

I wanted to relate the concept of gender inequality and double standards to a modern context. We have seen how injustices from gender roles play out in many of the texts we have read and also in the lives of the authors themselves (for example, even though most women wrote just as well if not better than men, they were still considered as being less than). And so, taking on the “memory” style of writing, I penned a small short story that explores the dichotomy between how women and men are treated through the use of the word bossy and the long-term implications that this can have on the former.

### **“Bossy.”**

I can’t remember the first time I was called bossy. I know that my report cards often held that word with “is hard-working and independent BUT…” often coming right before it.

I remember walking into third grade at the start of a unit, the pulsing sense of excitement in the air as Miss Cherry announced the new seating plan. I’d scan the classroom, my gaze landing on my best friend staring back at me. We’d cross our fingers and hope that we would be sat next to each other. We’d move into our new table groups and Miss Cherry would ask for each to choose a team leader. My hand shot into the air. I looked around at my teammates – there was no other hand. I became team leader.

I divided the tasks asking if anyone preferred one thing over another and delegated the rest. At one point in science class our volcano exploded. I told Marsha to grab some paper towels so we could clean the mess. Miss Cherry pulled me aside;

I was being too bossy.

I went back to my table. Behind me, I heard Will – Team Two’s leader: “We’re going to paint this red. David - get some towels, Clara grab that test tube.”

Miss Cherry walked up to him: “Great job, Will! Excellent delegating!”

As I got older, the word, (bossy) changed, but the implication stayed the same. At the dinner table debates about women’s rights, often once something like:

“The reasoning for women not being in positions of power because they are too emotional due to their hormones is ridiculous! Precisely because we have learned how to control our emotions is why would be great candidates for the job!

“You’re being too passionate.”

“Passionate?! I'm simply highlighting the fact that most people in power - bosses - are men, because women aren't considered adequate for those opportunities. And even if they prove that they are and work the *exact. same. job.* as a man, they are often paid less for it!

“I know and your argument has merit, but you can't say it so aggressively because otherwise people won't want to listen.”

Later that week, I watched as Will claimed the “Best Delegate” award for our Model United Nations conference. He had argued that more needed to be done to minimize the gender pay gap, his fist banging on the podium and words echoing around the auditorium.

The judge's called him driven and passionate.

A couple of months ago at work when we were dividing responsibilities between group leaders for our next event, I remember telling my mom:

“I really want to take charge of operations.”

“If you want to - ask for it, fight for it,” she said.

“But I know Sasha also wants to and I want to be a team player,” I replied.

“You’re always giving up what you want for others. When is it your turn to get what you want?” She asked.

“I don't know...”

“You have to be more assertive,” my mom said.

I let Sasha get operations.

...

I can't remember when my report cards changed, but I wish they still said Bossy.