How Relatable? Examining the Emergent “Cool Girl” as a Product of Male Fantasy

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The “Cool Girl” archetype was initially identified by Gillian Flynn in her 2012 novel *Gone Girl.[[1]](#footnote-1)* In the novel, protagonist Amy fakes her own disappearance and leaves a trail of clues ultimately intended to implicate her husband in the crime. Amy diatribes about the impossibility of the Cool Girl after she reveals her plot to the reader over halfway through the book:

Men always say that as the defining compliment, don’t they? She’s a cool girl. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she’s hosting the world’s biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2, because Cool Girls are above all hot. Hot and understanding. Cool Girls never get angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. Go ahead, shit on me, I don’t mind, I’m the Cool Girl.

Men actually think this girl exists. Maybe they’re fooled because so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl. For a long time, Cool Girl offended me. I used to see men—friends, coworkers, strangers—giddy over these awful pretender women, and I’d want to sit these men down and calmly say: You are not dating a woman, you are dating a woman who has watched too many movies written by socially awkward men who’d like to believe that this kind of woman exists and might kiss them.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In short, the Cool Girl in *Gone Girl* is a woman who acts like a man and looks like a supermodel.[[3]](#footnote-3) She does not have the emotional depth or insecurities that complicate women to men, deeming her an ideal female construction for the prevailing “bro-culture” of the modern age. After *Gone Girl’s* David Fincher film adaptation in 2014, the Cool Girl received mass media attention as a revelation of a contemporary female archetype that had gone nameless. Amy’s frustration with the pressure to be a “Cool Girl” resonated with many viewers, and the film’s brilliant rendition of the written monologue sparked widespread debate about the Cool Girl’s presence in modern day film, literature, and more.

Essential to the Cool Girl’s success is her authenticity. In the article “Jennifer Lawrence And The History Of Cool Girls”, journalist Anne Helen Petersen refers to the allure of Cool Girls and what prevent us from—at least initially—hating them: “She’s never polished; she’s always fucking up.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Peterson’s article points out that the Cool Girl is not an entirely new archetype. Indeed, according to Peterson, each era of cinema has had its own “Cool Girls” who woo male audiences and push the boundaries of femininity. Often, these celebrities have faded from the spotlight when they cross the line of acceptable “Cool Girl” behavior and do something which deems them undesirable.[[5]](#footnote-5) But there is something about the modern-day Cool Girl which makes her decidedly different from her predecessors. For one, an increasingly informal society has changed male culture, creating a new form of hyper-masculine male behavior referred to as “bro culture.”[[6]](#footnote-6) The 2012 article, “A Quick and Dirty Tour of Misogynistic Bro Culture,” reflects that “popular culture, especially cultural products aimed at young men, teaches men to be womanizers.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Specifically, the article cites that the pervasiveness of pornography caused by the internet largely contributes to bro-culture, and allows men easy access to porn at an early age. As a result, many men grow up accustomed to the idea of women as sex objects or the subject of fantasy.[[8]](#footnote-8) Other impacts of technology, such as sports networks like ESPN and TV shows like *Entourage,* which facilitate male gatherings and make “bros” an on-screen staple, legitimize the bro behavior. For the Cool Girl, bro-culture presents a new set of criteria which she must meet to be deemed “Cool”. Cool Girls of the modern day must eat like the boys, watch sports like the boys, and be game for the gross and harassing behavior that bros are likely to inflict on her from time to time.

This paper aims to dissect on-screen representations of the Cool Girl and examine how the persona has, due to wild popularity, transitioned from fictional characters to real-world celebrities. Moreover, I intend to explore how the Cool Girl fantasy has sparked a real-world expectation among young men who grew up watching the Cool Girl on-screen. These analyses will ultimately conclude with a projection of the Cool Girl’s future. Ultimately, I want to show that, while the Cool Girl may be marketable, her effortless Cool and Hot persona relies on a sense of authenticity and effortlessness that leashes her to the will of the patriarchy.

**The Cool Girl’s Romantic Comedy Rebirth**

Though, as Peterson points out in her article,[[9]](#footnote-9) the Cool Girl archetype is nothing new, the modern day Cool Girl is in many ways a byproduct of late 90s and early 2000s romantic comedies. Romantic comedies serve as a natural fit for Cool Girl characters, since these women are the ideal objects of male desire and it is easy for men to trip over themselves in attempts to woo the ethereal Cool Girl.

