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Sisters still doing it to themselves

EVE FISHER

“I’VE REALISED THAT DOMINANT, SOCIAL-CLIMBING MOTHERS HAVE A LOT TO ANSWER FOR WHEN IT COMES TO HOW OTHER WOMEN, MOST NOTABLY THEIR DAUGHTERS, HAVE BEEN TREATED IN THE PAST ... AND NOW.”

FINALLY, at the ripe old age of 43, I understand exactly what it meant when I made my debut back in Year 11.

Sure, I understood then it was a tradition related to coming out in society but I never stopped to think, even for a second, what it actually meant.

Now that I’ve had the pleasure of stepping back in time and becoming lost in the historical fiction that is the new Netflix offering *Bridgerton* — set in the early 1800s — I finally understand that making your debut wasn’t about coming out in society.

It was about offering your virginity to the highest — most well-connected — bidder.

Don’t get me wrong. I’ve absolutely lapped up *Bridgerton*. I loved it so much I couldn’t wait a year for next season so quickly smashed three of the novels to find out what happened.

I wouldn’t call myself enlightened by this exercise but it certainly has opened my mind to the oppressive nature of the era and the way women were treated as chattel. They were expected to marry who they were told to marry, and produce a male heir as an absolute minimum.

The life of the gentry was one of parties and parades. Women were encouraged not to think but to be a

demure and attractive accessory to that already mentioned highest bidder.

Who perpetuated society’s expectations of women? Who kept pushing those young girls to expect nothing from life except to find a good husband and breed? Who gossiped and caused ruin for others?

Yep, you got it.

Other women, specifically mothers.

The same mothers who presented them at those debutante balls, or the “ambitious mamas” as they’re known in *Bridgerton*.

I hear the outrage already.

“It was the men.”

“Only they oppress women.”

“The mothers had no choice.”

Pfffft, what a load of tosh.

The more I watched and read,

the more I’ve realised that dominant, social-climbing mothers have a lot to answer for when it comes to how other women, most notably their daughters, have been treated in the past ... and now.

Sure, in *Bridgerton* it’s framed as cute and funny and competitive, but cast your mind back and think about what it would have really been like for those girls — as young as 17 — metaphorically sent to the slaughter. Moving from the ownership of their father to the ownership of their husband.

And all the while their weak mother sits back and teaches them nothing other than how to please a man and not cry out when sex hurts.

Yes, I get the mothers were borne of women who treated them even worse but nothing has changed. For the past 200 years these “marriage-minded mamas” have bowed to the collective and passed on to their daughters their own desperate need to be seen and validated by a society that failed to value them.

Bridgerton is masterful at turning ideas that leave a bad taste in the mouth — like not marrying for love — into something lighthearted and funny. But there is still an undertone of mockery and judgment as the author Julia Quinn does out explicit details of

how the lives of young women were ruled and how they were taught to be collectivists. Owning one’s self never came into the equation. Just as it still doesn’t.

Being caught alone with a man was enough to force a marriage. A dalliance without a marriage proposal meant a life of ruin — with the gossip perpetuated by the ladies of course. Defending a woman of that ilk was out of the question.

Nothing has changed now. Women still get judged for casual sex. Women get harangued by their mothers and grandmothers about when they will marry and when they will produce a child. Sure getting a good job is great but you’d have to be an idiot if you thought it was actually considered important. As for happiness and success, they rank nowhere.

Women always have been, and always will be, at the mercy of other women’s judgment. About bodies. About looks. About potential. About suitability.

Yet men seem to cop all the flack by those feminist types who never ever seem to acknowledge that women should shoulder some of the blame for their own incarceration.

Women set the standard for other women. It would be nice if those standards were actually high.

LETTERS & TEXTS

HEAT NO OBJECT TO DILIGENT HELPERS

A BIG thanks to the Powercor crew who worked through the 36C day (1/1) at Point Lonsdale to fix a problem with our house electricity supply.

The power off for a while was no inconvenience to our family and their attention to detail was greatly appreciated for what will be a good outcome, up and down the street.

Best wishes for a good year ahead.

Peter Brett, electrical engineer (retired), Holidaying in Point Lonsdale

DON'T JUST DUMP YOUR RUBBISH PROBLEMS

AM still wondering, why the people of Geelong/Newtown, particularly those in Range Rovers, Mercedes and other Toorak tractors, believe it is their right to dump their unwanted goods — generally rubbish that no charity could actually use — where they like, in lieu of paying a small fee and taking the rubbish to the tip.

