuff and I don’t mind saying it if it makes her feel better.

‘She has!’ Sam says even more cheerfully.

Rude. But it’s made Millie smile.

*3.30 p.m.*

***The hottest detention known to man***

It’s so hot out here that I can feel my skin burning – it’s more or less bubbling – as I’m cleaning. Thanks, climate change, for this hideous and unseasonal heatwave! What if I’m permanently disfigured from the sunburn I get during this detention? I do feel

intrepid and bold, though, like a proper suffragette.

Although, thinking about it, I bet the suffragettes never had to deal with creepy #Tim Matthews. As predicted, he's absolutely overjoyed with it all.

'Ladies, if you wanted my attention, all you had to do was talk to me. Such an extreme romantic gesture was not necessary. Not when you're as fiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiine as you three.' His elongation of the word 'fine' unleashes some excess spit all over the place.

Urgh. I am definitely going to throw my sponge at him if he doesn't piss off soon.

*3.35 p.m.*

Oh god, as if this wasn't all awful enough here comes Terrible Trudy sauntering past with her crew. I was hoping she just hadn't come back this year, that maybe her family got stuck on a super yacht somewhere for ever or, better still, kidnapped by pirates. I'm not normally this mean about people, by the way, but Trudy's the exception. She's the most popular girl in school (she reigns only through terror) and she's my arch nemesis.

The conflict between Trudy and me started on my second day of nursery. She tried to take away my favourite bunny because it was better than hers. I didn't let her have it (it was MINE!) and thusly I made an ENEMY FOR LIFE. It was one bunny, but boy can she hold a grudge. Though to be fair, I've NEVER tried to be as accommodating of her as everyone else is.

And why should I be? She treats her friends like crap, let alone everyone else.

Over the years, Trudy's taken her grudge out on me in many different ways, such as sticking a tampon to my back with a note that said 'I'm on!' (Period shaming AND completely unfeminist, AND I REFUSE to be embarrassed by being on my period actually!) and trying to tell people that I wasn't wearing any knickers one time even though I WAS and it meant that boys spent the whole day trying to look up my skirt. Perverts. And that's without even mentioning all the times she's tripped me up or pushed me over.

Part of the reason she gets away with so much stuff (apart from being terrifying) is that her mum's a big record producer so allegedly there are always celebrities at her house and people want in on that. She comes back from holidays with the most completely unbelievable stories about who she's hung out with. She claims to have once gone on a date with Harry Styles. Common sense suggests this is a COMPLETE LIE but apparently I'm the only one who gets that.

Even if you didn't believe her, before you ever got to tell her that she was chatting utter nonsense you'd have to get through her crew. The Bitches – or as I like to call them TB, the name of a terrible, disgusting Victorian illness – are around her twenty-four/seven. One of the rules for joining TBs is apparently that Trudy Must Never Be Left Alone – diva. Another rule is that if Trudy doesn't have a boyfriend, then you can't have one either – ridiculous.

The Bitches consist of:

- Amelie – Second Bitch in Command, who follows Head Bitch around like she's leeching oxygen off her
- Tiffany – really wants to be Second Bitch in Command. Must suffer daily being Third Bitch in Command
- Nia – Fourth Bitch in Command. Resigned to carrying bags, and standing in Amelie and Tiffany's shadows, not to mention Trudy's
- Tia – doesn't seem to understand hierarchies so lives in blissful ignorance

Although, now I think about it, is calling them all The Bitches actually unfeminist? I don't think you're supposed to call another woman names at all really. Maybe I should try a bit harder this year to get along with them all?

'Losers think they're feminists now,' says Trudy. 'As if they're anything like Hollywood stars. Silly little cows. You're only in the school play, Camilla, you're not Jennifer bloody Lawrence.'

Maybe not then actually. Maybe feminism doesn't count when the woman in question is a complete MONSTER. Like with Margaret Thatcher ... maybe Trudy is the Margaret Thatcher of our time?

*3.40 p.m.*

Still scrubbing at the playground like a Tudor kitchen wench.

Oh god. Hot Josh is walking towards us. Everything's gone a

bit blurry ... Arms and legs suddenly ... weak ... and I can actually hear my heartbeat in my head.

This always happens when I see HIM.

Hot Josh is amazing. I don't say that lightly. He's the absolute sexiest boy in school and possibly the entire county, if not the country.

Definitely in our town.

