

Grown

a novel by
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Grown

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First Edition

AUTHOR'S NOTE

My first boyfriend was twenty-two years old; I was fifteen. The greatest secret I ever kept. It was exciting and invigorating to be considered so beautiful and adultlike. Everything a teen girl dreams of being seen as. But ultimately, I knew it wasn't right—the sneaking around, the lying. Still, at that age, I should not have been the first to come to that conclusion. Although, I did go to a predominately white high school in Westchester and was in Jack and Jill, I want to be clear: This book is completely a work of fiction.

If you've read *Allegedly* or *Monday's Not Coming*, you already know this book was inspired by a case . . . but this book is not about R. Kelly, nor is it a recount of his allegations.

This book is about the abuse of power. It's about the pattern of excusing grown men for their behavior while faulting young girls for their missteps.

It's about the blatant criticism of girls who were victims of manipulation. It's about holding the right person accountable for the crime he committed. It's about corporations attempting to silence victims and continuing to profit off the very monster they helped create.

About the individuals who were meant to protect and serve never believing victims in their moments of bravery. It's about girls trying to defend themselves against the world and the possibility of similar situations happening to anyone . . . even to girls from two-parent households.

This book is not about R. Kelly. It's about adults who know the difference between right and wrong. Because no matter where you stand on the issue . . . *he knew better.*

It is possible to have a loving relationship full of mutual respect and good intentions, like Gabriela's. But if you ever feel you are in a situation like *Enchanted*, where you're being used, threatened, sexually coerced, or you simply feel uncomfortable, please seek help right away. Tell your parents, one of your friend's parents, a trusted teacher, or a relative.

RESOURCES

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org

1-800-799-7233

The Hotline is the only 24/7 center in the nation that has access to service providers and shelters across the U.S.

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

www.nsvrc.org

“Our staff collects and disseminates a wide range of resources on sexual violence including statistics, research, position statements, statutes, training curricula, prevention initiatives, and program information. With these resources, we assist coalitions, advocates, and others interested in understanding and eliminating sexual violence.”

RAINN

www.rainn.org

“RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and

operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE, online.rainn.org y rainn.org/es) in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.”

ME TOO

metoomvmt.org

“The ‘Me Too’ movement supports survivors of sexual violence and their allies by connecting survivors to resources, offering community organizing resources, pursuing a ‘me too’ policy platform, and gathering sexual violence researchers and research.

‘Me Too’ movement work is a blend of grassroots organizing to interrupt sexual violence and digital community building to connect survivors to resources.”