YALE NEEDS WOMEN

How the First Group *of* Girls Rewrote the Rules *of* an Ivy League Giant

ANNE GARDINER PERKINS

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For my family:

Rick, Lily, Robby, Mac, Ginny, and Dear

And in memory of my father, Tom, and brother, Robert

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A NOTE ON TERMS

Some terms in this book may strike the modern ear harshly, but since this is a historical work, I have chosen to use the words used by Yale students in 1970, including "freshmen" to describe first-year students regardless of gender, "girls" and "coeds" for women, "blacks" for African Americans, "Afro-American" for African American studies, "homosexuals" for gay students, "sex" for gender, and "master" for the heads of Yale's residential colleges.

PROLOGUE

When I was fifty-two years old, I decided that the time had come to get my PhD. Better late than never. The idea was not entirely new. My best friend, Hazel, and I had met in our twenties, when we were both history graduate students, and I had considered getting a doctorate then. But while Hazel went on to get her PhD, I had felt pulled to different work, and after getting my master's, I'd gotten a job teaching in an urban high school. Thirty years later, I was still in education, now working on policies and programs for Massachusetts' public colleges and universities. I wanted to strengthen my thinking about the issues I worked on, and I knew that UMass Boston had a well-regarded higher education program. Once again, the doctorate beckoned.

So I began. Monday through Thursday, I worked at my job on Beacon Hill. Fridays, I went to class at UMass Boston. Weekends, I studied. My husband, Rick, did all the cooking and—let's be honest—every other household chore too. But it was exciting to be back in school again.

I never intended to write a history dissertation, though Hazel would tell you that my doing so was entirely predictable. I planned to research some practical topic, one tied more directly to my job, but in my first

fall semester, I took a required course on the history of higher education. Needing a topic for the final class paper, I wondered, *What about those first women students who arrived at Yale in 1969? I bet there are some amazing stories there*. The idea was not as random as it might sound. You see, I had gone to Yale too.

I arrived as a freshman in 1977, eight years after the first women undergraduates. I studied history and wrote for the *Yale Daily News*. I covered women's ice hockey and eventually the president's beat. In my junior year, I became editor in chief. Yet throughout that whole time, I knew nothing about the women at Yale who came before me and all the challenges they faced when they got there.

Decades later, I searched for a book that would tell me about Yale's first women undergraduates, but the women were missing from histories of Yale in that era. The books focused instead on the decision to let women in, as if that were the end of the story. But what happened next? That's what I wanted to know. Here was a college that been all male for 268 years, and then, suddenly, the first women students arrived. Historian Margaret Nash calls such moments "flashpoints" in history, times when the bright light of a sudden change illuminates all around it and everything, for a time, seems possible. In 1969, the U.S. women's movement had just begun. The Black Power movement was changing how Americans saw race. And into that moment stepped the first women undergraduates at Yale.

I took a day off from work and drove to New Haven to see what I might find in the Yale archives, and after that, there was no turning back. The story was just too compelling. I went back to the archives a second time, a third, a fourth, still more, now for a week a time. Eventually, I realized that if I really wanted to understand what had happened at Yale in that flashpoint of history, I needed to talk to the women who had lived through it.

The forty-two women I interviewed for this book were all wonderful—

inviting me into their kitchens and living rooms and places of work, talking with me far longer than the one hour I'd proposed, trusting me with their stories. "Don't screw it up, Anne," one of them told me after we'd gotten to know one another, and she was only half kidding. But by that point, getting this history right had become as important to me as it was to her. The women who go first and speak out help shape a better world for all of us, yet all too often their stories are lost. I was not going to let that happen to this story.

I went back to the archives again and pored through box after box of documents. I read hundreds of old newspaper stories and compiled thousands of pages of notes. For me, though, the real gift of this book has been the remarkable women I came to know in writing it, the first women undergraduates at Yale. This is their story. I am honored to be the one to tell it.

Anne Gardiner Perkins
Boston, 2019

ONE

268 Years of Men

THE WOMEN CAME TO YALE IN BUSES, PEERING OUT THE large glass windows at the men who had gathered on the sidewalk below to await their arrival. The girls from Vassar College wore brightly colored dresses and skirts cut up above the knee. Their hair shone from being combed and recombed on the two-hour drive from Poughkeepsie to New Haven. The guys from Yale had dressed up as well: button-down shirts, narrow ties, and sports jackets. The men's faces were clean-shaven, and their hair was trimmed neatly above the ears. It was Saturday night, November 1967, and the Yale men were ready for women.

Yale was still an all-men's college back then, and one of the only ways to find a girlfriend was to frequent the mixers that brought in busloads of women each weekend from elite women's colleges like Vassar and Smith. On Saturday nights, the buses rolled into Yale at 8:00 p.m., each with their cargo of fifty girls. At midnight, the girls returned from whence they came. In the four hours in between, the Yale men sought to make their match. Guys who had girlfriends already would show up at the Saturday football games with their girl on their arm and then appear with her afterward in

the dining hall or a local restaurant. But for the rest of the week, Yale undergraduates lived their days in a single-sex world.

To picture Yale as it was at the time, imagine a village of men. From Monday through Friday, students attended their men-only classes, ate meals in their men-only dining hall, took part in their men-only extracurricular pursuits, and then retired to their men-only dorms. Yale admitted scatterings of women graduate and professional students in 1967, but Yale College, the heart of the university, remained staunchly all male. The ranks of faculty and administrators who ran the school were nearly all men as well. If you were to peek through the door at any department meeting, the professors seated around the table would invariably be "white men in tweeds and casually expensive shoes," as one of Yale's rare black professors observed. Yale was an odd place, at least to a modern eye, but since its founding in 1701, Yale had always been a place for men.

Yale was the oldest men's club in the nation—older than the Kiwanis, the Elks, and the Boy Scouts; older than New York's Union Club and San Francisco's Bohemian Club; and older than Princeton and Dartmouth and the dozens of other U.S. colleges that also banned women from applying in 1967. Only two colleges in America were older than Yale: William and Mary, which went coed in 1919 for financial reasons, and Harvard, where Radcliffe women had been attending classes since 1943. Yale never had a sister school. On the weekends, though, for a brief span of hours, a fissure opened up in that men-only world. The buses from Vassar and Connecticut College, from Smith and Mount Holyoke, pulled up at the curb, and the Yale guys began vying with one another for the best of the imported women. The evening always began with such promise.

The bus doors swung apart. The women clicked open their compacts to check their lipstick one last time and then descended one by one into the crowd of men below, wondering what the night would bring. Girl after girl stepped down off the bus, smiled, and filed past the group of college

boys standing outside. They passed through the stone archway of one of Yale's twelve residential colleges and then into the wood-paneled common room where more Yale men waited. The men had been drinking already, clustered in groups around kegs of cheap beer brought in for the event, bracing themselves for the night to come.

A girlfriend was "the most prized piece of chattel in the college man's estate," explained one Yale student, but not just any girl would do. She had to come from one of the colleges thought suitable for future Yale wives, and she had to be pretty. If a guy brought a good-looking girl with him into one of Yale's dining halls, his classmates would show their approval by banging their spoons against their water glasses. Guys who arrived with a date thought unattractive would get ribbed about it later. And so the Yale men chose carefully.

A Yale sophomore appraised the women who now filled the room, picked out one of them, and approached her with his long-practiced line: "Say, aren't you from California?"

She was not, but the two chatted anyway, trading hometowns and majors. All the while, both scanned the room—was there someone better to be paired with?

In the next room over, the dining hall had been turned into a dance floor, with chairs and tables shoved over to the side, the lights turned low. A young man asked one of the newly arrived women if she wanted to dance. She smiled, and the two entered the room.

A band blared saxophone and electric bass from the front, the music so loud that conversation was impossible. There was little to do but nod and smile, pretending to hear what the other person said. A few couples over, one girl, put off by her partner's awkward dance moves, pretended she was dancing with the guy next to him. The song ended, and she retreated to the ladies' room, hoping he would be with someone else when she returned. The pairs in the room reshuffled, with men who sought a new partner

excusing themselves to get a beer, and women who wanted to move on explaining they needed to go find their roommate. The code in both cases was the same—*not you*.

Through the first two hours of the mixer, the cycle continued—choose, discard; choose, discard; choose, discard—a game of musical chairs where each person hoped not to be the one who turned up alone when the music stopped.

"Say, aren't you from California?"

By 10:00 p.m., the pairings became less fluid, the matches more firm. The question shifted: Would you like to see my room?

A senior with long blond hair had heard this line too many times before. "No," she answered, "I know all about your room." It had been a long night for her already. A Yale freshman had offered to give her a tour of the campus. Another guy had offered to show her his rock collection. As one Yale man observed, "Some girls that I've talked to have the idea that all we want from them is sex. Maybe they're right, but what else can you do when you don't get to know them and haven't got the time to establish a natural relationship?"

At midnight, the buses readied to leave, and the women filed back out through the stone archway, some coming from the depleted crowd at the mixer and others from the men's rooms they'd been visiting. The opening into Yale's village of men once again closed. The buses of women pulled out and began the long drive home while the men pushed the dining hall tables and chairs back into place and the band carted away its instruments. All that was left was the smell of the beer. And so the rhythm of Yale continued as it always had, with men-only weeks followed by weekends with women. Change, however, hovered just around the corner. But no one at Yale seemed to realize how fast it would come.

The school year passed. Another class of Yale men graduated, and a new one readied to take its place, just as the cycle had gone for decades. Yet beneath that veneer of sameness, things were shifting at Yale, and Kingman Brewster Jr., Yale's president, was the reason.

By 1968, Brewster was in his fifth year as president and had established himself as a leader who was determined to bring about change. He had tasked his admissions director with increasing the numbers of black students at Yale and he'd supported black students' efforts to create an Afro-American studies major, one of the first in the nation. He increased the financial aid budget so that all admitted students could attend and halted the admissions office practice of checking on students' family income before deciding whether or not to admit them. Brewster had hired some of the most renowned academics in the nation to strengthen the faculty and raised Yale's profile in the national press. And in the process of all of this, he had attained a prominence that surpassed that of most politicians.

Brewster made the cover of *Newsweek* in 1964 and was named by President Lyndon B. Johnson to a U.S. presidential commission the following year and to a second one in 1966. In 1967, the *New York Times* published a gushing five-page profile of Brewster, and talk began in some corners of a possible cabinet position or even a U.S. presidential run. That same year, Brewster made the cover of *Time* and chaired a UN policy panel on peacekeeping missions. If Yale men, as some said, were destined for leadership, then Kingman Brewster was striding confidently down the path of his destiny.

Begin with the name: Kingman—or as old friends and colleagues sometimes called him simply "King," his childhood nickname. For if ever there was a person who embodied the ideal of manhood at Yale, it was Brewster. He was "an imposing figure. Big," said one Yale student, and those who met him were struck by his presence. "Whatever 'it' is, he had it," remarked one Yale trustee. Brewster was handsome by most accounts, with

a craggy sort of face and brown hair that was just going gray at the temples. He wore pinstripe suits and shirts handmade in Hong Kong and was descended from ancestors who had come over on the *Mayflower*—the first trip. He carried with him "the assurance that came from being a direct descendant of the Elder Brewster," explained one of his friends. "You know, 'This is my place.'" And like every Yale president since 1766 but one, Brewster had gone to college at Yale, since, as every Yale man knew, quipped the *Harvard Crimson*, "a Yale man is the best kind of man to be, and only Yale can produce one."

Yet just when it seemed one might be able to sum Brewster up in a phrase—the patrician leader, the ultimate Yale man, the nation's most well-known university president—a confounding piece of evidence arose to complicate the picture. "He was a very complex man," observed student Kurt Schmoke.

Brewster encompassed a span of seeming contradictions. He was politically conservative but open-minded on many issues. He was both a blue-blood New Englander and a man who sought to learn from others, regardless of their pedigree. He was reserved but sparkled at social gatherings, where he would amuse his friends by mimicking various political personalities or once by singing with gusto an impromptu performance from *My Fair Lady*. He was forty-nine years old, yet on some of America's hottest issues—Vietnam, race—he stood not with the men of his own generation but with the generation that challenged it.

The students loved him. For their 1968 fund-raiser, Yale's student advisory board sold T-shirts printed with the slogan, "Next to myself, I like Kingman best." The following year, when Brewster entered a contentious campus-wide meeting on the future of ROTC at Yale, four thousand students rose to give him a standing ovation. On the subject of coeducation, however, Brewster and Yale students stood apart. Indeed, of all the dissonances that defined Kingman Brewster, the contrast between his progressive

stances on race, religion, and class and his conservative views on gender were perhaps the most striking.

