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# THE HIDDEN PRESSURES BEHIND YOUNG GIRLS AND MAKEUP



By Marissa Tekalign

Makeup has long been a tool for self-expression, creativity, and personal choice. But when young girls begin experimenting with lip gloss and mascara, the question arises: is this just harmless fun, or is there something deeper at play?

From an early age, girls are bombarded with messages that tie their worth to their appearance. Advertisements, movies, TV shows, and social media influencers all reinforce the idea that beauty isn't just a bonus—it's essential for success, confidence, and even love. Research has found that by the age of six, children already associate attractiveness with intelligence and kindness. That's how deeply these beauty standards are ingrained. Introducing kids to full-face makeup at a young age does more than encourage creativity—it subtly teaches them the capitalist and patriarchal values that fuel the beauty industry. Worth billions globally, this industry thrives by convincing people, especially women, that they are never quite "enough" as they are. Makeup companies capitalize on insecurities, selling products as the solution. When girls start wearing makeup before they fully understand who they are, they internalize the idea that they must change themselves to be seen as beautiful, worthy, or acceptable.

But this issue extends beyond makeup—it's part of a broader problem: the male gaze. Film theorist Laura Mulvey introduced this concept to explain how media often depict women as objects of male desire rather than as complex, independent individuals. Growing up in a world that prioritizes a woman's appearance over her ideas and achievements leads young girls to believe that being "pretty" is the key to being valued.

This early exposure to objectification creates a cycle of self-objectification, where girls begin viewing their bodies from an external perspective—judging themselves based on how they appear to others rather than on their abilities. Studies consistently link self-objectification to lower self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and an increased risk of eating disorders. Alarmingly, research also shows that when women focus excessively on their appearance, it affects their cognitive performance. This pressure to conform to beauty standards isn't just superficial—it has real consequences on women's success and self-perception.

Ironically, many women later reclaim makeup as a tool for empowerment, creativity, and self-expression. Beauty influencers and artists have challenged narrow beauty ideals, using makeup in bold and unconventional ways. But the reality remains: the pressure to start wearing makeup young is still deeply tied to societal expectations, not just personal choice.



This raises an important question: Can makeup ever truly be a neutral choice in a world where women are judged so harshly by their looks? While some argue that wearing makeup is a personal decision, it's difficult to ignore that this decision does not happen in a vacuum. Society rewards women who conform to beauty standards and punishes those who don't, making it challenging to discern whether makeup is a form of self-expression or just another symptom of ingrained social conditioning. The pressure to look a certain way doesn't just fade after childhood. Girls who grow up believing their worth is tied to their appearance often carry that mindset into adulthood. Studies show that being exposed to beauty standards early on can lead to body dissatisfaction, perfectionism, and even a greater likelihood of getting cosmetic procedures later in life. And with social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, kids are now seeing these unrealistic beauty ideals at an even younger age.

But the problem isn't just about self-image—it's about everything else that gets pushed aside. When so much energy goes into looking a certain way, there's less time to explore passions, develop skills, or build confidence in things that have nothing to do with appearance. For young girls, this can mean growing up in a world that constantly tells them their value is skin-deep.

This isn't about banning makeup or saying self-care is bad. It's about asking why beauty still carries so much weight in defining a person's worth—and how that affects the way girls see themselves.

Parents, teachers, and media creators all have a role to play in changing this. One way is by encouraging girls to see makeup as a form of self-expression rather than an expectation. Just as important is making sure they see diverse examples of beauty—different body types, skin tones, and styles that don't all fit into one narrow mold. Most importantly, we need to start talking to girls early about self-worth, confidence, and individuality so they grow up knowing they're valuable for who they are, not just how they look.

If we push back against these ingrained ideas and broaden the definition of beauty, we can help create a world where girls feel free to embrace makeup—or not—on their own terms. Instead of growing up believing they have to look a certain way to be loved, successful, or powerful, they can write their own stories. And those stories will be about so much more than just appearances. 4

# CONCLUSIONS ON CLIFFHANGERS

By Cally Gillard

Let's face it—authors and filmmakers will always want you to buy their next book or tune in for their next series. And one of the most effective ways to ensure that? Cliffhangers. But why do they use them so often? What makes them such a powerful storytelling tool?

First and foremost, cliffhangers are designed to increase suspense. Writers want to keep audiences on the edge of their seats, eagerly anticipating what happens next. By ending a book or episode with an unresolved conflict or shocking revelation, they create an irresistible pull that leaves readers and viewers desperate for more. This suspense makes audiences more likely to purchase the next book in a series or continue watching the next episode. And, of course, more engagement means more revenue.