Supposedly the inspiration for Gillian Flynn’s Cool Girl, Mary Jensen from the 1998 romantic comedy [*There’s Something About Mary*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9xVWDl3G2o) may be the inaugural Cool Girl as the archetype is currently understood.[[10]](#footnote-10) Mary, played by Cameron Diaz, is the beautiful, unfussy girl of protagonist Ted’s dreams.[[11]](#footnote-11) In love with Mary since high school, Ted hires a private investigator to find her in adulthood so that he may finally pursue his longtime crush. As the film puts it, Mary from *There’s Something About Mary* is every man’s dream. First and foremost, Mary is played by Diaz, an incredibly attractive former model whose blonde, blue-eyed look makes her a mainstream American beauty. The 1998 *Rolling Stone* film review called Diaz “the babe supreme” who “plays Mary with the beaming sexiness and sharp comic timing of a born star.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Beyond her mega good looks and biting humor, Mary is a Cool Girl down to her constant beer-wielding and interest in watching SportsCenter. She is also successful, working as an orthopedic surgeon. When describing her perfect man, Mary says: “I want a guy who can play 36 holes of golf, and still have enough energy to take Warren and me to a baseball game, eat sausages, and beer, not lite beer, but beer. That’s my ad, print it up.”[[13]](#footnote-13) What’s more, from the beginning Mary has a soft spot for Ted, despite his high school braces and bad haircut. Even when Ted has essentially stalked her in efforts to ignite a romance, Mary is ineffably still charmed. Her willingness to overlook his creepiness is an important aspect of the Cool Girl—she is eternally forgiving about the peculiarities of her suitors.[[14]](#footnote-14) This characteristic likely makes the Cool Girl even more desirable to men watching her on-screen, relinquishing fears of rejection and reducing intimidation.

Mary Jensen is in many ways an ideal, the male-oriented female impossible to dislike. Thematically, she contributes little to the movie outside of her unwavering desirability to the other characters and the audience. Whether it be Ted or another male character fighting for Mary’s attention, she is the star around which the film orbits. While Mary is not unlikeable, her character lacks depth and in turn, she is more a symbol of the ideal woman than an independent agent in the film.

A more developed example of the Cool Girl may be Andie Anderson from [*How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZMGk_Ml1fc)*,* released in 2003.[[15]](#footnote-15) Andie, a magazine writer, decides to a write an article detailing “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” and settles on ultra-masculine businessman Ben Barry to enact her experiment. Ben is likewise using Andie for his own purposes, as part of a bet proving that he can make any woman fall in love with him.[[16]](#footnote-16) The two end up actually falling for one another, despite finding out about each other’s respective motivations for the relationship. Andie differs from Mary in her increased agency and separate storyline. Unlike Mary, Andie’s own desires drive the plot. Still, Andie is in many ways an ideal. She is conventionally beautiful, with the same blonde hair, blue-eyed combination as Mary, and she is smart, funny, thin and successful.; Andie eats burgers and watches sports, and her character seems to be as close to the Cool Girl male fantasy as it gets.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Andie’s plotline revolves around manipulating men to advance her career—a direct departure from the always-agreeable Cool Girl of *There’s Something About Mary*. But it is how Andie enacts her plan that problematizes her “Cool Girl” persona. To “scare” Ben away, Andie acts like a “crazy” girlfriend. Andie buys Ben feminine “cutesy” gifts, pretends to be a vegetarian, names his penis, gifts him a “love plant”, and even buys them a puppy to raise together.[[18]](#footnote-18) By scolding female acts of emotional vulnerability, clinginess, exuberance, and the like, Andie endorses male perceptions of female instability and emotional hysteria. She corroborates male stereotypes about women and separates herself from those she is emulating for her article. In effect, Andie’s article tells women that acting on their emotions will make them unattractive and undesirable to men. An A.V. Club article delineates how the film “takes great pains to establish that the real Andie is a “cool girl” … so we’re free to laugh at her as she does the clingy, needy things “other girls” do to ruin their relationships.”[[19]](#footnote-19) While fake Andie scares Ben away, real Andie draws him in through her bro-y personality. As an audience, Andie’s scare-inducing tactics are a source of comedy, and by laughing at her antics we make women the punchline.[[20]](#footnote-20) The Cool Girl presented in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* is given more agency than in *There’s Something About Mary*, but this freedom is used to put other women down and discourage female behavior that may be annoying, overly-committal, and otherwise unfavorable to male viewers. Andie’s character presents another layer of the Cool Girl which problematizes her portrayal in the public eye: her praise is reliant on public disapproval of other, “less chill” women.