Brewster refused to frequent clubs that discriminated against blacks or Jews, and the signature change of his administration had been opening Yale's doors to more black students and students from families that could never before have afforded to send their son to Yale. But when it came to women, Brewster was content with the world as it was. He enjoyed many a meal at clubs that banned women from the main dining room at lunchtime, and as to the idea of ending Yale's 268 years as a men's school by admitting women undergraduates…well, why would anyone want to do that?

By 1968, Yale students had been telling Brewster the answer to that question for more than two years, ever since Lanny Davis became chairman of the *Yale Daily News* in 1966. "Coeducation should now be beyond argument," Lanny wrote in his debut editorial, which declared that the time was long overdue to end "the unrealistic, artificial, and stifling social environment of an all-male Yale." Lanny did not stop there but proceeded to publish a barrage of pro-coeducation columns and editorials, more than nineteen in all, over the next five months. "Lanny beat the drums day in and day out and, in a wonderfully positive way, harassed the hell out of us," said Brewster's top adviser, Sam Chauncey. And when the *Yale Daily News* spoke, the men who ran Yale generally listened. The *News* was one of the oldest and most powerful student organizations on campus. Past chairmen had included Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce, and Kingman Brewster himself, who read the *Yale Daily News* and met regularly with the paper's chairman to get a read on student opinion. When it came to admitting women undergraduates, however, even the *News* could not convince Brewster that the time for change had come.

Brewster was hardly alone in his stance. America's most elite colleges had long maintained their reputation not just by the types of students they

let in but by those they kept out: Jews, blacks, working-class kids—and women. Even after the wave of coeducation that followed the Civil War, upping the proportion of coed campuses from 25 percent before the war to 60 percent by 1890, the vast majority of top-tier colleges and universities in the United States stayed all male. Coeducation was solely a symptom of financial weakness, opined Harvard president Charles Eliot in 1873. The colleges that could afford to turn down women's tuitions—America's oldest and most prestigious—would continue to do so.

Nearly a century later, President Eliot's prediction held true, and in 1968, the list of U.S. colleges that still banned women undergraduates reads like an academic who's who: Amherst, Boston College, Bowdoin, Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Claremont McKenna, Colgate, Columbia, Dartmouth, Davidson, Duke, Fordham, Georgetown, Hamilton, Harvard, Haverford, Holy Cross, Johns Hopkins, Kenyon, Lafayette, Lehigh, Notre Dame, Penn, Princeton, Rutgers, Sewanee, Trinity, Tufts, Tulane, Union, UVA, Washington and Lee, Wesleyan, West Point and the other military academies, Williams, and—of course—Yale. A few, like Harvard and Brown, had created sister schools that kept the women nearby without putting them on equal terms with men, but none admitted women to the same college that the men attended. "In the minds of many," observed the *Educational Record*, "'all-male' education has become synonymous with 'prestige' education."

That status quo was just fine with Brewster, and unless he changed his position on the matter, Yale would stay just as it was. Brewster's power at Yale ran unfettered by the constraints that frustrated other campus presidents. He was not just a member of the Corporation, Yale's board of trustees, but its president, and "the faculty adored him," observed one senior professor. Brewster had raised their salaries and strengthened their reputation, and the glow from Brewster's accolades shone on all of them. Nonetheless, even Kingman Brewster could not always shape the world as he wished to.

The events of the spring of 1968 had shaken him. Martin Luther

King Jr.'s assassination in April had struck particularly hard, for here was a man whose hand Brewster had clasped when, as one of the first acts of his presidency, he had awarded King an honorary degree. That same month, students at Trinity College, just forty miles up the road from Yale, had held a group of trustees hostage until Trinity acted on a long-stalled student demand for a scholarship fund for black and other disadvantaged students. A larger protest at Columbia three weeks later ended with more than two hundred students injured and seven hundred arrested.

Over the summer of 1968, Brewster retreated with his family to their waterfront home on Martha's Vineyard, where he spent his days in Bermuda shorts and sneakers, sailing and talking with friends and presiding over the grill at evening cookouts. And there, pecking out the words with two fingers on his typewriter, Brewster wrote the initial draft of his annual presidential report, his statement of Yale's accomplishments in the year just passed and the goals for the year to come. As he looked ahead to the fall of 1968, Brewster set forth two central questions: How much say should students have in university governance? What was the university's responsibility to the New Haven neighborhoods that surrounded it? Brewster typed out his answers, which in turn became his priorities for the year. His report was silent entirely, however, on the possibility of coeducation.

The summer ticked away, and as it did, the twine that held the nation together continued to unravel. In June, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. In August, Chicago police assaulted protestors at the Democratic National Convention. And in the background was the constant drumbeat of the Vietnam War, where U.S. troop levels had surpassed half a million. The growing women's movement would unsettle the givens of Brewster's life still further, but in the summer of 1968, it was just gaining its footing. NOW, the National Organization for Women, was only two years old. Consciousness-raising groups had just started meeting in women's living rooms and kitchens. Most Americans did not yet grasp the extent

of the discrimination against women in education, employment, and the law. Aside from Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, the major works of second-wave feminism were yet to be written.

Out on Martha's Vineyard, the days grew shorter with the coming fall; the time to pack away the Bermuda shorts drew near. Brewster finished his president's report and readied to return to campus, not yet realizing that the agenda for the year ahead would be set not by him, but by students.

To Yale senior Derek Shearer, the idea that women were not good enough to attend a college like Yale made no sense. He had only to look at his family for evidence to the contrary. His sister Brooke was one of the smartest kids in her high school. His mother wrote for local and national magazines, and Derek felt proud to write *journalist* instead of *housewife* on the forms at school that asked his mother's occupation. Derek had attended a coed public high school in California, and his friends there included both boys and girls. He did not like the all-male atmosphere he found at Yale, and he was determined to change it.

Yale students and their views on the desirability of coeducation had changed in the four years since Derek arrived as a freshman. Some Yale men were still happy to attend an all-male school, with its bonds of brotherhood and freedom from the pressure (albeit self-induced) of performing for the opposite sex. But by 1968, the bulk of Yale students did not want to spend their college years trapped in a village of men. Many saw their single-sex existence as unnatural. Others just wanted girlfriends. A number, like Derek, were moved by the unfairness of a policy that gave them a chance to get into Yale while denying their sisters the opportunity to even apply. Like the growing number of Yale men who grew their hair long or wore mustaches and beards, these new views reflected the changing values

of youth across the nation. And at Yale, some of that shift had been inadvertently caused by Brewster himself.

After Brewster instructed his new admissions dean, Russell Inslee "Inky" Clark, to admit the top male students in the country regardless of their race or class or religion, the prep school boys who had long formed the majority at Yale had to compete against a broader field, and their numbers declined. In their stead, Yale admitted more students from public high schools, schools that with rare exception were coed. All-male Yale, while normal for the kids from all-male Andover and all-male Exeter, was not normal to this growing group of public high school graduates, and by Derek's senior year, half of Yale's four classes had been chosen by Inky Clark.

Derek held one of the top student positions at Yale: chairman of the student advisory board. The role granted him regular meetings with Brewster, and Derek used that pulpit to push Brewster on a topic that Brewster did not wish to be pushed on. "Complete and immediate coeducation," Derek told him in February 1968, was Yale's "most pressing educational need." All that talk came to naught, however, just like the earlier student efforts to end Yale's single-sex status. Brewster simply did not want Yale to admit women undergraduates. "Kingman was *not* comfortable with the idea of coeducation," explained Sam Chauncey, whose title as Brewster's assistant gave little indication of the degree of influence he held. Chauncey had occupied the office next to Brewster's ever since Brewster became president in 1963. The two talked every day: first thing in the morning, as issues arose during the day, or by phone if Brewster was out of town. Chauncey was privy to thoughts Brewster did not share with others, and while he always supported Brewster in public, Chauncey was free to challenge Brewster privately on issues where the two men disagreed—coeducation, for example. Yet here Chauncey met the same resistance as Yale students. Brewster "believed in change," Chauncey observed, "except when it came to things

that were really important to him." Keeping Yale an all-male school was one of them.

Despite his national reputation, Brewster had lived his life behind the walls of a markedly insular world. A graduate of an all-boys prep school, Brewster had attended all-male Yale, where he'd met Vassar College junior Mary Louise Phillips, the daughter of a Yale man, at a fraternity party. They'd married the following year. As Yale's president, Brewster spent his days surrounded by men, and while the elegant dinner parties he hosted began with couples seated together, after the meal the men retired to the front parlor for brandy and conversation while the wives were shunted off elsewhere. For Brewster, the notion of two parallel spheres, one for men and one for women, was so deeply embedded in the structure of his days that it was hard to imagine an alternative.

"Kingman knew girls and women as someone apart," explained Associate Dean John Wilkinson, one of Brewster's inner circle. "He wasn't accustomed to women who were his equals." That perceived difference was at the center of Brewster's opposition to coeducation.

To Brewster, admitting women students threatened the central mission of Yale: graduating America's future leaders. By 1968, Yale had produced Supreme Court justices, a U.S. president, and a small army of U.S. senators, governors, and CEOs. Along with Harvard and Princeton, Yale was "widely viewed as the training grounds for the nation's leaders," wrote historian Jerome Karabel, and Yale would confirm that reputation twenty years later, when every U.S. president between 1989 and 2009 was a Yale man.

"We are a national institution whose ambition is nothing less than to try to frame a leadership for the nation," Brewster told Yale alumni in 1966, and admitting the right students was the key to attaining that goal. The role of the admissions office, Brewster instructed his staff, was to "make the hunchy judgment as to whether or not with Yale's help the candidate is likely to be a leader in whatever he ends up doing." Since women

were not leaders, Brewster reasoned, they would be taking up limited spaces that could have gone to men.

If Brewster had wanted evidence of women's potential as leaders, all he had to do was look out his office window. Two blocks up at Yale's graduate school, future Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen was getting her PhD in economics, while future UC Berkeley chancellor Carol Christ was getting hers in English. One block away, future secretary of state Hilary Rodham had just been accepted at Yale Law School, where future Connecticut supreme court chief justice Ellen Peters was on the faculty and future Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman had graduated six years earlier.

This blindness to women's potential as leaders was not Brewster's alone. Judging by Americans' choices at the polls, he was right in step with his era. In the fall of 1968, all fifty of the state governors were men, as were 99 of the 100 U.S. senators and all but 11 of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Yale's brand was producing national leaders, and if examples of women leaders could not be found—despite women's exclusion to date from nearly every avenue to power—then Yale was going to waste as few admissions slots on women as possible.

Brewster was a skilled political tactician, and for the two years following Lanny Davis's editorial onslaught, he kept Yale students at bay by holding out the possibility of a sister school, a solution that would have brought women to New Haven without actually having to admit them to Yale. Brewster even tried for an entire year to convince all-women Vassar to abandon its campus in Poughkeepsie and move 120 miles east to New Haven. When that plan fell through, he was ready with another: Yale would happily build its own women's college—as soon as a donor stepped forward to pay the more than $30 million that Brewster said it would cost for the additional faculty, staff, and facilities. And there the issue sat, nicely stalled, until student adviser Derek Shearer got tired of waiting.

Derek graduated in June 1968 without making much progress with Brewster, but he wasn't done with Yale yet. While Brewster sat pecking away at his president's report in Martha's Vineyard, Derek was busy making plans of his own. Even if he would not be at Yale to carry them out himself, he knew plenty of students in the classes below him who were just as tired of Brewster's intransigence on coeducation as he was. Perhaps Derek could provide a spark to ignite student activism for change.

When Yale students returned to campus in September, they found that Derek had been there before them. On entryway bulletin boards and hallway doors, on trees and telephone poles, Derek had stapled a broadside that featured a large picture of his younger sister Brooke and the question: "Please, Mr. Brewster, why can't I come to Yale?" You couldn't miss it, and there was no denying the boldness of the "Operation Coeducation" idea that it proposed: Bring one thousand women students to Yale for a week. Construct geodesic domes on the Old Campus to house them. And see what Kingman Brewster said then.

Yale may have felt like an all-male island to the students who were pushing for coeducation, but the university was not totally devoid of women. Women were present at the edges, as wives and mothers and girlfriends or as secretaries and dining hall workers. A few had even found places in the roles usually reserved for men. In 1968, Yale College had 2 tenured women on its faculty—and 391 tenured men. Yale was not alone in its preference for male professors, and women faculty were equally scarce at campuses that had long been coed. Just 4 percent of the full professors at the University of Michigan were women and 2 percent at the University of California Berkeley, even though both of these campuses had been educating women students since the 1870s. Among

U.S. colleges, Yale's male-dominant culture may have been an extreme, but it was no aberration.

Although Yale's graduate and professional schools were technically coed in 1968, that wasn't how it felt to the women. *Invisible* is the word they used to describe themselves. Women graduate students made up less than 10 percent of Yale's student body, and they were spread out across eleven different graduate and professional schools, from the divinity school atop Prospect Hill to the medical school two miles south on the other side of the highway.