Sometimes, cliffhangers are necessary because the story is simply too long to fit into a single book or series. Rather than rushing through the plot, authors use cliffhangers to break up the narrative at strategic points. This ensures the pacing remains smooth and gives each instalment room to develop naturally. In turn, this also feeds back into the suspense factor—spreading the story out builds anticipation and deepens the audience's investment.



Beyond just keeping a story interesting, cliffhangers also play into a psychological principle known as the Zeigarnik Effect. This concept suggests that people are more likely to remember incomplete or interrupted tasks rather than completed ones. When a book or episode ends unresolved, the audience feels a mental itch to find out what happens next. This fear of missing out (FOMO) is one of the strongest motivators to continue reading or watching—cliffhangers are, in essence, the ultimate FOMO trigger. However, while cliffhangers are beneficial for creators, they can be frustrating for audiences. If the gap between installments is too long, people may lose interest and move on to something new. By the time the next book or episode is released, they may have forgotten key details or even lost their emotional connection to the story.

Interestingly, though, this can still work in an author's favour. If audiences want to refresh their memory, they might rewatch previous episodes or reread earlier books, generating even more engagement and sales. In that sense, even audience frustration can end up being profitable. At its core, the use of cliffhangers is about more than just storytelling—it's about strategy. Writers use them to build suspense, pace their narratives, and keep audiences emotionally hooked. And, of course, the financial incentives are undeniable: more anticipation means more readers, viewers, and sales. But while leaving the audience wanting more is key, creators must strike a careful balance. Wait too long, and they risk losing their audience entirely. Get it just right, and they'll keep people coming back for more—again and again.

# THE SILENT DROPOUT: WHY TEENAGE GIRLS ARE LEAVING SPORT - AND HOW WE CAN CHANGE IT

By Cara Bell

Sport plays a key role in so many people's lives, it has been proven that it not only improves physical health, but mental health too. However, in recent years, research has found that the number of teenage girls 'falling out of love' with sport is at a concerning rate. In 2022, Youth Sport Trust said that nearly 40% of girls stop playing sport when they begin Secondary school, and the BBC found that the number of girls who said they enjoy PE decreased significantly from 74% in 2016 to 59% in 2023. This raises the question- why are girls dropping out of sport?

By the age of 14, girls are dropping out of sports at two times the rate of boys and over two-thirds of teenage girls have stopped playing sport by the time they are 16 and 17.

There are so many reasons that girls drop out of sports, for example, a fear of being judged, body image, low self-esteem and puberty. Many girls also feel that they aren't motivated enough to carry on playing sports as they get older. In 2021, the BBC found that 25% of those who stopped playing sports said they stopped because they didn't feel encouraged to carry on, leading to more and more girls discontinuing participation in sport.

Gender stereotypes have also been proven to have a large impact on girls in sport. Women in Sport found that "Only 30% of parents think playing sport is very important for their daughters compared to 41% of parents for their son." We know that parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's beliefs and attitudes as they grow up. This proves that even if they are unaware it is happening, parents' perception of sports can be passed on to their daughters, leading them to believe that it is less important for them compared to boys.

After the Lionesses won the UEFA Women's EURO 2022, there was a huge rise in the number of girls participating in football and the amount of people watching women's football rose significantly, in fact, Women's Super League attendances increased by 200% in 2022 along with Women's Championship attendances increasing by 85%. With this being said, why is it that still so many teenagers do not or no longer attend sports clubs?



*"Definitely a much bigger drop off from teenage girls than boys, especially in years 10 and 11. Confidence/ considered 'it's not cool' socially. It is improving now because there are a lot more female role models. There is more support now. There is less of a recognised pathway for girls in sport so they feel there is less point in following a sport through outside of school"*



I spoke to a Year 10 student at Meadowhead about her views on the subject. She said "I have noticed- being a girl who plays football- that a lot of girls tend to quit their sport during teenage years." She then explained how currently, there are 3 divisions for her age group compared to 4/5/6 for the younger girls. She also commented "In my opinion, I think this happens because during your teenage years you may become more self-conscious of yourself and may be embarrassed of doing your sport"

Another female Y10 student observed "There's been a noticeable drop in Year 10 students playing sports compared to Year 7. This decrease could be due to a few reasons, like the increased schoolwork and pressure that comes with higher year groups. As students grow older, their interests often shift, and they might start focusing on other activities or hobbies. Additionally, some Year 10 students might not feel as excited about team sports anymore, which can lead to fewer of them participating. Overall, it seems that a combination of academic demands and changing priorities is affecting sports involvement at this age."