If the bins are full, don’t just dump it on the lawn.

I am positive your neighbours wouldn’t like me dumping my

rubbish on their property or on yours.

Please note that from today onwards, your registration plates will be captured and the details forwarded to the appropriate people.

You are all on notice.

Barry Turner, Newtown

GOOD GUN CONTROL MEASURES CAN BE BETTER

CRIMINALS appear to have easy access to firearms. The poor taxpayer voter has to sit an exam, incur a cooling-off period and pay the fire arms licensing bodies cash in order to obtain one.

Australia has the strictest gun control but still allows banned semiautomatic weapons to arrive

in Australia. Our gun control measures simply do not work

Terry Bohan, Belmont

FREEDOM OF SPEECH A RIGHT FOR EVERYONE

IT was great to see Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack declaring his fervent support for freedom of speech, following the Twitter bans in the US.

We wait for his announcement that he will now fight to repeal all the laws that the federal and state governments have been enacting, the purpose of which is to deny free speech to those seeking to expose extreme examples of animal cruelty, neglect and violations of animal protection laws on Australian farms.

If we are one and free, let’s also be consistent and caring.

Desmond Bellamy, special projects coordinator, PETA Australia

GOVERNMENT SHOULD PAY FOR PANDEMIC FUNERALS

WERE the funeral and associated expenses of all 801 Victorians who died as a result of Daniel Andrews’ mismanagement of the coronavirus paid for by the Victorian Labor government?

If not, why not, given it was culpable in the matter?

Michael J Gamble, Belmont

TEXT TALK

A heartfelt thanks to triage staff, nurses, doctors and food service assistants at University Geelong Hospital (Barwon Health). I presented at 1.30pm Saturday with acute tonsillitis to the emergency department as I got to the stage I was unable to sip water. I was attended to swiftly and no stone was left unturned. I was discharged at 2.30pm Saturday with very little pain and much relief. I cannot express how wonderful my experience at this great hospital was. Well done & thank you again.

Penny McAdam

ADDY ONLINE POLL

Are you planning to go to the Australian Open this year?

YES 2% | NO 98%

Register your vote at geelongadvertiser.com.au

Geelong Advertiser

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

AUSTRALIAN cricket captain Tim Paine let the pressure get to him this week. As his team tried to force victory over India at the SCG on Monday, Paine dropped his guard.

His on field “banter” with Indian batsman Ravi Ashwin was crude and undignified. He seemed distracted from his task, dropped catches and let his team down, as both captain and wicketkeeper.

Thankfully, Paine was smart and humble enough to own up to his mistakes on Tuesday.

It was another example of why he was chosen to lead the team three years ago in the wake of the sandpaper cheating scandal, and why he has done such a good job restoring the national team’s reputation in that time.

Paine is a tough competitor, but he knows Australians want a cricket team they can be proud of, one that plays the game to win, but knows winning isn’t everything, and one that pays due respect to its opponent.

The Indian team that Australia has played this summer deserves the utmost respect from Paine and his team.

It has endured adversity and bounced back each time, and with the series-deciding Test match starting in Brisbane on Friday, Paine can’t afford to be distracted with petty gamesmanship.

ON THIS DAY

532 The Nika riots break out in Constantinople, starting at a chariot race when citizens angry at emperor Justinian begin a path of destruction across the city

1923 Boy Charlton breaks the 880 yards freestyle swimming record, clocking 11:05.2 in Sydney

1981 Sydney police trap Gregory McHardie trying to collect the Woolworths ransom

2001 About 800 people are killed when an earthquake hits San Salvador

2008 Kayakers James Castrission, 25, and Justin Jones, 24, arrive in New Zealand 62 days after leaving Australia

2012 Luxury liner Costa Concordia hits a reef and sinks off the Italian island of Giglio

2018 A false emergency warning of an impending ballistic missile strike is accidentally sent out across Hawaii

2020 The Queen gives her blessing for Prince Harry and wife Meghan to “step back” from royal duties



WRITE TO US

Make sure to include your name, address and phone number if verification is required. Only your name and suburb will be printed. Please note we reserve the right to edit letters for reasons such as clarity and length. **PRIVACY POLICY:** Our privacy policy at <https://preferences.news.com.au/privacy> includes important information about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information (including to provide you with targeted advertising based on your online activities). It explains that if you do not provide us with information we have requested from you, we may not be able to provide you with the goods and services you require. It also explains how you can access or seek correction of your personal information, how you can complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with a complaint of that nature.