Yale's treatment of women as somehow less capable or deserving than men did not stop at women's scant numbers. Male graduate students were given housing in a prominent building at the center of campus, while the women were assigned to an ugly 1950s structure several dark blocks past the cemetery. Yale's Health Service did not offer gynecology, and the prescriptions there were preprinted with the title "Mr.," as if women would never need medicine or somehow did not exist. Yale had one of the finest gyms in the world, but women were banned from entering it. When graduate student Carol Christ arrived at Yale's famed Elizabethan Club with her male classmate, he was ushered inside, while she was whisked back out to the sidewalk. Women were not allowed.

Life for women at Yale might have been easier had there been some law or court ruling to prohibit colleges and universities from treating women unfairly, but in 1968 discrimination against women at U.S. colleges and universities was perfectly legal. The Fourteenth Amendment's provision for equal protection under the law had not yet been judged to include women. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 exempted professional women, including faculty and administrators. The Title IV protections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applied to race but not gender; Title VII excluded colleges and universities from its ban on employment discrimination. Title IX, which would ban discrimination in any federally funded education program or

activity, was not even under discussion. For the time being, those at Yale who sought to change the status of women would have to fight that battle on their own.

Had Yale's current students been the only ones pushing coeducation, Brewster might have held out a little longer. But Yale's rivalry with Harvard and Princeton for the nation's top high school students began at admissions, and that was where the woman question finally struck a nerve. In the fall of 1968, the students who shaped Yale's direction were not just those who already went there but those who kept turning Yale down.

"Speaking strictly from an admissions standpoint, a decision to educate women at Yale…is not only desirable but virtually essential," Inky Clark told Brewster in June. The numbers did not look good. By 1968, more than 40 percent of the students accepted by Yale were choosing to attend other colleges, with the majority citing Yale's single-sex status as the reason. Worse still, more than three quarters of students admitted to both Harvard and Yale picked Harvard, and again the problem was Yale's lack of women students. Yale men faced a two-hour car ride to Vassar or Smith for a date, while a Harvard guy who sought female companionship could turn to the Radcliffe girl sitting next to him in class or visit the women at nearby Simmons or Wellesley. If Yale was going to keep its standing as one of the top two or three colleges in the nation, the availability of women was an amenity it could no longer do without.

The final straw was Princeton. On September 14, while Derek Shearer was putting up his "Please, Mr. Brewster" posters at Yale, Princeton released an extensive study of coeducation that concluded that women students were "vital to Princeton's future." Princeton had not yet acted on the report; its trustees were still considering the report's recommendations. But here was a threat Brewster could not ignore. It was bad enough losing top students to Harvard. Losing them to Princeton, still a second choice to Yale for most applicants, would never do, and if Princeton went coed and

Yale did not, Yale might well find itself dropping to third place among the Ivy League schools. The Princeton report whetted Yale's "sense of competitive rivalry," said Brewster, and pushed him where he might not have otherwise gone.

Two weeks after Princeton issued its report, Brewster released an eight-page memorandum in which, for the first time, he held out the possibility of admitting women directly to Yale. He listed two reasons for the change: "the loss of first-rate students" who turned down Yale to attend colleges with "coeducational attractions" and the Princeton report, which in addition to its competitive threat provided an "impressive analysis" of the financial implications of coeducation and the benefits of admitting women directly rather than opening a sister school. Missing from Brewster's rationale was any notion of admitting women for reasons of equity or fairness. Nonetheless, coeducation at Yale was finally up for discussion.

Yet still Brewster stalled. Yale could not move forward with coeducation, he said, until it received that $30 million donation. And no, he hadn't asked anyone yet. Brewster's justification for his $30 million figure was based on the idea that going coed would cause Yale to increase its enrollment by 1,500 students, the number of women undergraduates Brewster proposed in his eight-page memorandum. But in 1968, Yale had plenty of space for women students if it simply chose to reduce the number of men in each entering class, and it had a fat $575 million endowment to dip into should it want to build the facilities and hire the faculty needed to expand. Even Inky Clark, an ally of Brewster's, gave little credence to Brewster's price tag argument: "It was a bogus issue," he said. "It really was bogus." By October 1968, there was nothing stopping Yale from admitting women students except Brewster's reluctance to do so.

Derek Shearer's "Please, Mr. Brewster" posters, however, had not gone unnoticed, and as the fall semester of 1968 got under way, the clamor for coeducation from Yale students only grew louder. "So Where Are the

Women?" bellowed the *Yale Daily News* in an editorial on the first Monday of classes. The following week, junior Mark Zanger, the leader of Yale's chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), joined the offensive. "Women Now. Talk Later," demanded his October 4 *Yale Daily News* column, which charged that Brewster was only "pretending" to take the coeducation issue seriously.

Perhaps Brewster simply hoped the coeducation fervor would go away, but Avi Soifer, a Yale senior, was not going to let it drop. While Operation Coeducation and its idea of bringing women students to Yale for a week had first been proposed by Derek Shearer, Avi was the one to take the next step. Like Derek, Avi had attended a coed public high school, where the presence of girls as peers and classmates was the norm. Avi had been following the coeducation issue since his sophomore year, when he covered Brewster's attempt to lure Vassar to New Haven for the *Yale Daily News*, and he had come to know a few women graduate students who helped him see the ways in which Yale women were assigned a parallel yet lesser existence. By September 1968, Avi was ready to act, and in September, he pulled together some friends and got to work. Kingman Brewster did not know it yet, but Operation Coeducation—or "Coeducation Week," as Avi's group came to call it—was under way.

On October 15, three weeks after Brewster released his memo noting the competitive pressure to go coed, Avi Soifer and his team went public with their plans. Coeducation Week would start on November 4 and bring 750 women college students to Yale for six days. The women would live in dorm rooms vacated by obliging Yale students, attend classes, participate in forums and panels on coeducation, and give Yale men the chance to interact with the opposite sex "under more natural conditions than the infamous mixer." Coeducation Week would prove to alumni and the public that Yale students were "serious and sincere about normal coeducational life in the near future," said Avi, and it would prod Yale to adopt coeducation

now rather than in that vague distant future to which Brewster perpetually postponed it.

The day after Avi announced the Coeducation Week plans, more than fifty students signed on to help make it happen. The logistics required were staggering. Twenty-two teams were dispatched to sign up women participants from colleges throughout the Northeast. Other students went door to door in the residence halls, asking their classmates if they would move in with friends for the week so that women could stay in their rooms. The committee needed fifteen thousand dollars to pay for the women's dining hall meals. The women, they decided, would cover half by contributing ten dollars each, and the committee would pay for the rest (or at least most of it) by asking the social committees of Yale's twelve residential colleges to throw in three or four hundred each, the cost of a mixer. There was meeting after meeting of committees and subcommittees and then subgroups of subcommittees. On one night alone, Avi went to twelve different meetings.

It's not clear how seriously Brewster had taken Derek Shearer's "Please, Mr. Brewster" posters, but he was paying attention now. On October 21, Avi was summoned to meet with a roomful of administrators and Brewster himself. Brewster was not pleased. Coeducation Week was happening too soon, he argued. Avi was bringing too many women to Yale. Yale students should just be more patient.

"Well," said Avi, "we may go ahead anyway."

"I wish you wouldn't," Brewster replied. But it was already too late.

The rest of October filled with the buildup toward Coeducation Week, and on Monday, November 4, 750 women students arrived in New Haven ready to spend a week as "Yalies." Girls from Vassar and Smith, from Bryn Mawr and Brandeis and Connecticut College, filled out their registration forms

and met the men whose rooms they would be occupying. "All over the campus there was something giddy in the air—like a giant joke that everyone was in on," observed one visiting woman. "Lots of smiling went on."

Some of the men were still hurriedly putting fresh sheets on their bunk beds as the women arrived, but on the whole, the first day went smoothly. The visiting women received meal tickets, lists of suggested classes to attend, and a calendar of the week's events. Avi's team had sent out dozens of press releases, and *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek* were all there, cameras flashing. "Women are people too," Avi told the *New York Times*, and the *Times* ran his statement as its quote of the week.

The week's events were somewhat eclectic. Monday featured a welcome ceremony with Yale's chaplain. Tuesday brought an Election Day rally; Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon was polling so close to Democrat Hubert Humphrey that the outcome was anyone's guess. Wednesday included a coeducation discussion with Yale's undergraduate dean. But the event that may have raised the most questions among the young women visiting Yale was a showing of porn flicks that the Yale Law School Film Society had scheduled to coincide with Coeducation Week. The movies were shown Monday night in a classroom right on the Old Campus, and the *Yale Daily News*, which took particular delight in the event's timing, featured it on the front page. When a visiting Radcliffe student stopped by the *News* building on Monday and offered to write an article, they assigned her to cover the porn festival.

She attended one of the early showings and watched several ten-minute shorts before walking out early. "All of them consisted of ladies removing their clothing and writhing around—all by themselves—on sofas, beds, and even desk tops," she wrote in the story the *News* published on the front page the next day. Her experience of writing a review of a porn festival while in the midst of all those male *Yale Daily News* reporters was unsettling. "There I was at Yale…sitting in a strange newsroom, writing some

story about some lady masturbating with a cross," she wrote a few weeks later. "It was bizarre and slightly absurd. All at once I was feeling isolated and quite lonely."

Most Coed Week visitors avoided that type of hazing, and by Wednesday, Yale students were gleeful with the success of the experiment. That evening, the Yale marching band concluded its weekly practice with an impromptu parade. With trumpets and sousaphones proclaiming their presence, the band members marched through the courtyards of half a dozen of Yale's residential colleges and on toward their final destination: President Brewster's front lawn.

All along the way, students came down from their rooms to join the band, and by the time the crowd of Yale students and visiting women arrived at Brewster's house, its numbers had swelled to the hundreds. The band played Yale football songs, and Brewster came out onto the front porch in a jocular mood, with his wife, Mary Louise, beside him. "Give us a date!" the students cried, urging Brewster to commit to coeducation. Brewster asked the bandleader if he could borrow his megaphone, and then, in a nod to the college his wife had attended, proclaimed to the crowd, "Vassar was good enough for me!" The students wanted a better answer. "Give us a date!" they repeated, and this time Brewster did: "In 1972, there will be women at Yale!" But that was not soon enough. "Next fall!" shouted the students. "1969!"

Things moved quickly from there. Coeducation Week "was just a very smart political act," observed John Trinkhaus, the head of one of Yale's twelve residential colleges. "It got national publicity, and somehow brought the whole affair to a head." Meanwhile, Princeton seemed poised to act. On Thursday morning, November 7, Brewster called a meeting with a one-item agenda: admitting women undergraduates to Yale. Avi Soifer was there, as was the current chairman of the *Yale Daily News*, Sam Chauncey, and a few more of Brewster's top advisers.

Two days later, Brewster headed down to New York to meet with the

Yale Corporation. Trustee Irwin Miller had been arguing for coeducation since 1967, warning that "the quality of admission at Yale…will undergo a long, slow decline unless there are women." He was not alone in his views, and the Corporation voted to accept five hundred women students for the fall of 1969. Brewster's $30 million price tag issue was set aside with barely a murmur. Yale would make do with the existing facilities and faculty: rooms designed for three students would hold four, and the few extra staff provided for the women would be covered by the women's tuitions.

Before Brewster could go public with the decision, one final step was needed. On Thursday, November 14, he presented his coeducation proposal to the Yale College faculty. The vote was 200:1 in favor, with the sole negative vote coming from history professor George Pierson, a man who had arrived at Yale as a seventeen-year-old freshman in 1922 and was still there forty-six years later.

The next morning, on elite college campuses across the country, men in presidents' suites set down their coffee cups in surprise. They looked at the front-page story in the *New York Times*: "Yale Going Coed Next September." Really? *Yale?* The last anyone outside the university had heard, Yale was still waiting for someone to write a $30 million check, and there was no mention of any donation. Yet clearly the decision was final. It said right there in the article that Yale's faculty had approved the plan the day before and that Yale's trustees had voted yes in a secret meeting in New York.

Yale had left itself just ten months to transform into a coeducational institution. "This is a crash program for next year," Yale College Dean Georges May told the *Yale Daily News*. Within four days of Brewster's coeducation announcement, Yale received eight hundred letters of interest from female students—some still in high school, some already in college. By March, nearly four thousand women had applied. They hailed from all over the country: Chicago, Little Rock, Brooklyn, Honolulu, Tulsa, and

Cleveland. Step one, then, was to read through all those applications from women that the admissions office staffing had not planned for. The housing problem quickly became pressing too, since Brewster declared that Yale would not reduce the number of incoming men just because it was adding some women. And what about student organizations? Someone had to ask each of them if they would allow Yale's new women students to join.

The list went on and on. The locks needed changing. The outdoor lighting was inadequate. Vanderbilt Hall, where the women freshmen would live, needed shades on the windows. The gym had to end its no-women rule. The Yale Health Center would have to hire a gynecologist. And then there was the worry of potential pregnancies. Could Yale do anything to avoid that?