Interview with a female teacher:  
Did you feel like you had less opportunities as a girl in sport growing up?

- Yes, definitely. There were a lot less clubs in school and locally. Even a lot less female PE staff in school to offer female sports.

From a teachers perspective, have you noticed girls dropping out of sport more than boys? Why do you think this is?

- Definitely a much bigger drop off from teenage girls than boys, especially in years 10 and 11. Confidence/ considered 'it's not cool' socially. It is improving now because there are a lot more female role models. There is more support now. There is less of a recognised pathway for girls in sport so they feel there is less point in following a sport through outside of school

At Meadowhead, in Year 10, students change from doing two hours of PE each week to one hour. This may make you wonder- does school do enough to encourage students to participate in sport?

Beginning in September 2024, Meadowhead became the first school South Yorkshire to offer a pathway for young female footballers with their Girls Football Scholarship program. This opportunity has allowed students to carry on their studies alongside football training, creating a new way for girls to continue sport without it getting in the way of their education. However, this is for football only, meaning that students who play other sports do not get this opportunity with their sport. So, what can Meadowhead do to help girls play other sports throughout their teenage years?

In summer 2025, there are many women's sports events to look forward to such as, the Women's Euros hosted in Switzerland, where the lionesses hope to defend their winning title and the Women's Rugby World Cup which will be hosted in England with hopes that it will inspire even more girls to participate in rugby and other sports.

# FROM PAGE TO SCREEN: THE CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS OF BOOK-TO-FILM ADAPTATIONS

By Izzy Harvey

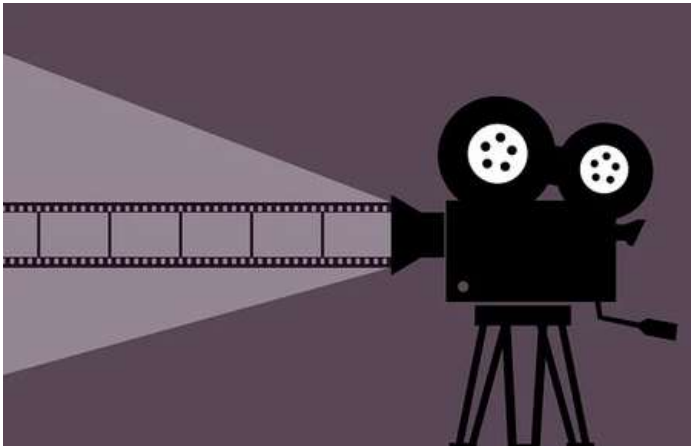
Few things are as thrilling as a book that keeps you up late at night, turning page after page. However, what happens when that beloved book is brought to life on the big screen? The world of book-to-film adaptations has in the past and I believe always will spark endless debate as filmmakers attempt to match the vivid worlds readers have pictured and to make it an exhilarating experience on the screen.

People worldwide don't just read books but experience a new world unlike their own while enjoying an exciting storyline which is why such a vast audience can feel so passionate about the cinematic adaptations. Book-to-film adaptations have been around for decades and they hold such an importance to many as it often provides a wider audience the opportunity to discover and engage in the original source material. However, the task is easier said than done as there are often high expectations for directors, producers and screenwriters to live up to everyone's imaginations by creating a visual world of wonder that gives justice to the books that many know and love. Although the adaptation and filming process can be a daunting task it does also come with its worthwhile rewards but not after many challenges to overcome when producing these books as movies first.

These challenges involve condensing the story, visualizing the story in a way that makes sense on screen and developing the characters through the film. After some research I have discovered one of the biggest problems audiences feel are 'wrong' with the film is the moments and scenes that are not included in the book, and this is due to the condensing of the book to make the film around 2 hours long. This means that film producers must think about the storyline and film makers must carefully select the most important parts of the book to include in the movie, while also ensuring that the story makes sense and flows well. Another issue faced by casting directors and film producers is staying true to the original material. In many cases it can be hard to recreate such intricate scenery to match the dreamlike image created in many fantasy books. This problem can then result in sets looking different and not being true to the original source and even disrupting the flow of the storyline as they don't fully match up. On the other hand, if the sets are created in a detailed fashion, it can work well for transforming the imagination into real visuals for people to resonate with and enjoy. An example of a films that do this particularly well is 'The Hobbit' films, given they had such a large budget they used visual effects and big set designs to help bring audiences into this new mythical world they had enjoyed reading about. In terms of staying true to the storyline material meaning not deviating too far from the book's plotline, characters or themes again 'The Lord of The Rings' and the 'Harry Potter' series are in favour with a vast audience. Even while making some changes such as scenes not being included these films are still loved and treasured by readers as well as viewers for taking what has been written and bringing it to life as closely as possible to the books.

