

A Young Woman's Guide to Conquering Dating Violence

*Love Doesn't  
Leave Bruises!*

A must read for all teenage girls!  
Miss Teen Maryland

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## Chapter Five- The AJ that I Love

“What’s wrong with you?” AJ asks. “You pissed about the game?”

“I guess.” I answer staring out the window. It’s after the game and he is driving me home. My parents and sister came to the game and the girls lost by four points! It was a good game, but with this being the last game I’ll play in high school ever; I’m a little bummed about loosing.

“What do you mean you guess?” He looks at me sideways. “Either you’re mad or you’re not.”

I don’t say anything I just stare out the window. This has been a long day and I am ready to just crawl into bed. I’d hoped that my parents would have made me ride home with them, but they let AJ drive me home. My feelings are really mixed up. After everything that has happened today I really don’t want to be with him anymore, but I’m not ready to give him up yet.

“I saw you with Sheree,” I say finally. Sheree and I used to be acquaintances until she found out that AJ and I were going out, then all of sudden I was a horrible person. I didn’t know that she liked him. She never mentioned it before. But she conveniently pops up everywhere – our locker, the library, Sam’s Pizzeria, the basketball game and then the boy’s locker room.

“What?” He asks.

“Don’t try to act like you don’t know what I’m talking about,” I say firmly not knowing where I suddenly got this bravado from but I’m mad. I’d been waiting for AJ to come out of the locker room – he likes for me to wait for him. AJ was the last one to leave the locker room and when he came out Sheree suddenly appeared dressed in a short black skirt and three inch heels. She whispered something to him that he thought was funny and slapped her behind. I’m not sure if he saw me standing next to the door or not, but I am embarrassed for the second time today.

“Who do you think you’re talking to?” He asks pushing his fingers into the side of my head. My head snaps to the right from the force of his fingers.

“I saw you touch her butt, AJ.” I whine instead of answer his question. I don’t want him to be mad at me.

“No I didn’t,” He says looking at me as if I shouldn’t even be confronting him. I just can’t believe that this is happening. I never thought that AJ would treat me like this.

“AJ, I was standing right next to the door, she whispered something to you and you smacked her butt.”

“Sheree is a ho, I wouldn’t be caught dead touching her.”

“I saw you,” I press on in a whisper.

“Evelyn, why are you questioning me, anyway?” He glances at me. “Did you ever think to yourself that if I did slap on Sheree it was because you don’t let me do anything but *rub* on yours?”

I don’t say anything.

“I mean when are you going to be ready?” He asks.

“How did we start talking about sex?” I think to myself but I still don’t say anything.

“I must have been crazy to start dating some church girl who doesn’t know what to do with the body God gave her.”

Tears sting my eyes for the umpteenth time that day and I fight to keep them at bay. We are driving on the one lane highway leading up to my house. It’s nine o’clock at night and dark outside so I just stare out the window and watch the lights of the oncoming traffic.

“Eve, I swear you like making me mad. I can see why all the boyfriends you have had have broken up with you.”

I am unable to hide the tear that slides down my face.

“Are you crying?” AJ asks loudly.

“No,” I lie. I just want to get out of the car and away from AJ.

“Yes, you are!” He screams before turning the car into the lane with oncoming traffic. I scream and hear the screech of car wheels all around me. It feels like we spin a few times and finally the car stops moving, but I’m still screaming.

“Shut the hell up!” AJ’s voice matches my screams. “Shut up, Eve, right now.”

I stop screaming but now I’m crying and shaking. “Stop crying!” he screams again and then everything turns into a kaleidoscope of colors – yellows and red whirl before my eyes and I see stars.

When the moment ends I’m curled up in the seat shaking uncontrollably and holding my face.

“I’m sorry,” AJ says quickly. “I’m so sorry, Eve.” When I don’t say anything he touches my arm and I jump as if he has singed my skin.