As for the real changes that would shift an all-male institution to one in which women stood equal with men, there was no time. Such change was not, in fact, what Brewster had in mind. The goal for September, declared his hastily formed coeducation planning committee, was to admit women "with the least disruption of the current pattern" of education at Yale as possible. It would be up to Yale's first women undergraduates to do the disrupting required. But first, they would have to get in.

TWO

Superwomen

IN LITTLE FALLS, NEW JERSEY, A SUBURB OF NEWARK, IN a three-bedroom ranch house on Brookhill Place, seventeen-year-old Kit McClure was working on her application to Yale. Kit was a senior at Passaic Valley Regional High, a high school like so many others in the United States that it could have come off an assembly line. Passaic Valley had a mascot (a hornet), long linoleum hallways that shone after waxing, a prom, a football team, and a marching band. At the halftime shows of the Passaic Valley football games, you could see Kit right out on the field with the band. She was the one with the bright red hair, the only girl playing trombone.

Kit's parents, liberal on so many other matters, had forbidden it. Girls don't play trombone, they told her. Girls played flute, violin, and piano—the instrument Kit had been playing since she was seven years old. Kit was determined to play trombone, though, and she talked Passaic Valley's band director into letting her practice with one of the trombones in the band room after school. By the time Kit's parents figured out what she was up to, she had already taught herself to play. And now there was this opportunity at Yale.

Yale had one of the best music programs in the country, world-class concert halls, and the icing on the cake: building after building of science labs. After music, science was Kit's passion. The summer before, she had won a National Science Foundation scholarship and spent July and August doing research at Cornell. Yale would be an incredible college for Kit, but kids from Passaic Valley High School did not go to places like Yale. They went to Montclair State or Patterson State or became beauticians or auto mechanics. Still, it was worth a try. Maybe Kit was the type of girl Yale was looking for.

Meanwhile, 230 miles north at Simmons College, an all-women's school in Boston, Shirley Daniels was also working on her Yale application. Shirley was already a college freshman when Yale made its announcement, but in Shirley's first fall at Simmons, she'd met a guy named Sam Cooper, a black sophomore from Yale who was there one weekend on a road trip to check out the Simmons black women. Shirley and Sam started talking, and he told her about the Afro-American studies major that Yale would begin offering the next year. It would be one of the few in the country.

Shirley had lived in Roxbury, the heart of black Boston, ever since she was twelve. At Simmons, she was a member of the black students' organization. Shirley would have preferred a coed college, but she liked how Simmons encouraged its women students to get professional degrees and the way it emphasized that women should be independent thinkers. Simmons did not offer Afro-American studies, however, and as far as Shirley knew, it was not planning to. The idea that she might be able to spend her next three years of college studying black history was remarkable, and Sam said Yale was accepting transfer students as well as freshmen. "Why don't you apply?" he asked her, and so Shirley did, writing with her whole heart why she wanted to major in Afro-American studies at Yale.

From across the country, the applications poured in as girls who had grown up thinking that Yale was off-limits now went for their chance to

get in. Connie Royster had grown up a few miles from Yale and so knew firsthand Yale's reputation and the incredible resources that were on offer there: a university art gallery with collections rivaling some of the best museums in the country, world-class teachers, and a thriving theater scene that included the University Theatre and the newly opened Yale Repertory Theatre. Connie's love of the arts, first cultivated by her boarding school, had grown deeper in her year as an exchange student in England and during her first semester at Wheaton, a women's college in southern Massachusetts. If colleges let you major in being a Renaissance woman, Connie would have been the first to sign up. Absent that possibility, she could not think of a better place to attend college than Yale.

For Connie, the draw of Yale was personal as well. Her family had worked in Yale's fraternities as chefs and managers since the early 1900s, and as a small child, Connie had played in the fraternity kitchens when the extended family was called in to help for a major event. Connie's family was well respected among New Haven's black community. Her grandmother had cofounded the New Haven branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and her Aunt Connie was well known nationally, although by a different name: U.S. district court judge Constance Baker Motley. Motley had been appointed in 1966 as America's first black woman federal judge. Before then, she worked as an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and argued ten cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, winning nine of them (the tenth was later reversed in Motley's favor). In the early 1960s, she succeeded in overturning the long-standing ban on black students at a number of public universities in the South, including the University of Mississippi and the University of Georgia.

Connie Royster was named for her Aunt Connie, and now she had a chance to apply to Yale, something that had not been possible for women when Constance Baker Motley went to college. Connie's family took pride in their long connection with Yale, and she had always been one of the

smart kids at school. Of course she would apply…but whether she would get in was anyone's guess.

Betty Spahn did not apply to Yale, at least not intentionally. It all started as a joke played by her roommate Caroline. Betty and Caroline were freshmen at George Washington University, and after Yale announced it was going coed, Caroline's father, a Yale alumnus, sent Caroline one of the transfer student applications. Caroline's grades weren't good enough to even bother filling it out, but Betty, thought Caroline, was perfect for Yale. Betty had just aced her first semester at George Washington, and before that, she had been an Illinois high school debate champion. The preliminary application for transfers was no more than a form with some blanks for grades, extracurriculars, and address—information that Caroline could easily provide about her roommate. On a lark, she and one of their other roommates filled out the form on Betty's behalf and sent it to Yale. Betty had no idea.

Betty was from Park Forest, a town an hour south of Chicago. She grew up in a neighborhood of ranch houses built right after World War II, where you could walk into any one of your neighbors' kitchens and find the exact same layout as your own. The stove was on the left as you walked in, the sink sitting under a window that overlooked the small yard out back. Betty's parents were churchgoing Republicans, suspicious of the moral bearings of Easterners. Neither was happy that Betty had decided to attend George Washington. Why couldn't she just go to the University of Illinois? It had been good enough for her mother. But Betty had spent a year as an exchange student in Germany by then. She was not interested in limiting her world to that which lay within a two-hour drive of her childhood home.

At the beginning of March, Betty opened her George Washington

mailbox and was surprised to find inside a letter from the director of undergraduate admissions at Yale.

"Dear Miss Spahn," it read. "The Admissions Committee has concluded its review of preliminary candidates for transfer, and I am pleased to advise that the Committee wishes to have you submit your complete credentials." Betty was totally confused. What was this about? The letter went on: "The application for final transfer candidates and other forms and cards are enclosed…We look forward to receiving your application."

Caroline thought it was hilarious. Of course Betty had to follow through with the rest, Caroline argued after explaining what she had done, and once Betty got over her initial shock, she agreed. Yale was one of the top two schools in the country, right? Who would pass up a chance to go there? Betty wrote the essay required and sent it in with her recommendations and the other material Yale asked for. In a month, she would know whether or not she had made the next cut.

On April 13, 1969, the week before Yale's acceptance letters went out, the *New York Times*' Sunday magazine ran an eleven-page article about the young women who had applied to Yale, every one of whom, reported the *Times*, came with effusive recommendations, straight A's, and flawless board scores (or close to it). One had traveled through Bosnia with a Serbian friend, taught in the newly formed Head Start program, and choreographed the dance scenes in her high school's production of *The King and I.* Another had studied Anglo-Saxon poetry and religious art and hoped to major in medieval studies; she had tutored high school students on a Navajo reservation over the summer. Of the entire eleven-page article, however, what Yale's women undergraduates remember most is what the *New York Times* called them. They were "the female versions of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Uebermensch*." They were "superwomen."

The word stuck like a mark on the forehead of every girl admitted to Yale that year. "Oh," they'd hear, "you're one of those superwomen." It

separated them from one another, as each newcomer wondered, *Why would any of these superachieving women be friends with someone like me?* For the students who harbored any insecurities or thoughts that maybe they had been admitted by mistake, there was that *superwoman* word, feeding their doubts.

Yale sent out two types of letters that April. Most girls got the thin envelope, the one that held the sparse words of rejection. The fat envelope crammed with the acceptance letter and the accompanying forms was the one that you wanted.

Outside Philadelphia, in the small town of Swarthmore, a postman wended his way through a subdivision of half-acre lots with street names that spoke to the aspirations of its residents: Columbia Avenue, Dartmouth Avenue, Harvard Avenue, North and South Princeton Avenues, Rutgers Avenue, Yale Avenue. When seventeen-year-old Lawrie Mifflin began her senior year at Swarthmore's public high school that fall, not one of those colleges accepted women. Lawrie lived on Drew Avenue, one of the few streets in the neighborhood named for a college that was already coed. She was cocaptain of Swarthmore High School's field hockey team, and as one of the top kids in her class, Lawrie had seen for herself that boys were no smarter than girls. She deserved a shot at Yale as much as they did. Lawrie sent in her application, and then, like everyone else, she waited.

The postman turned onto Drew Avenue and walked up the short driveway to number 419. He lifted the lid of the metal mailbox on the wall beside the front door and jammed a fat envelope inside. The announcement it contained was printed at the top with Yale's coat of arms and its motto, "Lux et Veritas," light and truth. At the bottom was the signature of Yale's dean of admissions, R. Inslee Clark. In between were the words that most mattered: "Yale University announces with pleasure the admission of Lawrie Mifflin to the Class of 1973 of Yale College and hereby extends a cordial welcome to this community of scholars." Of all the students, male

and female, who applied to Yale from Swarthmore High School that year, Lawrie was the only one who got in.

The acceptances were equally slim at other schools: one girl from Lincoln High School in Kansas City, one from Susan Miller Dorsey High School in Los Angeles, and one from Passaic Valley Regional High School outside of Newark, New Jersey—a redheaded trombone player named McClure.

Kit had been excited at first when she got the letter, but then she thought about it for a moment. "Oh, no. We can't afford this," Kit said to her mother.

"Oh, no. We'll afford this," her mother replied.

For every high school girl who applied to Yale that year, one in twelve got in. It was far better to be a boy, where the odds improved to one out of seven. Yale may have gone coed, but that did not mean it wanted a school that was half girls. Even among alumni kids, that most favored group, boys were twice as likely to be accepted by Yale as girls were.

The competition for spaces in Yale's sophomore and junior classes was equally fierce. "Ever since you've been two years old, you've heard that Yale and Harvard are *the* schools," explained one Brandeis sophomore. "And suddenly now you had this chance to go." Yale offered a breadth and depth of resources and programs that none of the colleges then open to women could offer. And for many who had ended up at an all-women's college, a coed environment was just as appealing as it was to Yale men. As the letters from Yale's admissions office began arriving, the mailrooms at Smith and Wellesley, at Vassar and Mount Holyoke, filled with the shrieks of the girls who had been accepted, while others walked back to their rooms in silence. In some cases, one roommate got in while another did not. The friendships did not always survive the experience.

From Simmons College in Boston, Yale accepted two students. One was Shirley Daniels. She would get to major in Afro-American studies after all.

Shirley's father was ecstatic. "Yale! Yale! My daughter's going to Yale! She's going to Yale!" He too had once had plans for college, and while he rarely talked about himself, Shirley learned from her aunt that he had even been accepted to Harvard. But after he graduated from Boston Latin, Boston's premier public high school, World War II had broken out and Shirley's father chose to join the army instead. He served for twenty-three years and never got his college degree. But now his daughter was going to Yale. "She's going to Yale!" he said over and over.

"He could not stop talking about it," said Shirley, smiling.

In towns and cities across the United States, the envelopes from Yale arrived. Betty Spahn may have been surprised the first time she received a letter from Yale, but this time she was watching for it. Her parents were hardly enthusiastic. Both of them were proud of Betty's good grades. Her father told her she could be anything she wanted to be. But if Betty was going to transfer schools, why not come back to Illinois? She could achieve her dreams there too, and the tuition would sure be a lot cheaper. Betty had made up her mind, though. She was accepting Yale's offer of admission, and she would just have to figure out later how to earn the money she needed to go there.

New Haven native Connie Royster got the fat envelope too. Connie was thrilled, of course, but her acceptance was still bittersweet. Connie was nearing the end of her first year at Wheaton. She had made friends and a place for herself there. Wheaton had supported her love for the theater, and she had starred in a number of plays. Once the letter from Yale came, though, there was really no choice.

For Connie, going to Yale was "a kind of reclaiming or claiming." Her family had been employed at Yale since the start of the century, when her grandfather and his brother emigrated from Nevis. Connie's grandfather was no longer alive, but he would have rejoiced at the news. Connie's acceptance was not just a personal accomplishment but an accomplishment

for the entire family. She would never turn that down. Besides, it was *Yale* after all, one of the top two schools in the country. "Education was the most important thing in my family, the most important," said Connie. She told her roommate first and then went to call her parents. Connie Royster was going to Yale.