Over the years, we have seen many successful and unsuccessful adaptations of books into films and there have been many cases where the film industry has delivered a memorable and classic film to go hand in hand with its books inspiration. Through some research I have discovered some of the most popular and memorable movies of all time are based on books, such as "The Lord of the Rings," "The Silence of the Lambs", "Pride and Prejudice" and "The Godfather". For an example, on 'Rotten Tomatoes' 'The Silence of The Lambs' has received a rating of 95% in both the rotten tomatoes tomatoreader and popcornmeter. In addition, one of the top critics 'Scott Tobias' who writes for the AV Club reviews 'The Lord of The Rings' film as being: "An enthusiastic visionary set loose on one of the biggest playgrounds ever constructed, Jackson brings more personality to the series' first instalment, The Fellowship of The Ring, than typically seeps into a franchise of this magnitude". The Lord of The Rings trilogy succeeded because of its faithfulness to the original story, stunning visuals, and strong character development.

In contrast there have been occasions when the cinematic version just does not hit the mark and leaves audiences disappointed with the way their beloved book has been produced. A few adaptations that have failed to meet audience expectations, are as follows: "The Dark Tower," "The Cat in the Hat," and "Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief." By again looking at the statistics of these films we can better grasp the thoughts of the audience and how the critics have accessed these films. 'Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief' has only received a 48% on the tomatoreader which corresponds with the reviews of critics whereas the popcornmeter which shows the audience reviews is only standing at 53% which shows the anticlimax experienced by readers when viewing this film.



Also, 'The Dark Tower' was reviewed by top critic, Larushka Ivan- Zadeh for the Metro Newspaper and she stated, "Not so much a stinker of a movie as a bafflingly incomplete one, The Dark Tower has presumably been inflicted with so many cuts it's like watching a 95-minute trailer". This furthermore shows that The Dark Tower faced criticism for straying too far from the original source material overall leaving fans disappointed.

Overall, the adaptation of books to film shows a complex and skilful process that connects the cinematic and literary worlds through many challenges and barriers. If the challenges are overcome and performed well the film will triumph in many ways such as the audience reviews and the likeness to the book. The significance and impact of book to screen adaptations lies in their ability to transport and move audiences of all ages. The age-old appeal of book-to-film adaptations shows the true power of storytelling through literature and the big screen. If it's in the seats of a cinema or in the pages of a book these entrancing stories continue to inspire, connect and captivate audiences across the world.

# "A COMPLETE UNKNOWN: TIMOTHEE CHALAMET'S BOLD TAKE ON BOB DYLAN (AND WHY IT ACTUALLY WORKS)"

By Sam Banks

New York, 1960's.

Enter a young, completely unknown, Bob Dylan played by Timothee Chalamet and directed by James Marigold, adapted from the 2015 book 'Dylan Goes Electric' by Elijah Wood's; about Dylan's adventure from his early folk days to his controversial switch to electric.

And the truth? I wanted to hate it.

I mean, who does Timothee Chalamet think he is, playing The Bob Dylan? Singing Bob Dylan's songs? It's not that I dislike Timothée—though I can't say I'm not a little jealous of his good looks and fanbase—but c'mon, who gave him the confidence to think he could play the Bob Dylan?

But the truth is, I was wrong. In fact, perhaps this is the Bob Dylan fan in me, but 'A Complete Unknown' may in fact be one of my favourite movies of the year, and one of the few music biopics worth watching amidst the all the slop that's been released recently.

The film begins in the early 60's, with Dylan's slow rise to fame through his folk songs, and ends with his infamous 1965 Newport Concert, in which he made his bold switch to electrical music. Throughout the movie we see his troubled relationships with fellow musician Joan Baez (played by Monica Barbado) and Sylvia Russo (played by Elle Fanning), who was based on Dylan's 'muse' Suze Rotolo, whose name was changed on his personal request.

Each actress does a fantastic job, solidifying the emotional torment Dylan's carefree attitude put them through. Elle Fanning's tearful reaction to Dylan and Baez's live performance stands out as one of the film's most powerful moments.

As for Barbado, her talent is most notable through her song's, particularly 'It Ain't Me Babe', a cover so good it had me wondering if I had to betray Dylan and Baez and say that Barbado's version is better. (Just for the record, my opinion is still undecided...)