The final, and most complicated, example of a romantic comedy Cool Girl is that of Mila Kunis’s character Rachel Jansen in the 2008 film [*Forgetting Sarah Marshall*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OVTID3Kzag)*.[[21]](#footnote-21)* At the start of the film, protagonist Peter is broken up with by his actress girlfriend Sarah Marshall. Peter creates jingles and background music for Sarah’s show. He’s shown to be lazy, lingering in the spotlight of his famous girlfriend. After the breakup, Peter goes to a resort in Hawaii in an attempt to get over the break up and reinvigorate himself. Rachel is a concierge at the resort. To his surprise, upon checking in Peter discovers that Sarah and her new rock star boyfriend are staying at the same hotel. Rachel, witnessing a confrontation between Peter and Sarah, offers him a suite to stay in and the two quickly become friends. Eventually, Peter falls for Rachel and they end up together. Sarah, on the other hand, realizes that her rock star lover is not suited for her and ends their romance. She pines for Peter to reconsider a relationship with her, but he declines and pursues Rachel instead.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Rachel Jansen is another textbook Cool Girl, with flawless looks, a sharp sense of humor, a low-maintenance attitude, and an inexplicable affinity for down-in-the-dumps Peter. Like Mary from *There’s Something About Mary*, Rachel’s storyline is mostly limited to how she affects Peter. As a GQ article titled “Does Forgetting Sarah Marshall Hold Up?” aptly notes, “Rachel mostly functions at just a tiny notch above ‘plot device,’ but there's nothing for Kunis to do in this movie save for helping Peter realize a series of things about *himself*.”[[23]](#footnote-23) But Rachel’s impact on the movie extends beyond her character as a flat perpetrator of the Cool Girl narrative. Unlike in *There’s Something About Mary* or *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, Forgetting Sarah Marshall* displays more than one object of male desire. Sarah is a foil to Rachel, she has immense professional success and a high-strung attitude that ultimately leads her to break up with low-energy, bad-boyfriend Peter. Through her cool demeanor, Rachel makes Sarah appear emotionally unstable and petty. Though perhaps with good intent, the film puts Sarah and Rachel at odds with each other, ultimately choosing Rachel as the ideal and in turn promoting the Cool Girl at the expense of a woman deemed too “high maintenance”. Sarah is punished for desiring a partner with equal ambition, and Rachel is praised for her more “chill” attitude towards Peter’s laziness.

Mary, Andie, and Rachel all represent Cool Girls who, in one way or another, seek to please men through their idealized personalities and separate themselves from other, “normal” women. They serve as glorified fantasy masked as beautiful, feminine women who think, speak, and sometimes act like men. What’s harmful about the Cool Girl in film is not necessarily her personality alone, nor even her looks; the problem with the Cool Girl is that, through her perfection to men, she rebukes the behavior of other women. If the Cool Girl is setting a male standard of the ideal girlfriend, as these movies suggest, then women should suppress emotional vulnerabilities and personal interests that fall outside of the male comfort zone.

When examining these films, it is also important to analyze the target audience and production team. *There’s Something About Mary,* for instance was written by an entirely male staff.[[24]](#footnote-24) When we consider how Mary is portrayed—as both flat and hyper-idealized—as well as the film’s crude comedy style, it is likely that the film is intended for a primarily male audience as well. In one scene, which is still considered shocking by many, Mary mistakes Ted’s semen (which was stuck on his ear from a masturbation mishap) for hair gel, and proceeds to use it to style her hair.[[25]](#footnote-25) Indeed, a recent Entertainment Weekly review of the film referred to it as a “male-centric rom-com.”[[26]](#footnote-26) As a film for men, Mary’s idealization serves less as a reprimand of other women, and more as a dream for male audiences. The movie’s male protagonist Ted, like Peter in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall,* is supposed to represent a normal if not underwhelming man. If we examine the film from Laura Mulvey’s lens in *Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema,* Ted may be intended to present male viewers with a mirror image of themselves.[[27]](#footnote-27) By extension, his successful pursuit of Mary allows male viewers to not only fantasize about her as an ideal of beauty and personality, but also as a woman attainable to the average man.