The *New York Times* may have called them superwomen, but most of the women undergraduates accepted by Yale that first year were still teenagers. It's not hard to imagine each of them at kitchen tables or bedroom desks, reading through the paperwork and filling out the forms that Yale sent them in thick envelopes each month through the summer of 1969. And as they did so, all around them events unlike any they had ever seen began to reshape the world they grew up in.

In June, hundreds of gay men and women, fed up with their relentless harassment, fought back when police began arresting patrons of a gay bar in Greenwich Village called the Stonewall Inn. In July, a man walked on the moon. In August, four hundred thousand young hippies at a New York music festival made the name "Woodstock"—until then just some town in the Catskills—a permanent part of the American vocabulary. And in every part of the country, whether Spokane or Houston or Baltimore, the first women undergraduates ever admitted to Yale made ready for the next step in their education and prepared to travel to New Haven in September.

Less than two weeks remained before the students arrived at Yale, and Elga Wasserman, special assistant to the president for the education of women, was firing off memos.

To Lewis Beach, physical plant manager: *The ladies' restrooms are still not ready. Seven are locked. Two have broken toilets. You can barely find sixteen of them.*

To Kingman Brewster, president of Yale: *We need a woman in the*

admissions office; I'll come up with some names. We need a write-up of our coeducation plans to give potential donors; I'll work on it. And yes, with some luck, I think the housing for the girls will be ready by the time they arrive.

That a woman at Yale would be signing her name to such memos was startling. *Power* was not a word one associated with women on college campuses in 1969—not at Yale, not anywhere. Deans of women, who had once held sway at the big state schools like the University of Kansas, had been losing their jobs for two decades to the new deans of students, invariably men. Ninety-five percent of coed colleges had men as presidents, and even some of the top women's colleges had male presidents too. "The higher, the fewer" was the rule that applied to women in college administration, and so just like the women undergraduates who would soon be arriving at Yale, Elga Wasserman was breaking new ground.

Wasserman was the most visible woman administrator at Yale, the only one reporting directly to Brewster. The job of overseeing coeducation was not hers alone, though—at least, not at first. The day after the Yale Corporation voted to move forward on coeducation, Brewster turned to his adviser Sam Chauncey and said, "You son of a bitch, you pushed me into this thing. You've gotta make it happen."

Chauncey agreed to take a temporary leave from his role in the president's office and help Yale prepare for coeducation, but Brewster wanted a woman to lead the coeducation effort—it wouldn't look right to have it led by a man—and he wanted a woman from inside of Yale. Yale was special. No outsider could understand what made it that way, and Brewster almost always hired administrators who, like him, had gone to college at Yale. No woman could yet lay claim to that credential, but at least a woman who worked at Yale would have a feel for the place. Yet Brewster's choices were slim. Like other colleges, Yale had not made it a practice to hire women administrators.

In the fall of 1968, when Brewster began his search for a Yale woman

to lead coeducation, fifty-three of Yale's top fifty-four administrators were men. The one woman was the associate librarian for technical services—not exactly a position of influence. Widening the pool from Yale's central administrative ranks to its graduate and professional schools expanded the list of women candidates by four: two nursing school deans and two assistant deans at the graduate school. And Assistant Dean Elga Wasserman wanted the job.

Wasserman was forty-four years old, with a string of accomplishments unusual for a woman of her era. But when the *Yale Alumni Magazine* introduced her to the broader Yale community in a December 1968 article, it described Wasserman as "a housewife, mother of two, skating and skiing enthusiast, sometime interior decorator, chemist, teacher, and former assistant dean of the Graduate School," burying at the end of the sentence the achievements that most qualified her for the job. Wasserman was in fact a chemist with a PhD from Harvard, a college chemistry professor, and an administrator with six years' experience at Yale Graduate School. And she had three children, not two.

By the time Brewster chose her to lead coeducation at Yale, Wasserman had lived in New Haven for twenty years, ever since Yale's chemistry department hired her husband, Harry, in 1948. Wasserman's two decades at Yale had not left her bitter; her personality did not tend that way. But like any woman with aspiration, Elga Wasserman bore a few scars.

She had graduated summa cum laude from Smith College, and when she and Harry first moved to New Haven, they came with the identical degree: a PhD in chemistry from Harvard. Harry stepped right onto the track leading to a tenured position on Yale's faculty, but for Wasserman, that PhD was a path to nowhere. Yale did not hire women chemists. Instead, the university routed them into positions as research assistants, a job where women could tread water and watch men with the same qualifications move swiftly by. This was the job that Wasserman got when she first came to Yale.

Women with degrees in history or English didn't do much better. There was not yet a single tenured woman on the Yale College faculty when Wasserman first got there. Neither Princeton nor Harvard had a tenured woman professor either. But at least in Boston a woman with a PhD might teach at Wellesley or Simmons. For those who sought to work at a top-ranked college, New Haven was a one-company town, and if you were the woman in a two-PhD couple, as Wasserman was, you were out of luck. "Women were sort of the ornaments to the men, which was not my style," said Wasserman. "I was very unhappy."

But Wasserman was resilient. She had learned that trait as a young girl. She was German by birth, and until she was twelve, her family had lived a comfortable middle-class life in Berlin. Hitler's rise did not bode well for Jewish families like hers, though, and in 1936 the family fled, eventually settling in Great Neck, New York. There, Wasserman mastered a new language, made new friends, learned the routines of a new school, and excelled. That early practice at negotiating change served her well.

Wasserman had her first child a year after she and Harry moved to New Haven, and over the next thirteen years, she crafted a life from the options available. She pulled together a series of part-time jobs, working as a lab assistant and teaching a few courses at the local state college. She raised her three children and made some friends. Then, in 1962, Elga Wasserman got a break. Yale Graduate School dean John Perry Miller, who lived down the street, called and asked if she would be interested in working as assistant dean. It was an unusual move. Outside the nursing school, Yale had no women deans at that point, and the job that Miller offered Wasserman was not just assistant dean but assistant dean in charge of sciences, the land of men. When Miller agreed to let her work part time so she could be home when her kids got out of school, Wasserman accepted his offer and became assistant dean at the Yale Graduate School, the spot from which, six years later, Kingman Brewster hired her to lead the transition to coeducation at Yale.

Those then, are the outlines of Wasserman's life up to age forty-four, when Brewster tapped her to work on coeducation with Sam Chauncey. Over the next four years, she had both fans and critics. But of all the things said about Elga Wasserman, the sentence perhaps most worth noting is one she uttered herself, a comment on Brewster's decision to hire her: "I don't think he knew who he was getting, really."

The first women undergraduates arrived at Yale on September 12, a Friday. Shirley Daniels came by bus, making her way from her home in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood to the Trailways station downtown and then settling into her seat for the three-hour trip to New Haven. The bus let her off across from her residential college at Yale, Timothy Dwight, and Shirley carried her bags through the college's arched entryway and into the courtyard beyond. She could hardly believe it. Less than a year ago, she had not even realized it was possible to major in Afro-American studies, and now here she was, ready to begin. Shirley found her room, unpacked her belongings, and then went out to walk around Yale.

It was quite a sight. The college rose up from the city around it like some Gothic mirage, as if the campus had been airlifted out of fifteenth-century England and deposited neatly in downtown New Haven. The school's stone buildings, with their towers and turrets, pressed up tight to the sidewalks. Gargoyles stared down from the rooflines. Yale's campus included museums, concert halls, courtyards, sculptures, and one building older than the nation itself. The gym was the largest in the world, the library as majestic as a European cathedral. Yale was a place where one walked with head craned upward, trying to take it all in.

It was quiet the day that Shirley arrived, with a misty rain cloaking the city, but by Saturday, the tempo picked up. The streets of New Haven

clogged with cars bearing out-of-state plates and cruising for parking spots. Students arrived from all over the country. Some came by airplane, others by train or by bus. But mostly, Yale's first women undergraduates came by car, arriving in Pontiacs and Chevrolets from Pennsylvania and New Jersey and the outskirts of Syracuse.

"It was an hour and twenty-five minutes via the Throgs Neck Bridge," said a woman sophomore who drove up from Queens, her father behind the wheel of the family's light-blue Chevy Chevelle. "And it was exciting, I tell you."

Yale enrolled 575 women undergraduates that year: 230 freshmen women, 151 sophomores, and 194 juniors. The senior class remained all men since Yale did not award undergraduate degrees to students who had not been there at least two years. For the most part, the new female students mirrored the racial and ethnic diversity of their male classmates, which was to say, they were not that diverse. Ninety percent of the women were white. There were forty black women students in all: twenty-five freshmen, eight sophomores, and seven juniors. The numbers of Asian American women were smaller still: thirteen across all three classes. As for Latina students, there were three: one Chicana freshman and a sophomore and junior of Puerto Rican heritage. Native American women, if there were any, went uncounted.

Over the weekend, the students streamed onto campus, with cars parked every which way along Chapel Street. The sidewalks crowded with parents and kids carting boxes and suitcases up to their rooms while reporters and film crews who had traveled to New Haven to chronicle the arrival of coeducation trailed after them. "Oh, you're a *Yale* woman!" they called out to the girls. "Tell us what it's like to be a Yale woman." The *New York Times* was there, along with the *International Herald Tribune*, *Time* magazine, and *Women's Daily*. Everyone wanted to hear what the superwomen would say. But there were bags to unpack and roommates to meet, and so the

young women went about the task of moving in, dodging the press as they did so.

Connie Royster and her parents drove to Yale from their home in Bethany, Connecticut, on Saturday. The family had moved from New Haven when Connie was in junior high school, but on Sundays, they still worshipped at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, a few blocks up Whalley Avenue from Yale, and work and family were in New Haven as well. They made the half-hour drive in all the time. Yet this trip was special. The Royster clan had put in lifetimes at the fraternities at Yale, and now Connie was enrolling as a student there. She had been assigned to Berkeley, one of Yale's residential colleges, and given three roommates: two juniors and one who was a sophomore like Connie, a girl from Illinois named Elizabeth Spahn. Connie had been close with her roommate at Wheaton. With any luck, this Elizabeth Spahn might become a friend too.

As the Royster family approached New Haven, Betty Spahn stood alone in the Berkeley dorm room that she and Connie had been assigned. Betty's parents had not been able to take her to Yale. It was a long way from Park Forest, and they had her three younger brothers to take care of. Besides, it was not as if this was Betty's first time leaving home. She had already been at George Washington University for a year by then and in Germany for the year before that. Betty caught a ride east with her high school boyfriend and his father, who were headed to Harvard and agreed to drop her off at Yale on the way. Betty had never been to Yale before. She knew it was famous. But until she asked to look at the map at the start of the trip, Betty had thought Yale was in Boston.

The drive took more than fourteen hours, mile after mile through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. It was an uncomfortable journey. Betty and her boyfriend had continued dating through her first year at George Washington, and she had traveled to see him at West Point, the college he attended for his first two years. But over

the summer, they had drifted apart, and Betty was taken by surprise when he told her that he was transferring to Harvard. His family, however, blamed Betty for his decision because she was the one who had started to question why the United States was in Vietnam.

They had Betty wrong, though. True, Vietnam made less and less sense to her, but even President Richard Nixon was promising an end to the war. Betty was no radical—they didn't grow them out there in Park Forest—and she wasn't a feminist either, at least not yet. Few of Yale's first women undergraduates would have described themselves that way. They all were aware of their pioneer status. How could they not be? But Kingman Brewster wasn't the only one who hadn't yet read Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. "Most people didn't experience 'the sixties' until the seventies," wrote novelist Julian Barnes. So too with the women's movement.

The car pulled up in front of the arched stone entryway of Yale's Berkeley College. Betty Spahn unfolded herself from the backseat and stretched her cramped legs. Her high school boyfriend and his father were quick with goodbyes, and Betty watched as their car pulled back onto Elm Street and drove off. Betty was nine hundred miles from home, alone in a place where she did not know a soul. She got the key to her room, carried her suitcase up the stone stairway, and slowly opened the door. The room was entirely empty. No roommates. No furniture. Yale provided a bunk bed, a desk, and a bureau, but the rest of the furniture was up to you. No one had told that to Betty, and she had assumed Yale would be like George Washington, where her room came fully furnished. *They must do things differently at Yale*, she thought. At least they had sent her a postcard with the names of her three roommates. Two were juniors, but the other, like her, was a sophomore: Constance Royster from Connecticut. Maybe Constance would be the friend that Betty Spahn needed.

Over in the Coeducation Office on Grove Street, Elga Wasserman was pleased with how smoothly the move in was going. She and Sam Chauncey had worked well together in the lead-up to September. Chauncey managed the renovations made to the freshmen women's dorm in Vanderbilt Hall, and Wasserman handled pretty much everything else with the brisk, get-it-done efficiency for which she'd been known at Yale Graduate School. Gynecology service set up in the Yale Health Center? Check. Women students assigned roommates? Check. Women's locker room added to Payne Whitney Gym? Check. Academic advisers assigned to each incoming woman? Check. Speakers organized for the women students' orientation meeting? Check. Yet not everything had not gone as Wasserman wanted in the initial months of her new job.