He's done modelling for ASOS and only started at the school at the end of last year after his family moved from London. He's really cosmopolitan. I can count the conversations we've had on one hand. They usually consist of one word from him and only once a bit of dribble from me. As he approaches, I swear I can hear an actual choir of angels heralding his arrival.

Suddenly, I remember that I am currently on all fours, scrubbing creepy Tim's name off the playground. Great.

I do a sort of sideways crab movement on all fours to move closer to Millie and Sam, seeking the safety of my pack like a baby lion.

'What are you doing, crabby? You look weird,' Mills says. Helpful.

'Oh, I see!' Sam nudges her. 'Hot Josh, dead ahead.'

'Oooooohhhhhh!' Millie and Sam look delighted. They love watching me get all fluttery and red in the face.

'Your face matches your lipstick now.' Sam can be such a cow sometimes. I never do this when she's flirting with Dave.

Hot Josh appears to be heading straight for me. Or us? Oh god, it's me.



'Hey,' he says.

I seem to have continued being crouched down on all fours, staring up at him. Paralysed. I worry I may look like a cat caught going to the toilet. The other two have obviously, sensibly, jumped up to normal standing positions. My legs are apparently unable to support that movement, unfortunately.

Hot Josh appears to be holding out a hand, and all I seem able to do is stare at it, like I've never seen a hand before, and stay in my weird crab/cat position on the tarmac.

What is he going to do with that hand? Is he about to delicately brush my cheek and tell me he loves me?

'Er ... want me to help you up?' he finally says after what feels like ten THOUSAND YEARS.

'Oh yes. Fabby. Thank you.'

I appear to have just said FABBY? WHO SAYS FABBY? SOUNDS LIKE FLABBY!

FFS.

I take his hand and stand up, trying to hide my pink cheeks.

'I really love what you guys did today.' He seems to be talking directly to my actual face. 'It's such a buzz in the industry right now. So woke of you guys to support it.'

Oh my god.

Oh my god.

Oh.

My.

God.

I'm suddenly very aware of my vagina. Why? What? What's

happening? Why aren't I talking? Oh my god, he's going to think I'm so weird.

'Thanks,' says Sam. Thank the baby Jesus Christ for Sam and her ability to talk real words in the face of extreme sexiness.

'Power to the fanny!'

Oh god, who said that?

That just came out of my mouth, didn't it?

What am I doing with my hand? Am I making a vagina sign with my fingers? I MEAN, REALLY?

'Errr yeah, great ... sooo ... later!' Hot Josh walks away and takes with him any chance of me EVER having dignity or poise.

'POWER TO THE FANNY!' Millie and Sam sing after he's out of earshot (I hope). I sink back down to the ground. No amount of scrubbing is going to erase the shame of that little incident.

I shall never speak again. I cannot be trusted.

*6 p.m.*

### ***Back Chez Moi***

I can hear Dad, my fourteen-year-old brother Freddie and our next-door neighbour Matt in the living room. They're whispering, and it sounds like they're up to no good.

As I cautiously put my head round the door, I see them all sitting in a line on the sofa, staring blankly at the TV.

Each of them has #Tim written on their foreheads.

Eugh. How do they know? Did Freddie find out and pass it on?

Traitor.

I bet the forehead thing was Dad's idea. He used to be a stand-up comedian and still likes to think he's 'funny'. I hope they've accidentally used permanent marker.

'Power to the fanny!' the three of them sing in unison after a few seconds.

'URGH! Children!'

'Could you not have waited until next week when I was in before you menstruated all over the school?' Matt teases. He's going into Lower Sixth this year so starts with Nick next week.

'Great feministing, Kat!' says Dad. 'Who is this Tim lad, though? I'll need to know for Nat's next storyline.'

Nat is the daughter in Dad's sitcom about a single father raising a teenage girl. Every week, millions of people tune in to watch thinly veiled stories from my actual life, while Dad rakes in the glory.

'Oh great. Yet again, changing the first letter of my name makes for a masterful disguise. Last month that woman from the weird house at the end of the road congratulated me on starting my period!'

'Aww, that was kind of her, love. Fabby!' Dad says.

'It is not fabby! And, I started my period YEARS AGO, Dad.'

Of course. It's HIS bloody fault I said fabby earlier. I've picked it up from him!

'Well, better late than never!'

'Why can't you just get a normal job like Mum?' I huff. 'I'm going upstairs! Matt? Are you coming?' He is, after all, MY

friend not theirs. 'You wait till Mum gets home and I tell her you were making fun of feminism! And you KNOW it was supposed to say #TIMESUP!'

