

# Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

## File 16 Coming-of-age stories

Coming-of-age patterns p. 185

Today, I want to talk to you guys about my favorite genre, my favorite movie genre, and that is coming-of-age movies. I don't know why coming-of-age movies. I just love them so much. I feel so identified with them. I don't know, I get reminded of my past self, and I think it's because I'm such a nostalgic person, that's why I really love these types of movies about teenagers, about their struggles, about their, you know, how they're growing up. My dream is to one day make a film, a coming-of-age film.

And since I mentioned Lady Bird a lot, let's talk about Lady Bird. If you haven't seen Lady Bird yet, it came out last year and it was probably my favourite movie of the year last year.

Lady Bird is directed by Greta Gerwig and it stars Saoirse Ronan,

Christine, AKA Lady Bird, as she likes to call herself, is a teenager who is kind of rebellious. She goes to this Catholic, or Christian, school and her mother is just so controlling and overly critical of her. Everything she does, in the eyes of her mother, everything she does is wrong. All she wants is to graduate and move to New York and go to college there. But of course, her mom is not keen on the idea.

In this movie, Lady Bird experiences a lot of firsts. She has her first relationship. It deals with different friendships, her going to prom, her relationship with her mom. Her relationship with her mom is probably one of the realest ones I've seen on a movie. So that's what I really, really loved about this movie. I also loved how they gave her pimples, because that's something we don't see a lot in coming-of-age movies. They always have, like, perfect hair and makeup and fashion sense and everything. That part – of the makeup and the depiction of a real teenager – I really liked that.

So if you still haven't watched it, you know what to do.

## From girl to lady p. 186

Middle-class girls needed a new kind of education for the new kind of life that they were leading. Once ideas about middle-class gentility start to take hold from the turn of the XIXth century onwards, clearly, girls are leading a different kind of life. They are not helping their mothers with the housework, they now have servants to do that. Their father's business will be several miles away from the home, so they're not going to be helping there. They're at home all day. They need a new set of skills to prepare them for the life ahead. The sole aim really for a middle-class woman now is to get married to a man. Hopefully one who is solvent, who's healthy and who her parents approve of. So she's got to make herself attractive. And that means learning particular kinds of accomplishments, the kind of accomplishments that upper-class girls have always been taught, but now middle-class girls are being taught too. Typically, it's learning conversational French. It's learning how to play the piano. Some dancing might be involved. There's also more subtle things. She's going to go into a world where she has to learn how to behave and how to manage her physical presence. How to stand upright, not slouch. How close do you stand to other people? What happens when you need to be excused, when you need the bathroom, how do you ask for that?

## Growing up as untouchables p. 189

**Urmi Basu** (founder of the NGO “New Light”) - The children that you see at our back are... they really are at the bottom of the caste structure: children who come from the Untouchable community. At that level, you cannot move up.

**America Ferrera** (American actress) - Like there's nothing you can do? I mean you can't...

**Urmi Basu** - You can go to school, you can get an education, you can become the Prime Minister, you can become the President, you can become the astronaut, but you cannot change your caste position. That's a completely watertight caste position.

**America** - And in reality, what are the chances of, like, these kids getting an education, and a job that isn't determined to be an Untouchable job?

**Urmi** - Very little because some jobs which would not be taken up by the upper-caste Hindus, were designated for, for the Dalit people or the Untouchables, like working at the crematorium, like working as a morgue attendant in government hospitals, working as a hangman in the prisons. Those are jobs that won't be done by upper caste-Hindus. Traditionally, the government has reservations to those jobs. Those openings are kept for people who are from the Untouchable community. It works in a very, very negative way because when we start to talk about education and empowerment, or empowerment through education, many of these young kids, especially the boys they think, “Oh well when I'm sixteen I will get a government job, and I will get a salary of 12,000 rupees. OK I don't need to go to the university, I don't need to get a higher degree.” But what kind of job? They don't even think it is possible for them to go to the university and, and be a professor, and our effort is to make sure all those kids finish high school, they go to the university and they have the possibility of working, getting other jobs.

**America** - And for these girls, like, what kinds of jobs await them, like, if they don't get an education? What kind of jobs could they hope to do?

**Urmi** - The girls would become housewives: they would be married off by the time they're sixteen or seventeen, though the marriageable age is 18. And then they

would get married to somebody from the same caste, because it's all very, very caste-bound.

Hip hop star coming up p. 190

**Interviewer:** You said you always wanted to write a hip-hop story. Why?

**Angie Thomas:** Well, you know, for me growing up hip-hop was how I saw myself. I didn't see myself a lot in books, you know. As a kid, I loved books, but as a teenager I hated it because I rarely saw books about me, you know. Like, *Twilight* was big when I was a kid. And I have nothing against *Twilight*. But when I was a teenager, I was, like, "My mom would not let me date a 300-year-old vampire." So I couldn't connect with it. So you know...

**Interviewer:** Good Mom!

**Angie Thomas:** So ... But ... But rappers told the story I saw myself in. So that, for me, I wanted to talk to those kids who also see themselves in hip-hop. So often they're called "reluctant readers". And there's no such thing as a reluctant reader. They're just kids who haven't found the right book.

**Interviewer:** You said you're not trying to create rappers, you're trying to create speakers. What do you mean

**Angie Thomas:** You know, I don't want kids to pick up *On the Come Up* and think 'Oh now I have to go and be a rapper. That's what I'm supposed to do.' There's nothing wrong with that if that's what you want to do. But I hope they walk away understanding that they have a voice and to use it — even when people judge you for how you use it — to speak up and speak out, you know. Especially young black kids, so often they're criticized for how they say things as opposed to what they're saying. And I want them to know that you're fine just the way you are, continue to speak up.