Transforming Yale into a college where women felt as welcome as men was already a formidable goal. Institutions do not slough off their history so easily. But before the women had even arrived, Kingman Brewster put in place two ground rules that made Wasserman's task even harder.

Rule number one was that the addition of women would not reduce the ranks of Yale men, and so the women were outnumbered seven to one, a ratio whose costs would soon become clear. The second ground rule was that the women would be divided evenly among Yale's twelve residential colleges, thus diluting their small numbers still further. These colleges were far more than just dormitories with fancy names. They were enclosed communities within the larger campus, complete with their own academic deans, fellowship of faculty members, and masters, the heads of the colleges. Yale had no student center where undergraduates could gather. Instead, there were the twelve colleges, each turned inward to a central courtyard accessible only through the college gate. Students ate in their college, formed their closest friendships in their college, attended the social events

of their college, took part in the student government of their college, and from sophomore year on, they lived in their college.

Some stereotypes arose about the college personalities—Calhoun was supposedly for the beer-drinking jocks; Ezra Stiles was full of eccentrics—but such characterizations did not hold up to much scrutiny. Yale sought to make each college a microcosm of the university as a whole, and so they chose students' colleges for them in the summer before their freshman year. Transferring to a different college required all sorts of permissions and paperwork, so students generally stayed where Yale put them. For the white male undergraduates whom Yale had long served, the system worked to create a smaller, more intimate environment. For groups that were in the minority—students of color, women—dividing a small number still further only made things worse.

The freshmen girls would seem to have avoided this splintering up since they all lived together in their own dorm on the Old Campus, Vanderbilt Hall. Yet even here, the residential college divisions separated the women from one another. If you were in Trumbull College, then your roommates were too and so were the women across the hall. These were the same women whom you would see at meals and the social events of your college. There may have been 230 freshmen women at Yale, but each of them would graduate having never met most of the women in their class. The women sophomores and juniors had it harder still, for Yale parceled them out in groups of thirty to each college, where they lived in the same buildings, although not on the same floors, as the 250 men who lived there.

Brewster himself had argued at first against splitting the women up. Women students should not be housed as "a small isolated minority" in each college, he told the residential college masters right after the coeducation decision went through. The solution was straightforward: some colleges would have women students in the first year of coeducation, but

others would have to wait until women's numbers increased. Yale's male students, or at least the ones Brewster listened to, saw it differently and pushed hard for assigning women to all twelve colleges. By February 1969, Brewster gave in. Every college would have its own small group of girls. As a *Yale Daily News* columnist explained, Yale had to divide the women up "to prevent a spring riot by giving every undergrad a slice of—or at least a look at—the pie." And if the cost was creating an environment that was harder for the women, well, so be it.

Elga Wasserman fought the decision to split up the women long after Brewster stopped listening to her, and she assured incoming women students in an August letter that Yale would soon have a plan in place to expand women's enrollment from the initial 575 to "at least 1,500," the number Brewster had initially promised. That target would still leave women students outnumbered four to one by the men, but at least it was a start. Achieving even that meager goal, though, would prove far more difficult than Wasserman ever anticipated.

By the time the women students arrived, Wasserman was overseeing coeducation on her own, and Chauncey had moved back to his office next to Brewster's. Wasserman was ready to lead, and she had the intelligence and charisma required. "There was something hard-edged, but hard-edged like a finely cut diamond, when she walked into a room," said a student intern in Wasserman's Coeducation Office. "She glowed…and not because she was flamboyant. It was her intelligence and her personal energy." But the traits that worked well for men in positions of power did not always work so well for women.

Wasserman had been in her new role at Yale for seven months by September and was beginning to see the walls of the box she had been placed in. When she first got the job, a male colleague described her as "a really brilliant gal who doesn't push it." That wasn't just a description of Wasserman, though. It was a job requirement. Push too hard as a woman,

and you would get labeled as "strident" or "aggressive" or "difficult." Fail to push and nothing changed. For a woman leader at Yale, the space in between was only a few inches wide. And so Wasserman learned to stay in the "safe middle ground," as she put it, but that did not mean she was happy about it. She had come to her new role at Yale with such a strong vision of what she wanted to accomplish.

Yale could be a leader in the education of women. It could show the nation how to build an institution where women with talent got the same chance as men. The work was not just about students, thought Wasserman. Faculty, staff, graduate women, and careers after college—Yale needed to move forward on all of them. Up until September, the logistical crises created by Yale's hasty coeducation decision had required all Wasserman's attention, but now that most of those problems were behind her, there was time to consider real change. And that is where things had started to get murky. Did Brewster intend to give her the power she needed, or was she just the one brought in to tidy up details after the decision makers had left the room? Wasserman knew the role that she wanted. But she had been at Yale long enough to recognize the signs that she might in the end be just the gal with the broom.

Maybe the title was a small thing, but she still burned every time she had to put it at the bottom of a letter: Special Assistant to the President on the Education of Women. It was "an insane title," said Wasserman, a mouthful of words no one ever got right. "Associate Dean of Yale College" was the title she wanted. The associate dean was a recognizable role at Yale, one held by men. It was the logical next step from Wasserman's assistant dean position at the graduate school. But Brewster said no. Some of the male deans in Yale College objected, he told her, explaining that they felt it would be demeaning to them for a woman to hold that title. So Wasserman became a "special assistant," a position well off to the side of the hierarchy at Yale.

The slight, like many Wasserman bore, was invisible to the students. But each time Wasserman's standing at Yale was diminished, so too was her power to advocate for the young women who were unpacking their bags at Yale.

Across Yale's campus, the women students continued to arrive. For the Yale men who hoped to gain a girlfriend, move-in day offered a chance to meet the new women before the prettiest ones were all taken, and Yale men were quick to introduce themselves to the thirty women sophomores and juniors assigned to their college. The 230 freshmen women in Vanderbilt Hall were a particular draw. There were more to choose from, for one thing, and a sense perhaps that the freshmen girls might be more impressed than the female sophomores and juniors by all the charms of Yale men.

Out in the Vanderbilt courtyard, the men waited, surveying each new arrival. When a girl caught their eye, they leapt up with a smile and offered to carry her luggage. Some men skipped this step and just knocked on the doors of the women who had already moved in. "Oh! I lived here when I was a freshman!" they told the girls, who invited the visitors in so they could see what had changed. The boys surveyed the room and stayed to talk for a while afterward. Eventually they left, smiling their goodbyes. "Oh, how nice," the women said to one another. And then, a few floors down, the men knocked on a new door and exclaimed to the young women who answered: "Oh! I lived here when I was a freshman!"

By Sunday, the weather grew hot, and the women students who arrived that day—some dressed in bell-bottomed blue jeans, others in short skirts or dresses—gratefully accepted the men's offers to carry their suitcases up Vanderbilt's long flights of stairs. Among those ferrying belongings from their car to their rooms, it was hard to miss Kit McClure. Her red hair fell

in waves down to her shoulders, and out of her car came the trombone. For a girl in 1960s America, it was like some bright piece of contraband. A few other freshmen arrived with possessions that puzzled the Yale men as well. The hairdryers, the typewriters, the posters and desk lamps—those were expected, but from one station wagon came a girl with a stick that was polished and sturdy and curved at the end. Lawrie Mifflin had driven up from Swarthmore with her parents and was carrying her field hockey stick up to her room with the rest of her things. It would be exciting to play field hockey for Yale. Hopefully she was good enough to make the team.

Back and forth went the shuttles from car to dorm room until eventually some of the parents began saying their goodbyes, the mothers trying not to cry, the fathers long practiced at avoiding such emotion. The moment weighed hard on Yale's first women freshmen as well. Most were leaving home for the first time.

The 575 women undergraduates who arrived at Yale in 1969 came from the West Coast and East Coast and most states in between. They came from big cities and suburbs and places so small the address was a rural free delivery number. They differed in race and ethnicity and in whether they worried about their family's ability to pay the $3,600 it cost for Yale's room, board, and tuition that year—the same amount of money it cost then to buy two Volkswagen Beetle cars. In many ways, Yale's first women undergraduates were as different as a group of 575 can be, but they did hold a few things in common.

These girls were smart—smarter than the boys, as the first term grades would show. And they were tough. Or at least, that's how they had appeared on their applications.

Sam Chauncey and Elga Wasserman had made the final decisions about which women got in that year. The admissions office had already started reading the applications of male students by the time Yale decided to admit women, and so a compromise was struck. The admissions staff

would manage the initial processing of the women's applications—ensuring they were complete, sorting them into folders, arranging the folders into stack upon stack of file boxes—and Wasserman and Chauncey would take it from there. Over the winter, the two spent hour after hour reading through the applications of each of the nearly five thousand women who had applied.

Typically, Yale employed a two-part ranking system that emphasized applicants' leadership potential as much as their intelligence, a reflection both of Yale's perceived mission and, before Brewster became president, its long-standing anti-Semitism. Yale had stopped admitting students based solely on academics in the 1920s, when too many Jews began passing its entrance exams. By the 1940s, the *Yale Alumni Magazine* defined Yale's mission as educating "fine citizens" who would be "rather unscholarly" but demonstrate "character, personality, leadership in school affairs, and the like." And so it continued through the years. By the late 1960s, Yale economics professor Ed Lindblom, who served on the Admissions Committee, was appalled to find that Yale's admissions staff saw scholarly excellence as "a source of personality disorder or sickness or queerness."

Despite the inherent subjectivity of measures like character, Yale's admissions process had at least the appearance of objectivity. Each folder had two readers. Each reader ranked the application from one to nine on two different scales: academic promise and personal promise, the leadership piece. Thirty-six was the perfect score, a nine on both scales from both readers. These scores were then condensed into one of four numbers: one for the strongest applicants, two for those who were reasonably strong, three for applicants who were shakier, and four for the weakest group. The admissions staff did this initial ranking, and then from the beginning of March through early April, an admissions committee of faculty members and Yale College deans worked with the staff to decide which applicants to admit. The ones almost always got in; the fours never did, and most of

the deliberation focused on the twos and threes: which to admit, which to reject, and which to wait-list.

That was the process used for the male students who entered Yale in 1969, but there was no time for that for the women, and besides, Chauncey and Wasserman were looking for a quality in that first group of women that was not as necessary for the men. After screening for academics, they chose the women for grit.

Girls who had four brothers, who had attended a huge high school, who had worked for a year, who had lived abroad, who had played sports, who had endured a traumatic event—those were the ones that Chauncey and Wasserman wanted. Yale's first women undergraduates may not have yet understood the challenges that awaited them, but Chauncey and Wasserman did. "There was no point in taking a timid woman and putting her in this environment," said Chauncey, "because it could crush you."

THREE

A Thousand Male Leaders

LAWRIE MIFFLIN WAS READY TO PLAY FIELD HOCKEY. SHE had played every autumn since she was eleven—many of the girls in her high school had played too. The streets of Swarthmore may have been named for colleges that only men could attend, but the playing fields were filled each fall with girls wielding hockey sticks, smacking the ball down the field as hard as they could. "Being a member of a team gives you confidence and power," said Constance Applebee, who introduced field hockey to the United States in 1901. Lawrie had brought her shin guards and a bag of balls to Yale along with her hockey stick. She just needed to figure out how to sign up for the team.

Yale's orientation week schedule listed introductory meetings for a half dozen men's sports but made no mention of field hockey, so after saying goodbye to her parents, Lawrie set off for the other side of campus, where the athletic office was. "Where do I sign up for field hockey?" she asked the man behind the desk. He looked confused. There were no sign-ups, he told her. There was no team. There was also no women's soccer team, no women's basketball, and no women's tennis or swim team or crew. Yale was not offering any competitive sports for women.

Athletic girls did have a few options to choose from. Lawrie could take classes in modern dance, ballet, and something called "women's exercise," a watered-down version of the fitness training offered to men. She could learn synchronized swimming from a part-time instructor from Southern Connecticut College. She could help exercise the polo ponies, although girls could not join the team, and she could be a cheerleader, sort of. Yale's cheerleading squad announced that it would include four girls on the team that year, a limit that kept the nine men in the majority. And no "girl-style" cheerleading. "We don't want rah-rah cheerleaders here at Yale," the team captain warned any woman who considered trying out. Cheerleading at Yale was manly, full of muscle beach tricks like headstands, pyramids, and forward rolls. While the guys performed in long pants, the girls would be baring their legs in culottes.

Lawrie Mifflin was not interested in cheerleading or any of the other choices Yale was offering to women. No field hockey? It was hard to believe.