Mum is a staunch feminist and a serious scientist. She'll sort them out. She's how I got started on all this. Last month, after three bottles of wine in our kitchen, her and Matt's mum Sandra started explaining the patriarchy to me. Which ended with Sandra waving a carrot stick around and dipping it in hummus quite aggressively actually before shouting: 'And that's ALL they want to do, Kitty Kat! They just want to dip their carrot in your hummus and then waltz off.' Then she fell off her stool, taking her carrot with her.

Bea, our beautiful black Labrador and my only current female ally, follows me upstairs. Seems she's had enough of the boys too.

Worth noting that Dad didn't find menstruation quite so funny when she was 'in season' on his record collection a few years ago. We had to get her some doggy period pants. I think she quite liked them. They were soft and bouncy – excellent for sitting.

*6.15 p.m.*

***Debrief on the floor of my room with Matt, watching Drag Race***

'So, did anything else happen today? Aside from you sticking it

to the Man?’ Matt asks, tickling Bea’s tummy.

Matt moved in next door about ten years ago after his dad left him and his mum for his PA. Sandra painted all the walls in their house bright red – as a woman now, I’m starting to understand her – and Matt’s been seeking shelter with us ever since.

‘God, loads!’ I say. ‘How much did Freddie tell you?’

‘What? Oh, no, Freddie didn’t tell me. It was all over Snapchat,’ Matt says.

Makes sense. Matt’s the most popular boy in school so has everyone on Snapchat, although that also makes it super weird that he spends so much time with me.

‘UURRRGH!’ I groan. Goddamn you, social media.

‘This will cheer you up: Mum shouted at those boys again when we were out in town. They weren’t even doing anything this time.’

‘What – the ones that were little dickheads after you came out?’ I ask.

‘The very same. It’s so embarrassing, though they look so much less hard when my mum’s calling them “little knobless pricks”.’ He chuckles to himself.

Matt came out last year. I was so proud of him and so pleased that he felt like he could finally be himself and be open with everyone. Unfortunately, some dickheads from school started shouting things at him, calling him names. He was trying to ignore it and wouldn’t even let me kick them in the shins, but then his mum heard and went full lioness-protecting-her cub on

them. “Little knobless pricks” is actually quite tame compared to the things she told them she’d do if they carried on. As well as the fact that she threatened to report them to the police for homophobia. Matt was both mortified and relieved.

Go Sandra! In other news, unfortunately Trudy didn’t die at sea on her parents’ yacht.’ (Massive **unfeminist thought** to wish death at sea on another woman ... MASSIVE.)

‘Shame. Any members of One Direction on the yacht this year?’

‘She was too busy taking the piss out of us to tell us. But I’m sure Zayn was there rubbing sun cream into her back while Harry Styles waited on her naked or something.’

‘Obviously.’

‘Millie got the part of Juliet.’

‘Amazing! Bet she’s pleased!’

‘Do you think Nick knows that Millie’s in love with him?’

‘EVERYONE knows that Millie’s in love with him,’ Matt says.

‘Well, we shall wait and watch with interest!’ I say.

‘We shall!’ Matt agrees.

Our love lives may be non-existent (especially as one of us just made a vagina sign at their crush) but at least we get to watch other people be happy. There’s always that. And that’s lovely, isn’t it?

*6.20 p.m.*

SOME kind of interest would be nice, though. Please.

6.25 p.m.

WHEN WILL IT BE MY TURN?

6.26 p.m.

But obviously I'm a strong, independent, feminist woman, happy to be on my own. I don't need a man.

6.30 p.m.

I can hear Mum getting home from work downstairs. She works in a research lab at the hospital analysing test results and being a cool sciencey lady. She was a child genius. I'm pretty sure she'd already won about ten thousand science prizes by the time she was my age.

'Hey, Matt! Hey, Kat!' she shouts up the stairs. She sounds excited. 'Heard about your activism, Kitty Kat. Can't believe they oppressed you before you got the whole word on the playground. It's just a shame about that sleazy boy in your year being called Tim too ...' She appears at my bedroom door.

She looks like she's about to laugh. She'd better not laugh. She's weeping slightly at the corner of her eyes. I can see a collection of water and her shoulders are shaking. Matt's just started laughing, so now she's laughing.

THANKS, MOTHER. THANKS, MATT.

'MUM! I can't believe you of all people are laughing about

this! And Matt! Whose friend are you exactly?’

‘Sorry, Kitty Kat, I do think it’s a wonderful thing that you’ve done but, you know, you have to see the funny side really?’ She’s the worst. Just when you think you can depend on someone. AND she knows I hate being called Kitty Kat. Everyone STILL does it but it makes me sound like a toddler.