On the other hand, *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days,* which has both a male and female protagonist, was written by both men and women.[[28]](#footnote-28) The male protagonist, played my Matthew McConaughey, is exceptionally handsome and successful.[[29]](#footnote-29) Like Andie, he presents an ideal—possibly intended to please the film’s female audience as an object of viewing pleasure.[[30]](#footnote-30) As a film accessible to men and women, though perhaps skewed towards women, Andie’s “crazy girlfriend” behavior tells female viewers how not to act and male viewers what not to desire. *Forgetting Sarah Marshall,* though written only by Jason Segel (who also plays protagonist Peter), is likewise less of a gender-targeted film than *There’s Something About Mary.[[31]](#footnote-31)* Again, the film presents two “types” of women (though, unlike *10 Days,* it manifests these types in two separate characters), and it punishes the woman who scorns the male protagonist by deeming her undesirable.

It appears that, to men, the Cool Girl may be a means of subduing the threat or intimidation of women with complex emotions and interests by flattening her personality to be a reflection of his own, and then fetishizing her to reduce the intimidation that could be caused by female usurpation of masculine traits. To women, the Cool Girl is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, women may admire the Cool Girl for her physical beauty and unwavering male approval and attention. On the other hand, the Cool Girl’s basically unattainable personality and physicality may make women watching feel insecure in themselves, and may even encourage them to tame the animate aspects of their personality that are not present in the Cool Girl’s. While the Cool Girl’s functionality in movies may limit the impact of these effects, we run into the trouble when the Cool Girl enters the real world.

**The Cool Girl Manifested in Celebrity**

Cool Girls have a unique duality on and off screen. Due to their likeable status on-screen, some Cool Girl actresses and performers have assumed the role in their off-screen personas as well. Many of these women are extremely well-liked, and seen as the authentic “relatable girl” celebrities that Hollywood has long been lacking. While Cool Girls may appear to be universally likeable, response to celebrities who emulate the archetype suggest that being a Cool Girl is more of a balancing act than a recipe for success.

For most, actress Jennifer Lawrence is the epitome of a real life Cool Girl. Lawrence, a white, blue-eyed beauty, has built much of her reputation on a “chill” personality. Lawrence’s ascent to mega-stardom began after her appearance in 2010 film *Winter’s Bone.[[32]](#footnote-32)* She received an Oscar nomination for her performance, and soon after was chosen to play Katniss Everdeen in the film adaptation of the bestselling book series *The Hunger Games.* She was on the cover of the *Vogue* September Issue in 2013, wherein her interview described a girl with unbeatable humor and a down-to-earth perspective.[[33]](#footnote-33) A 2018 Anne Helen Petersen article titled “Jennifer Lawrence is a Prisoner of Her Cool Girl Image” marks this era as her peak of popularity.[[34]](#footnote-34) During this period Lawrence, “chugged champagne, she tripped at the Oscars, she talked about butt plugs; she was hot and chill, dirty-mouthed but cherubic — a living manifestation of Gillian Flynn’s conception of the “cool girl,” first articulated in her 2012 book *Gone Girl*.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Interestingly, Lawrence did not even cultivate this image as a result of her film portrayals.[[36]](#footnote-36) She likewise did not always act the Cool Girl part in real life but, as Petersen points out, the moments of Cool Girl-ness were what the public chose to accentuate when sorting out her brash personality.[[37]](#footnote-37) Every fall at an awards show or burp in an interview became “GIFS, and headlines, and proof of the authenticity of the image.”[[38]](#footnote-38) To solidify this image and the media-frenzy it produced, Lawrence needed to ride the wave and continue to provide Cool Girl content for the world to lap up.