Lawrie would miss all that she loved about playing on a team: the adrenaline of competition, the bonds built with teammates, the structure of daily practices, and the joy of the game. What was more fun than a day in September with the smell of fall leaves and the sun on your skin and a shot flicked just beyond the goalie's fingers after a perfect pass from your friend? Yale's failure to provide women's sports teams also robbed women students of the visibility and prestige that came from representing Yale on the sports field. Just like at any other college, Yale's athletes were campus stars. But you could only be one if you were a guy.

It wasn't much better with the other student groups. The *Yale Daily News* said it welcomed women, but if you looked at the bylines, you could barely tell that Yale was coed. Other groups banned women outright. "It would make an inferior sound to have girls singing," explained a member of the Yale Whiffenpoofs, the most prestigious singing group at Yale. The Whiffenpoofs toured internationally and produced a record album each

year, but they saw no reason that they should allow women to join. To make sure that Yale's new women would not complain about being excluded, the Whiffs went on offense and helped found an all-women's singing group, the New Blue. If the women had their own group, the reasoning went, they would not ask to audition for the Whiffenpoofs.

Not all student organizations treated women this way. Connie Royster found a home right away at the Yale Dramatic Association—"the Dramat," as everyone called it. Many of the less prestigious student groups—the Outing Club, the literary magazine, the Mathematics Club—welcomed women in. But girls were still barred from great swaths of extracurricular life at Yale: all competitive sports, five of Yale's six a cappella singing groups, the marching band, and Yale's most elite senior societies, the secret brotherhoods whose members included some of Yale's most prominent student leaders.

Kit McClure did not know yet that Yale's marching band would not accept women members. She planned to play her trombone in the band, just like she had in high school. But back in January, before Yale had even sent out its acceptance letters to women undergraduates, Band Director Keith Wilson called Sam Chauncey to explain that the marching band would be staying all male. Women could play in the concert band if they were good enough, said Wilson, but the guys in the marching band had told him they did not want any girls marching with them. Besides, no Ivy League marching band allowed women musicians, nor for that matter did most of the Big Ten. Wilson saw no reason for Yale to be different.

Chauncey sent Elga Wasserman a memo about the phone call. "Sounds OK," she wrote back in reply. She could not take on every injustice at Yale, at least not at once, and perhaps Wasserman, who had always made her mark in the classroom, underestimated how central extracurriculars were to life at Yale. A month later, her coeducation planning committee made that indifference to women's exclusion from Yale student groups official. "Pressure should not be put on [student] activities if they were not eager to

admit women to their number," the minutes read. Yale may have given its young women students a room to sleep in and the ability to enroll in classes, but the roles as athletes and marching band members and other prestigious student positions were still reserved for men.

Lawrie Mifflin was having none of it. *Damn it*, she thought, *I'm not going to let them stop me*. Lawrie had met another student who played field hockey, and the two girls began talking. A few days later, handwritten fliers appeared on the entryway doors of Vanderbilt Hall: "Anybody want to play field hockey? Contact Jane Curtis in Vanderbilt Room 23 or Lawrie Mifflin, Vanderbilt 53." Lawrie did not see herself as some feminist crusader. She never thought, *I must do this to strike a blow for women*. She just wanted to play hockey, even if Yale thought "women's exercise" was good enough. "Doing what you're told doesn't amount to much," U.S. field hockey founder Constance Applebee taught her players. It was a lesson Lawrie Mifflin already understood.

As for Kit McClure, well, she had never been too good at following the rules either, and this was not the first time she'd been told she couldn't play in a band because she was a girl. In high school, a guy who had heard Kit play trombone asked if she wanted to join his rock band, but when she showed up for practice, the other band members all had the same reaction: no girls allowed.

The guy who had brought Kit to the practice made a deal. The band would audition every high school trombone player from the surrounding three counties over the course of three months, and if they found a guy who could play trombone better than Kit, they would take him. None of the other band members had needed to pass that type of test, but three months later, the spot was Kit's. As for the Yale marching band, Chauncey and Wasserman may have backed down, but Kit was not going to. Director Keith Wilson gave in—but there would be no girls apart from Kit. One was enough.

Up in their dorm rooms, lounging on secondhand sofas, or sitting outside in the warm autumn sun, Yale men studied their *Old Campus*, the Yale freshman face book. It was small enough to carry around with you, a paperback just about a half-inch thick. Inside it was page after page of photos of each of the first-year students, both male and female, along with their high school, nickname, and Yale dorm and room number. The *Old Campus* face book had been published for years, but with the advent of coeducation, the 1969 edition provided Yale men with an invaluable resource: for $3.95, they could have a catalog of every freshman girl on campus. "I think every man at Yale memorized the info in that book," observed one freshman boy.

The men made good use of their *Old Campus* booklets, selecting the photo of a woman they deemed attractive and then phoning her up to ask her out on a date. The enterprising student editors of the *Old Campus* knew a market opportunity when they saw one, and along with the class of 1973 edition, they published *Old Campus* supplements for the classes of '71 and '72 with photos and information on the women sophomores and juniors. They didn't even bother with photos of the men transfer students. It was the women whom everyone was interested in. With seven men for every woman, guys who wanted a shot at dating a Yale girl had to move quickly.

Some men studied the books intently enough that they could identify Yale women whom they had never met in person. Junior Jessie Sayre was stopped by a Yale student one day on her way back from the gym. "Pardon me—is your name Sayre?" He had recognized her from her photo. And lest any Yale woman wonder about the desires of the men who sought their attention, the *Yale Daily News* spelled it out in its lead story that Monday: "The Yale University campus awoke from its annual summer siesta this

week to discover that its 268 years of celibacy had come to an end." For some Yale men, it wasn't just women who arrived at Yale in 1969. It was sex.

The advent of undergraduate coeducation at Yale coincided almost exactly with another major change that was reshaping U.S. college campuses. The sexual revolution was in full swing—at least, that's what the headlines all said—and the rules through which colleges had long sought to curtail student sex were being swept away in its wake. Administrators should not be meddling in matters that were none of their business, students argued, and after pausing a moment to consider, college administrators had tended to agree. The girls at Yale "will have to obey the same rules as the boys—which is virtually no rules at all," tut-tutted the *New York Times*. "Many alumni, and some students as well, are concerned about the moral level-to-be."

Some remnants of Yale's old rules regulating student sex remained, at least on paper. Technically, girls were not allowed in the boys' rooms nor boys in the girls' rooms after midnight, and Yale's undergraduate regulations ranked the violation of these visiting hours ninth of the ten offenses that were "of particular concern to the University": not as serious as cheating, riots, drugs, and improper use of fire extinguishers but ahead of unauthorized possession of master keys. No one enforced Yale's rules about dorm room visitors, though, and even the guard at the entrance of the freshmen women's dorm in Vanderbilt Hall did little to hinder the male students who sought to enter. A Yale ID got men past the guard any time before midnight, and after that, they easily met the challenge by hoisting themselves up and through the first-floor bathroom windows that the girls left open for the purpose.

Male students' easy access to Yale women did not bother Elga Wasserman. Like many, she saw the shift in sexual norms as a sign of progress, an end to the days when colleges took it on themselves to patrol the virtue of their female students. "Yale is a contemporary urban university,

and it would be unrealistic for us to establish regulations which are not appropriate today," she wrote to the parents of incoming women students that summer. "Your daughter will therefore be called upon to make many of her own decisions." If Yale men were free to choose to have sex, then Yale women should be free to do so as well. One problem, however, stood in the way of that goal: the risk of pregnancy.

The answer, of course, was birth control, and by 1969 the Pill had been available for almost a decade—if you were married. In Connecticut, as in many states, the use and prescription of birth control for unmarried women was illegal and would remain so until 1972, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that such prohibitions were unconstitutional.

But Yale could get around that problem if it chose to. The university benefited from a sort of gentlemen's pact with local authorities: Yale oversaw its students' behavior as it saw fit, and for the most part, the police looked the other way. The legal drinking age in Connecticut was twenty-one, for example, but you would never know that from the surfeit of sherry parties Yale college masters hosted for freshmen or the kegs of beer consumed at Yale-sponsored mixers. If Yale wanted to make birth control available to its undergraduates, then it would just go ahead and do so.

The men who ran the Yale Health Service resisted the idea and feared that access to birth control would encourage promiscuity, but Wasserman had little patience with such views. They weren't backed by data from colleges that did offer contraceptives, and they reflected the outdated image of "woman as princess, and protected, pure," she argued. Early in her tenure as the chair of the coeducation planning committee, Wasserman discussed the matter with Robert Arnstein, the psychiatrist in chief at Yale Medical School and a member of her planning group. Both agreed that Yale should open a gynecology service for its women undergraduates, but it needed the right person to run it. Bob Arnstein had a suggestion.

Philip Sarrel was a Yale-trained gynecologist whom Arnstein had

met through the sex education course that Sarrel designed for Yale medical students. Sarrel served on a national scientists' committee with all the big names in U.S. sex research, including Paul Gephardt from the Kinsey Institute and William Masters of Masters and Johnson. His wife, Lorna, was a pediatric social worker at Yale–New Haven Hospital, and the couple was young enough—just in their low thirties—that Yale students would not see them as old or out of touch. Wasserman agreed that Sarrel was the right choice, and Arnstein picked up the phone.

The job of starting a gynecological service for Yale's new women undergraduates was a perfect fit for Phil Sarrel, but when Arnstein made the offer, Sarrel replied with three conditions. First, "I don't come alone," he said. "Lorna comes with me. We're going to be a team like Masters and Johnson." Second, the couple would teach a human sexuality course open to every undergraduate. And third, the Sarrels did not want to just hand out condoms and diaphragms and prescriptions for the Pill. They wanted to do so within the context of a confidential sex counseling service where students could come to get answers to their questions about sex and be prompted to think through their sexual decisions in the context of their own goals and values.

Phil Sarrel's proposal went well beyond what Arnstein and Wasserman had initially envisioned. The idea that Sarrel and his wife would work as a professional team was unusual enough for Yale at that time, but teaching a human sexuality course and running a sex counseling service? Open to the whole student body? No other college in the nation had anything like it. Wasserman was delighted. This was just the type of leadership role she had envisioned for Yale.

Had Wasserman been the only supporter of the Sarrels' approach to sexuality education, the idea might have died there. But Arnstein, a close friend of Brewster's, was widely respected, and Arnstein supported the idea too. If Bob Arnstein vouched for Phil Sarrel, then Sarrel must be okay. Moreover, a powerful motivator was at work that spring, one that made

Yale's male administrators far more open to bringing in a guy as progressive as Phil Sarrel than they might have been otherwise.

"There was a whole anxious thing around the sexual aspect of coeducation," explained Lorna Sarrel. "The male administrators thought all these women [were] going to get pregnant; they definitely feared pregnancy. And that inclined them to think, 'We need to do something.'"

The worry was not just about the consequences for the pregnant women students. The administrators wondered too: "What's going to happen to these guys that impregnate them?" Wasserman put the matter on the coeducation planning committee's agenda in February. Phil Sarrel's proposal may have been a stretch for Yale, but it was better than pregnant coeds wandering the campus. The committee voted to approve. The Yale Sex Counseling Service would open at the start of October, a few weeks after the new school year began.

On September 17, the third day of the semester, Wasserman held an orientation meeting for all of the new women students. "You are urged to attend," said the memo announcing the meeting, and most women did. It was the only time that the 575 women undergraduates who arrived that year were ever in the same room together. Wasserman had a broad agenda for the night—the "present and future plans for coeducation at Yale"—but that's not the part that students remembered.

It was "very scary," said a freshman girl from a small town on Cape Cod. "Elga Wasserman sat us all down in one of the lecture halls and said, 'By Christmas, 6 percent of you are going to be pregnant.'"

The statistics came from similar populations of young women. There was no reason to think Yale, absent intervention, would be different. Yet whatever the press said about the unleashed libidos of the sexual revolution, few of the young women gathered in Yale's Strathcona Auditorium that night were sexually experienced; 75 percent of the freshmen girls were virgins, as was half of the total undergraduate population. Some Yale women

welcomed the new equity in relations between the sexes. "To me it was the dawn of a new era," explained a woman sophomore. "I mean, that's the essence of women's lib. If you just sit there and go, 'Oh, God, he's looking at me,' you might feel set upon and scrutinized. But in my case, *I'm* looking at *him*." For many women students, however, this new era was coming far faster than they were ready for.

At the meeting in Strathcona Auditorium that night, Wasserman introduced Phil Sarrel. He told the girls about the Sex Counseling Service that would open in a few weeks and gave them the phone number to call for an appointment if they needed contraceptives, got pregnant, or simply wanted to talk about the relationship they were in.

"I was being very cool," said a freshman girl from Chicago, "but inside I was thinking, 'My God! Do they think this is all going to happen to me?'"

By 9:00 p.m., Wasserman's orientation meeting was over, and the girls filed out of Strathcona Auditorium, some with eyes wide about what they had heard. It would not be the last time, though, that they were confronted with the issue of sex. Over the next year or two, it would sometimes seem that they couldn't get away from it.

