

SPRINGTIME

Springtime is the chance to start new and exciting activities. If you are a freshman, it might be the time to tryout for drill team or cheerleader. Maybe you want to perform with the show choir or be in the school musical.

Being young and planning what you'll do is so exciting. BUT...(Isn't there always a BUT... in there?) You bet there is and to Holly, that BUT...changed her life as a freshman and for the rest of her life.

Holly was an eighth grader when Larry was a junior and began taking notice of her. It really turned her head. Why not? As the school year drew to a close, Holly and Larry were very good friends.

When school began the next fall, Holly and Larry picked up where they left off. Teachers were concerned about them, but they really couldn't do much. One teacher who was close to Holly decided to talk to her mom. The reply to the teacher was, "They aren't single dating and they are chaperoned a lot." Now, most everyone at school knew that they were seeing each other regularly and that they were alone a lot.

Seasons pass so quickly when you're in school and Holly's freshman year was no different. Springtime showed promise of new and interesting events. She had always wanted to be a cheerleader and at her school it was a high honor. As the workshops and tryouts came closer, everyone was getting nervous and excited about the outcome. There were a lot of girls trying out. BUT...at the same time a not-so-nice rumor began to circulate about Holly and Larry.

The day of the first workshop Holly asked to see the advisor alone. She was very upset about what was going on. She wanted to know if the advisor had heard anything about her. After they talked for awhile, Holly confided in the advisor and told her that she was pregnant. Her life was now changed forever. The dreams of her youth were gone--never to be fulfilled.

When Holly's parents were told about the situation, they forbid Holly to see Larry (just a little late). Larry wanted to marry Holly and take care of her and his child. BUT..., Holly's parents got a court order preventing Larry from talking to or seeing Holly.

One thing that Holly, her parents, and Larry did not know or understand was the state law concerning sexual intercourse with a child (defined as anyone 14 years or younger). Even though Holly had consented more than once to having sex with Larry, it was against the law. The law is very clear about that.

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As spring passed into summer, things got worse and worse. Larry's mother was trying to get the two together and give a marriage a chance. BUT..., the court system stepped in. This time charges were filed against Larry for having sex with a child. When he went to trial, the judge questioned Holly about how many times the young couple had had sex. She answered, "30 to 40 times". The judge immediately threw the case out of court. BUT...(another one!) the county attorney said, "No. We are going to make an example of him."

In the fall Larry went away to college while waiting for his trial. At the trial everything was brought out again and Larry was charged and sentenced to 10 weeks in jail and five (5) years probation. He now has a permanent blot on his record.

Holly did not understand what the law was and neither did Larry. It is important to understand these things because as a result of what happened to Holly and Larry, their lives will never be the same, no matter how they would like it to be.

There is still another victim in all of this--a beautiful baby boy who will never have the chance to know his father.

Having sex is maybe something that you feel you are ready for, BUT..., you must think about the consequences.

Spring has come around again and it's time for tryouts for the next year's activities. Instead of trying out, Holly goes home and takes care of her son. Larry is no longer in college, but works in town to help support his son. That's another part of the law. Larry will have to pay child support for the next 18 years, BUT...never get to help raise his little boy.

If you are are a 14-year-old girl, sexual intercourse is against the law, even if you consent. If you do consent, you will be sentencing the father of your child to jail time and a criminal record.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION TEEN SEXUALITY AND UTAH STATE LAW

Students' decision to engage in sex at an early age may be illegal. Utah State Laws that affect teen sexuality state:

Children under age 14: (everyone below 14 is considered a child)

Sexual contact of any kind, inappropriate touching up through, but does not have to include, sexual intercourse, is a felony. If someone over 18 were convicted of sexual misconduct with a child, they would be charged with a felony under the Child Abuse Law.

Girls age 14-15: (boys are not included in this law)

Cannot consent to having sexual intercourse. A law designed to protect young girls from exploitation calls this "unlawful sexual intercourse". Even if they want to consent, it is illegal. Anyone over 18 having intercourse with a 14-15 year old girl can be charged with statutory rape. This is a very serious charge and can have lasting results.

Age 16:

A girl can now consent to having sexual intercourse.