“Whoa,” he says in a low voice. “Are you scared of me now?”

“You hit me,” I say. “AJ, you hit me!” I look at him with fire blazing in my eyes.

“Eve, I tell you all the time not to push me, first you accuse me of doing something that I didn’t do and then you try to make me feel bad by crying. Why do you always push me to this point?”

I don’t answer him. I can’t stop shaking. He leans forward to kiss me and I turn my face to the window. He tries to pull me to him and I refuse to let him do so.

“Eve?” He says in a scratchy voice. He sounds like he is crying so I look at him. His eyes are full of remorse. “I’m sorry, Eve, it was an accident.” He tries to give me a small kiss on the lips but I turn my face and he gets my cheek. When I don’t return the kiss he gets out of the car and walks around to my door. I can see cars whizzing by and I wish I was in one of those cars.

He opens my door pulls me out of the car and wraps my arms around him.

“I love you” he says, holding my arms until I give in and embrace him on my own.

“Okay,” I say simply.

“I love you,” he repeats.

“Alright,” is my response.

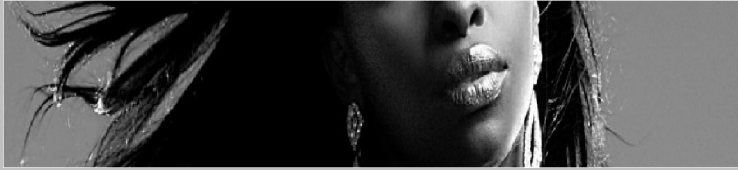
“Say it back,” he says kissing my forehead, then my eyelids. “Tell me you love me back” he says kissing the corners of my lips.

A car zooms by and a boy hangs out the window and shouts “Get ‘er done!” I swear some people are so stupid.

I’m tired of standing on the shoulder of the road so I kiss AJ back and give him his wish by saying, “I love you too.”

He gives me the crooked smile that I have always loved, jumps in the car and turns on the radio. I have no idea what is playing and before I know it he grabs me and starts dancing. Then he starts to hum with the music and I realize that this is the AJ that I love – spontaneous, loving and funny.

## *Understanding Verbal Abuse*



I was walking down the hallway in school and I heard a faint “*Dookie*” that became increasingly louder as I ignored it assuming that the person wasn’t speaking to me. It wasn’t until he greeted me with a kiss and sighed, “*Dookie,*” that I realized he *was* talking to me.

In case you don’t know what “*Dookie*” is, it is another word for poop. Can you imagine my surprise and horror of being called this name? What was worse was that other people heard him and laughed! I was humiliated. How could someone that said he loved me, call me this? The answer to this question is simple – he didn’t really love me at all.

Real love shouldn’t humiliate, however, the purpose of verbal abuse is to gain control over another person by using degrading slurs and put-downs. Examples of verbal abuse are:

- ♥ **Put downs-** “That dress makes you look fat!” “You look like a tramp when you wear you hair that way.” Put downs are meant to keep one in their place and feeling as if they never do anything right. Ironically, abusive people usually have low self-esteem and will insult others for the very things they don’t like about themselves.
- ♥ **Public humiliation-** Yelling, reprimanding, being insulted in public, being teased or talked about (even if you are not there) in public
- ♥ **Name calling-** B\*\*\*, Fat, Ugly, Stupid, low life, etc.

## *Understanding Verbal Abuse* *-Continued-*

Can you think of any other forms of verbal abuse not mentioned on the previous page? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever witnessed or experienced verbal abuse? If so, how did it make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

### **Story Reflection**

What do you think about Evelyn's friend Erica? Is she a real friend? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Looking back at the last couple of chapters, do you think that AJ really loves Evelyn? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Did you see any signs of verbal abuse between AJ and Evelyn? If so, what were they? \_\_\_\_\_

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If Evelyn was your friend what would you say to help her recognize the signs of verbal abuse? \_\_\_\_\_

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