‘Sorry, Kat.’ Matt’s staring at the floor but I can see his shoulders are still shaking.

Godsake.

‘If you won’t even take me seriously, I shall stay in my room,’ I tell Mum earnestly.

‘What about dinner?’

‘I shall come down to dinner and then come straight back to my room. I shall not utter a word to ANY of you.’

And I really mean it.

8 p.m.

### ***My bedroom***

After Matt left, I sat through dinner in silence. I did the washing up in silence. I came back up to my room, in silence, and now I am continuing to read *Pride and Prejudice*. Apparently Jane Austen was a feminist.



*10 p.m.*

*In bed*

The dog's just come into my room with a note attached to her collar.

It says #Tim.

*11.30 p.m.*

The mortification of today is swimming round and round and round my head. First off I spray-painted the name of the school pervert on to the playground. Then I made a vagina sign with my fingers at the boy I fancy AND said both FABBY and FANNY. Such an idiot. I spend a lot of time in bed worrying on a normal day, even without all that. People say bed's supposed to be a relaxing place, but it doesn't seem to be for me.

Have you ever found yourself worrying about really bad things happening when you're on your own? Whenever I'm alone for too long, I find my mind wandering to scary things.

Like, every year before we go on our summer holiday I'm always convinced that the plane is going to crash and we're all going to die, or that my whole family will die and I'll be the last one left alive and I'll have to survive on a desert island alone, presumed dead.

I hate flying.

Or, what if someone breaks into our house tonight with a

gun and then they kill everyone but I survive the horrible massacre of my family and then have to go into witness protection? And what if they can't find the person who did it and then I am framed for killing them all and I have to spend my whole life in prison?

Because things like that do happen, there are shows about it on Netflix.

Sometimes when I start thinking about these things I get a funny feeling in my throat, like something's obstructing it and I feel a bit sick and like I can't breathe.

I've been having thoughts like this since I was about six years old. I used to make deals with myself like, 'If I touch the light switch three times before I fall asleep we'll all make it through the night.' And, 'If I wash my hands three times then none of us will ever get sick.'

The light switch deal is the only one that I still do. It's not something I've ever told anyone about. I don't think my friends have these thoughts, but I'm far too embarrassed to ask and find out.

*11.45 p.m.*

\*Beep\*

**Message:** WhatsApp Group name changed by Sam:  
**POWER TO THE FANNY**

Me: SAM!!!!

Sam: 😏

Millie: 😏

***Unfeminist thoughts: 1***

*1. Wishing Terrible Trudy had died in the summer holidays. It wasn't my fault, your honour, she made me do it.*

# Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September

7.12 a.m.

*The bathroom, sitting on the toilet, willing the misery to end*

My womb is a man. I'm sure of it. It's the only way I can get my head around the idea that something inside of me is causing me this much pain.

**Fun Feminist Fact:** *In the 1800s some people considered menstruation a dangerous disease and it was suggested that women stay horizontal. Previously women's menstrual blood was also considered to have evil powers so women were given a wide berth. Today I wish I was either Victorian or considered to possess evil powers via my vulva. I think vulva is the right word. Does anyone really know what's vulva and what's vagina?*

7.15 a.m.

Do you know who profits from our periods by the way?

MEN.

I read about it on Insta on the @PeriodFactsCompletelyTrue account. The tampon industry is FULL OF MEN, earning money from our pain and misery. Well, #TimesUp, guys, because I've finally bought myself a menstrual cup. Yep. That's right. I've beat your hideous masculine system. SISTERS ARE DOING IT

FOR THEMSELVES (cleaning out their period blood from a small reusable silicone cup, that is).

In the Insta post they talked about how women are taking charge of their periods and as I am clearly now a woman – albeit with smaller boobs than I thought I would have – I am going to do it too. It's all about being woke and vocal about the experience.

The only thing is, I'm not sure if I've put it in right. I followed the instructions to the letter, but I'm starting to wonder if there's some secret of vagina ownership I don't know about yet because mine seems tricky. For a start, although the view from up here is obviously a little different, I don't think it looks like the one in the diagram. I also took one look at the size of the err ... receptacle and frankly it didn't seem quite right to me that that would fit in THAT.

It's so unfair that we have to spend so much time worrying about our vaginas when boys wang their willies about the place, just waiting for a chance to use them.

I feel like, in an EQUAL world, there would be more penis admin.