Yet, Lawrence’s image upkeep ultimately led to the disintegration of the Cool Girl’s main charm: her authenticity. The conception of this suspicion was the same gaff that initially endeared her to the American public: falls at award shows.[[39]](#footnote-39) After [falling on her way up the stage at the 2013 Oscars,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYjnRQu1a9I) Lawrence [fell again](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e28sJGvFpto) on the red carpet at the same event the following year. A 2015 article by *The Cut*, *Is Jennifer Lawrence Faking Her Falls? A Truther Speaks Out*, described a conspiracy, sparked by comments by *30 Seconds to Mars* front man Jared Leto, that Lawrence’s falls were a fake ploy for attention. From there, other aspects of her personality began to crumble in the public eye. Quickly, her crude sense of humor came under fire as crass and to many, just plain rude. A story which Jennifer [originally told in 2013](https://youtu.be/cfSTxFhdTZs) about using sacred Hawaiian rocks to itch her butt received laughs the first time, but [came under fire in 2016 as highly disrespectful.[[40]](#footnote-40)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvl80iBaRqE&feature=youtu.be) Within a few years, one of Hollywood’s most well-liked actresses had garnered as many—if not more—haters than fans. [Blogs](http://yourfaveisproblematic.tumblr.com/post/45661326649/jennifer-lawrence) began highlighting the offensive and unacceptable aspects of Lawrence’s career that had been previously overlooked as “quirky”. Former fans turned their backs on the celebrity, and [made their reasoning known](https://onmogul.com/stories/the-rise-and-fall-of-jennifer-lawrence) to other fans. Even other celebrities began mocking Lawrence for her overly-cultivated, inauthentic “relatable” personality. In 2016, [Ariana Grande impersonated Jennifer Lawrence on an episode of SNL](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMOKevIBwDs), mimicking the actress’s low voice and emphasizing her “normalcy”.

The “downfall” of Jennifer Lawrence’s public image demonstrates the undue scrutiny that women face in the public eye. A fascinating Cool Girl comparison is the case of Mila Kunis. Kunis, whose Cool Girl status is well-known, has not faced nearly the same criticism as Lawrence. For one, Kunis frequently plays Cool Girl characters in movies. Unlike Lawrence, much of Kunis’ public identity may be attributed to her movie portrayals. Outside of *Forgetting Sarah Marshall,* Kunis played another Cool Girl in the 2011 romantic comedy *No Strings Attached.* She also frequently plays characters in media meant largely for male audiences. She played Mark Wahlberg’s girlfriend in the raunchy, male-dominated film *TED,* and has voiced Marge on the equally crass comedic TV show *Family Guy* since 1999.[[41]](#footnote-41) It is possible that these roles have helped foster Kunis’s “chill image” without requiring the actress to promote the personality to the public in the aggressive style Lawrence employs. And Mila has cleverly harnessed this amassed image to further her career—in 2016, [she became the spokesgirl for Jim Beam bourbon](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewcJf-5pmWQ). The campaign shows Kunis drinking with men and sends a message: Cool Girls drink bourbon. Additionally, Kunis is a less decorated actress prone to taking less serious roles. Lawrence has won an Oscar and three Golden Globes for her work, and was the leading role in a blockbuster franchise—*The Hunger Games*.[[42]](#footnote-42) Her professional success may contribute to her heightened criticism, and not only because she is more frequently in the spotlight. As a woman in possession of great, public success, threatened critics are likely to do everything to limit this power and put her down.

The popularity of the Cool Girl in real life is troublesome, as many of these women feed into patriarchal pressure in their quest for good publicity. As fact instead of fiction, these celebrities actualize the “existence” of the Cool Girl, a persona that’s allure is highly linked to its unattainability. These celebrities, whether they genuinely eat pizza or not, tend to adhere to traditional standards of feminine beauty while touting a rejection of all female behavior which is not “chill”. In addition to isolating those who feel unable to maintain the even-tempered “chillness” of a Cool Girl at all time, the Cool Girl’s tendency to adhere to traditional standards of beauty may further isolate those whose looks do not fit the well-manicured, classically beautiful, and prevalently white image of the Cool Girl.

That being said, does the Cool Girl deserve to be hated for trying to be liked? I’m not so sure. Yes, Jennifer Lawrence’s “Cool Girl” persona was admittedly contrived and at times blatantly rude, but should we scorn her for seeing what the public responded to, and riding the wave? This is the unique problem of the Cool Girl: she is so likeable and idealized in film, that women can shrug her off as a fantasy. But when we make the public believe that, indeed, this perfect woman does exist, we manifest male obsession in a way that is dangerous. Inevitably, the Cool Girl will falter, likely in an attempt to use her Cool factor for self-promotion, and reveal that she’s not as authentic as we previously believed. Perhaps the celebrity Cool Girl cautions us that, outside of fiction, these girls are only allowed to be so successful. Their likeability is reliant on not grabbing for attention in ways that make them seem inauthentic or, god forbid, ambitious. The second that a Cool Girl ceases to be effortless, it seems that she also ceases to be cool.

