

PERSONAL NARRATIVE/COLLEGE ESSAY SAMPLES

NAME: _____

PROFESSIONAL EXAMPLE #1

Dishing Dirt By Emily White

The day I hear the rumor I am 14 years old, enclosed in a bathroom stall. Its walls are light blue, exactly the color of mold. Through a crack in its door, I can see three girls enter: heavy metal girls with tremendous eyelashes. They stand in front of the mirror, speaking urgently:

"Did you hear about HJ?" one of them says. "I hear she did it with Mitch and all his friends, like 12 guys at once!"

"Twelve guys?" says another. "She is disgusting!"

The last chimes in. "Oh, my God, she is such a slut!" she says, drawing out the last word for effect.

From my vantage point, I can see their faces in the mirror as they talk; the way their eyes open wide in amazement as they contemplate the horrors of what this girl has done. I'm thrilled by their outrage. When they finally leave the bathroom, I emerge, reeling with what I've just heard. Twelve guys. Impossible. So impossible I believe it utterly.

I have seen the girl they're talking about. She's dark and womanly, with an air of mystery about her that the kids in the hallway assume is sex. She is usually alone, but she always acts as if she's on her way somewhere, as if she's late. I'd never admit it in school, but I'm drawn to her. Everyone looks at her, while I'm a gloomy, invisible girl with a maximum of three friends, a girl whose name nobody can remember. Beer, parties and kisses are remote. I'm a Save the Whales activist, so antisocial I've convinced myself that whales are smarter than people.

But that day eavesdropping in the bathroom, I feel inadvertently included. As I listen to the girls talking in the mirror, my heart starts to race. The scandal works on me like a stimulant. Obviously the Night of 12 Boys is an event of vast importance, and the urgency in the girls' voices momentarily eclipses anything I've felt for H. in the past. Emerging from the stall, I know what I need to do: pass the rumor on.

Out in the hallway, it's lunchtime, and the three girls I usually eat with sit in a circle in our usual spot, the gritty linoleum floor outside the science classroom. They're talking in a bored way about homework assignments and last night's television shows. I sit down with them and say with gravity, "Guess what I just heard?" Immediately they all stop talking and listen to me - the violin prodigy, the knitting girl and the nervous girl who talks relentlessly. They're captives of the information I hold, which I offer to them like a wise man offering gifts: "H. did it with 12 guys at once!" Like the girls in the restroom, my lunch mates are shocked. "Are you kidding? Ewwwwww."

Over the next few years, kids tell all kinds of wild stories about H.'s exploits. Usually the stories have to do with her and a crowd of boys; the boys multiply exponentially while she remains alone. In my mind, I imagine her in the backs of cars, maybe with the windows rolled down and her hair flying. I

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