We also get a look at Pete Seeger, the man who helped Dylan's rise to fame, who's played by Edward Norton. Norton manages to portray the kind natured, albeit jealous rival perfectly, even learning how to play the Banjo.

However, the natural star of the movie is, of course, Timothee Chalamet. Despite his many projects released last year, Chalamet is still able to deliver a fantastic performance, perfectly representing Dylan's frustration over being boxed into a corner by both fans and musicians. His dedication is nothing to be shrugged off either, spending half a decade to learn to sing and play both the guitar and harmonica.

After hearing the emotion he's able to put into Dylan's song's, I can only hope he keeps his skills and releases his own music.

And yet, the film still has its imperfections.

First off, it could've done with a few subtitles here and there, as I understood a total of 5 or so lines Timothee said. Albeit, considering Dylan was known for mumbling his words, perhaps I should be praising the movie for its accuracy.

However, the movie has one flaw I just can't overlook.

Picture this, you've been sat for nearly two hours, and are ready to witness the movie's climax. Tensions are high, higher than ever, as Bob Dylan steps out onto the stage in front of thousands of fans, ready to show off his change from folk to electric.

And over in the corner stands the world's nicest man—Pete Seeger. The same man who gave Dylan a chance when he was just starting out in his career. And as he watches, he begins to become angry, attempting to cut Dylan's microphone.

Now, while the movie takes this 'creative' liberty of portraying Seeger as a bitter old-school musician trying to shut down Dylan, that's far from the truth. Seeger himself clarified he only wanted to fix the poor sound quality—not silence Dylan's new sound. It's a frustrating myth that's persisted for decades, and including it in the film is likely to make it stick around for a few more.

Whether you're a Dylan devotee or just love a good music biopic, *A Complete Unknown* is worth watching. It captures the spirit of an artist at war with his own legacy—something Dylan fans, and maybe even Chalamet himself, can surely appreciate.



# TARMAC OR TAR-WHACK?

By Reuben Rose

Our roads in the UK are terrible. Many factors contribute to this, but one of the biggest contributors is the material used. Asphalt and concrete are the most common materials on UK roads, but they are expensive and energy-intensive. However, our streets can be cheaper, greener, and more attractive.

This is done using Klinkers, but you may ask, what are Klinkers?

To be brief, they are mass-produced bricks of a (mostly) uniform shape. Due to their simplicity in production and installation, they are imperative to fixing UK and worldwide streets.

The heat island effect as described by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "Heat islands occur when a developed area experiences higher temperatures than nearby rural areas, or when areas experience hotter temperatures within a city." streets and buildings cause this due to their tendency to absorb and re-emit heat from the sun. A heat island could cause heat stroke and exhaustion, so reducing their effect on our cities is important. This is why having bricks as roads is of the utmost importance for making cities cooler as heat islands can have a 1-5°C difference in areas affected. This means having fewer re-emitting materials will help make cities and suburbs cooler and more comfortable.

To further add to this, Klinkers can withstand higher temperatures than asphalt, leading to less deformation over time. This is because they are made by being baked in 700°C kilns. Unlike asphalt, if road temperatures reach 50°C it can begin to deform. Although road temperatures of 50°C sound like a very high temperature it can be reached on sunny 20°C days.



With asphalt roads, expensive and time-consuming measures are being put in place to stabilize and help stop deformation as shown by the Road Surface Treatments Association (rsta) "The response from local highway authorities is to send out the gritters to spread granite dust to absorb the soft bitumen and so stabilize the road surface and make it less sticky." These measures are costly to the taxpayer. When asphalt begins to get very hot, bitumen ( a compound in asphalt) begins to rise to the surface making it more prone to deformation. However, klinkers can withstand such heat without the need for costly and harmful measures. Continuing this on granite dust is harmful to humans and can cause chronic lung disease and pulmonary fibrosis as stated by the American Lung Association "Unfortunately, breathing in silica dust caused by chipping, cutting, drilling, or grinding soil, granite, slate, sandstone or other natural materials can lead to chronic lung disease."

Furthermore, klinkers can be laid much easier than asphalt. Klinkers are laid by hand much like cobbles however the laying of them can be sped up with the use of machinery such as bricklayers, unlike tarmac which requires a mixer, steamroller, etc. All of these machinery increase noise pollution in cities making living in them more stressful.

To conclude, I believe klinkers are superior to tarmac due to their ease of installation, lack of deformation, and their reduced effect on the heat island of cities.



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