**The Cult of the Cool Girl**

While the celebrity and fictional Cool Girls are not necessarily harmful in and of themselves, they seem to cultivate a male obsession that promotes unrealistic standards and misogyny. Take, for example, the popular blog [*Total Frat Move*](https://totalfratmove.com/).[[43]](#footnote-43)

*Total Frat Move*, or *TFM,* appeals to young college men in fraternities, providing weekly fraternity stories and “TFM Babes of the Day” through both their website and Instagram. *TFM* has largely embraced the Cool Girl as a female standard. In short, women who act the part of the Cool Girl are accepted and praised by the blog, while those who are too needy or unwilling to throw back a beer are admonished. The 2013 *TFM* article “50 Ways To Be The Perfect College Girlfriend”, for instance, cites criteria including, “3. Be able to shotgun a beer at a reasonable pace … 5. Don’t be an emotional drunk. … 10. Understand the rules of football,” and the ever-so-charming number 45: “We will never be Channing Tatum. Deal with it.”[[44]](#footnote-44) These recommendations deeply reflect the impact of Cool Girl archetypes on the modern male psyche. Seeing the ideal both on and off-screen, it appears that some men have subsequently molded their expectations for a partner around the qualities that make Cool Girls so uniquely attractive. Number 5, for instance, reflects the admonishment of emotional female behavior that Andie Anderson’s character in *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* endorses.[[45]](#footnote-45) Number 45 displays the hypocrisy of men who idolize the Cool Girl: we want you to be effortless and adhere to x, x, and x standard, but don’t even try to change us.

Other male-media sites send similar messages. The extremely popular website and media company Barstool Sports, for instance, has a selection of eight, nearly all-white, thin and conventionally attractive girls permitted to write for the website. These women are the Cool Girls—between their looks and willingness to write articles on sports, they are the idealized women of the modern-day bro. Their section, titled “Barstool Chicks”, includes bits such as the “Call Her Daddy” podcast, which corroborates their sexualization by male readers and staff members. One [Barstool Chicks article](https://www.barstoolsports.com/chicks/sean-mcbae-continues-to-win-on-and-off-the-field), titled “Sean ‘McBae’ Continues To Win On And Off The Field” talks about the “smokeshow” girlfriend of an NFL coach, linking revealing photos from her Instagram and saying that the coach has everything, including “an absolute rocket to go home to every night.”[[46]](#footnote-46) In these instances, the Cool Girl is complicit in the objectification of other women, and contributes happily to a misogynistic male culture.

**The Future of the Cool Girl**

My argument is not to say that there is anything inherently wrong with women who enjoy activities and hobbies typically enjoyed by men, nor that they should silence these interests in favor of being more relatable to female viewers. The problem I’m suggesting is not so much related to the Cool Girl personality itself, but to the way it is packaged to viewership that often denies the audience access to the Cool Girl’s moments of emotional vulnerability or other “flaws” that may make them less likeable/attractive to men. In trying to retain ultimate likeability and admiration of their viewership, the Cool Girl inconspicuously markets herself as authentic, genuine, and relatable, while also hiding certain aspects of her personality that may make her appear less “chill” to male fans. Though the Cool Girl seemed initially harmless in romantic comedies like *There’s Something About Mary,* her perpetuation of a male ideal has spread off-screen and altered the way some men perceive women they view online, work with, and even date.

It seems that some of the public has picked up on the infeasibility of the “Cool Girl” in real life. Much of this response, however, has dealt with the problematic nature of the Cool Girl by attacking women who often received the title as being “fake”, “annoying”, and “rude”, using their Cool Girl status as a means of covering their “gross” and “mean-girl” personalities. This response is certainly not the answer to the problem of the “Cool Girl”, and simply tears women apart for attempting to achieve success through what was, at one point, a very successful career narrative. Instead of tearing these women apart, we should open dialogue to discuss how the Cool Girl can maintain her cool while also being more honest with her viewership. Though intellectual and emotional openness may not define “cool” for male viewers, through increased honesty and discussion, we may be able to alter this narrative in a positive way by creating more accessible on-screen and real-life female figureheads.

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