The days set aside for registration and move in passed in a rush of activity as the women set up their rooms, purchased their books, and met some of the whirlwind of new people: faculty advisers, freshman advisers, college deans, college masters, and men—so many men. But on Thursday, September 18, classes began.

Darial Sneed, a freshman from Manhattan, was the only woman in her economics class. "Hello, lady and gentlemen," the professor announced as he entered the room, a small joke to start the day. Every guy in the class turned to stare at Darial.

Yale may have called itself coed, but 87 percent of its undergraduates that year were men, and by the end of the first week of "coeducation," the new women students began to understand how that skewed ratio would shape their experience at Yale. "The worst part was being constantly conspicuous, which is something you don't think about until it happens to you," said one freshman girl. As one professor observed, Yale's women students were denied, "the most precious right any of us ever achieves…the privilege simply to be able to disappear." Instead, the young women lived their days dogged by the knowledge that they were always being watched.

"Everybody knew your business at Yale, as a woman. Everybody knew who you were dating," explained a woman sophomore in Saybrook College. "You moved in there, and you were one of just a handful of women, and all the men knew what you did every minute." The dining hall was the worst. Each woman felt it from the moment she entered: forty pairs of male eyes watching as she walked up the long center aisle to where the food was served, forty pairs of eyes as she carried her tray to a dining hall table, forty pairs of eyes any time she got up to get a glass of milk or a cup of coffee. The self-consciousness from having all those men watching was so acute that two freshmen girls made a pact. If one of them went up for coffee, they both would go up for coffee. Somehow, that made it not quite so awful.

Underlying the day-to-day difficulties caused by Yale's gender quota was the symbolic sting that came with it: a woman who wondered how Yale valued her worth need only be reminded that Yale gave admissions preference to men. Before coeducation even began, that bias had been condensed to a tagline: "a thousand male leaders." Yale had a responsibility to the nation to graduate a thousand leaders a year, the argument went, and since men were leaders and women were not, men should get preference in admissions. Kingman Brewster denied he ever said it, but every woman at Yale, including his wife, assumed that he did. It was the same rationale that had stalled coeducation in the first place and the same one now used

to justify Yale's admissions quotas, which limited women to 230 in each entering class while holding 1,025 places for men—the thousand leaders plus a cushion of 25 extra in case the admissions office made some mistakes.

By September 1969, the phrase "a thousand male leaders" was widely known at Yale and widely repeated. "I remember that 'a thousand male leaders' line," recalled a freshman woman in Yale's Silliman College. "I remember being pissed off at that."

The phrase rankled, and some women liked to extend it: "one thousand male leaders and two hundred concubines," they would say to each other, underscoring what the tagline implied for their own status. The male undergraduates were the given, the nonnegotiable, the heart of Yale's mission. The women were add-ons. Within just a few months, the fight to end Yale's gender quotas would begin. But in those first few weeks of coeducation, just being a woman at Yale was challenge enough.

The days veered crazily between two extremes. To be a young woman at Yale was to be simultaneously invisible yet unable to blend in. Sometimes, the women would scan the classroom and find that they were the only one there. Usually there were at least a few others. Either way, each girl felt the weight of proving not just her own merit but that of the entire gender. "Not bad for a woman," a professor wrote across the assignment of one student. In some classes, boys would stare when girls spoke, as if the furniture itself had offered an opinion. If the women stayed silent, professors sometimes closed the discussion by asking, "Now what is the woman's point of view on this subject?"

Before coming to Yale, most of the women had thought that being surrounded by men would be great, a perk of their first-at-Yale status. Their friends and family had teased them about how many boyfriends they would have, and that didn't sound half bad for those who had suffered through high school with the social handicap of being labeled "the smart girl." But none had ever imagined it would be like this.

The experience was confusing. All those men. All that attention. This was exactly what every girl wanted, right? Yet sometimes it seemed as if responding to all the attention from men left little room for anything else. "Without fail, every time I sit down to write a paper or do some reading, the phone rings," wrote a freshman from a suburb of Hartford. One guy would ask her to dinner, the next to a movie, and a third would suggest playing Frisbee. It wasn't just the interruptions, though. There was an unpleasant edge to the attention as well, "an uncomfortable sense of being observed, judged, and if one was not strikingly beautiful, perhaps found wanting," explained one woman sophomore.

Many of the men liked what they saw. As a Morse College senior observed, "We do have the best girls, I think, and we are known for it." Others were less pleased. A group of seniors had been watching one of the women in their residential college with concern. One day at lunch, they all walked over and sat down with her. She had never met any of them before, never talked to them, but they had some advice. She walked across the college courtyard "too quickly, too purposively," they told her. She sat in the dining hall "too far in the corner, too hunched over, too often with a book." She held her head "tilted too far up towards the sky or too far down towards the ground." No need for despair, though, they assured her. With some effort, she could improve.

As hard as most women found those opening weeks at Yale, there was one at least who was thriving. Connie Royster had been sad to leave behind her friends at Wheaton College, but she loved being at Yale. In many ways, she was home. Connie still had some older cousins who worked in the York Street fraternities, and some days she'd ride by on her bicycle to say hello. They were so proud of her. "How are you doing?" Connie's

cousins would call out. "Great!" she would answer. Connie thought of her cousins as her guardian angels, looking out for her at Yale, and they weren't the only people she knew when she got there.

Connie had gone to junior high in New Haven and grown close to the small group of kids in the top track who took all their classes together. Connie's junior high friends had continued on in New Haven public schools when Connie went off to boarding school, but she had remained friends with two in particular, the two who had gone to Yale. Both were among the first people she called when she learned she had been admitted. Connie knew those friendships would be waiting for her when she got to New Haven. What she had not expected was getting a roommate with whom she would become fast friends so quickly.

The girl had looked so forlorn when Connie first saw her on move-in day. Connie and her parents had swung open the door to her room in Yale's Berkeley College, and there was her roommate, standing alone in the empty dorm room with her one little suitcase beside her. The space echoed. Neither of the other two roommates was there yet, and this one looked so confused. She said her name was Betty Spahn.

Betty was a white girl, about five foot two, with long, dark hair down to her shoulders. She had driven to Yale from Illinois, she said; a friend and his dad had given her a ride on their way to Harvard. Connie was long practiced in making friends from all races and backgrounds, but there was something about Betty she connected with right away. Betty felt the same way. "It was like we had always been friends," said Betty.

Connie's father offered to drive the two girls to the Salvation Army to see if they could find a couch for their room, and by the time Connie and Betty returned with a suitably shabby acquisition, they were laughing and joking together and had made the first steps toward the friendship that would sustain them through Yale and for many years later. Over the following weeks, their days pulled them different directions—Connie

to her art classes and theater rehearsals, Betty to her history and politics classes—but the two still managed to find time at the end of the day to touch base.

Betty would have loved to get involved in an extracurricular activity like Connie, maybe the Yale Political Union, but she had little time for extracurriculars. Betty needed to earn money to help pay for her tuition, and Yale had given her what was known as a bursary job as part of her financial aid package. Some of the women students on financial aid worked in offices of administrators or faculty, filing or making copies on the mimeograph machine. But many worked in the dining halls serving the students whose families did not need help paying Yale's tuition. Yale assigned you to a college that wasn't your own, so at least you weren't serving your roommates. Betty worked the dinner shift in Silliman College, where she stood behind the steam tables, ladling out food to the students who came down the serving line with their trays.

Male bursary students worked at Silliman too, but their job was bussing the tables. Apart from Betty, the women serving the food were all townies. Betty didn't mind her dining hall job, and she enjoyed the women she worked with. They were kind to her, and once Betty had her uniform on, she blended right in. A few days after she started her new job, though, something strange happened, something that she had trouble figuring out.

It was right at the start of Betty's shift, before the Silliman students came in for dinner. The dining hall manager came over to Betty and tapped her on the shoulder. "I want to see you in my office," he said. Betty knew who he was, but up until then it had always been Mary, the black woman in charge of the steam tables, who told her what to do. Betty turned to follow him anyway. Mary saw right away what was happening. "No, you can't! She's a Yale student," Mary shouted, and she put her body between Betty's and the manager's. "Go back to your station," she told Betty sternly. Betty

did as she was told. The manager went back to his office. And then it was over. Still, it was all very odd.

A week later, the dining hall manager beckoned again, but this time the target was not Betty but a young black woman, a townie who was also new to the job. When the manager asked her back to his office, the woman left her station at the steam table to follow. While she was gone, the Yale students entered for dinner and Betty's coworkers covered the woman's station. Eventually, the young woman returned to the dining hall, disheveled and crying. Mary, the senior steam table worker who had protected Betty from the manager before, hugged the young woman tightly and took her off to the ladies room. Betty was puzzled and asked the women in the serving line beside her what was going on. "Shush, honey, you don't need to know about this," was the answer she got. "She's going to be fine."

Betty did not know what had gone on in that manager's office, but she knew her coworker was crying. She kept listening as the other women talked. "Her husband doesn't need to know," they said. "It would just rile him up." Such things were so far beyond Betty's experience that she barely had words to describe them. She did not understand the details of what happened, but she did know one thing for certain: where she came from, it was *not* okay to make women cry by forcing yourself on them. Before the students came in for dinner one night, Betty approached Mary about what happened.

Mary's response was swift: "Now, don't you make any trouble, because it'll just come down on her head." The young woman was still in her probationary period, Mary explained. "This is a good job. It's got benefits," she continued, making clear that Betty was not to put that in peril. The woman had a young baby. If she wanted the job, she needed to wait out the months that remained in the probationary period. After that, the union could protect her. "Don't you make any trouble for her," said Mary. "She's

got enough trouble." Mary had worked there a while. She knew how the system worked. She looked at Betty: "This is just the way the world is."

A week after the start of fall semester classes, Kingman Brewster donned his tuxedo and walked the three blocks from Yale's president's mansion to Sprague Hall, where he was scheduled to deliver a speech to the Yale Political Union. Four hundred people had gathered to hear him, for this was Brewster's first major address of the year, and he had prepared his thoughts with a national audience in mind. In colleges throughout the country, students were demanding more involvement in university decisions, and that night Brewster countered their call for "participatory democracy" by suggesting minor adjustments instead: performance reviews of university presidents, more attention paid to student petitions, and more transparency. Brewster was not interested in sharing more power with students, and he suspected many other presidents agreed with him. The next day, the *New York Times* ran the speech on its front page, exactly as Brewster had hoped.

And now on to the next issue: Vietnam. The Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, with its call for college students across the nation to boycott their classes and hold antiwar rallies instead, was just a few weeks away. Yale took no official stand on the matter, but Brewster did not hide his own views. The war needed to end, and Yale students who attended the October 15 antiwar demonstration on the New Haven Green would find Brewster there too, as one of the rally's lead speakers.

As for coeducation, the woman issue was done as far as Brewster was concerned. The goal was achieved. Acceptance rates were up: 64 percent of the men offered places at Yale had said yes that year, compared with 56 percent the year before coeducation began. True, Brewster still needed to find someone to donate the money for more housing—he had promised

1,500 women after all. But that aside, Yale's foray into coeducation could be declared a success, and the woman issue moved off the agenda.

Had he spoken with any of Yale's women students, Brewster might have altered his assessment. It could be so very lonely to be a woman at Yale. "I could walk for blocks at night without seeing another woman's face," said a freshman girl from Rochester, and other women also struggled to make female friends. "It is virtually impossible to meet other girls," another freshman observed. "I am lost in a sea of men." Even the architecture at Yale kept women apart. The dorms had no long hallways onto which multiple rooms opened. Instead, the colleges were designed with entryways that had just two or three rooms to a floor. "The structure is such that it's like living in a hotel," the distressed master of Davenport College wrote to Wasserman once he realized how few of the women there had even met each other.

Yale women were not instant friends. Within the small group of women in their residential college, many had little in common save their gender. Field hockey player Lawrie Mifflin found some women friends in her college, Saybrook, but other girls were not as lucky. "If you didn't find a really close simpatico friend in your college, that was hard," said Lawrie. "You really felt alone then." There was something else too, a feeling at Yale that friendships between women were not all that important. A freshman from all-girls boarding school Concord Academy called it Yale's "anti-woman conditioning." Her Concord Academy classmate, also at Yale, saw it too: "Yale men see nothing wrong with their all-male gangs and activities, but groups of girls are regarded as pathetic and queer." And so Yale's women were divided—by decisions made before they had even arrived, by buildings that kept them apart, and by a culture that said their friendships did not matter.

"How is your daughter doing?" one of the ubiquitous interviewers asked a father after the initial weeks had passed. "Well, I think she is like most freshmen," he answered. "She is very lonely, and it's a lonely time."

The interviewer kept pushing. "Has she met many people here?" The father paused and then, not hiding the pain he felt for his daughter, replied, "I don't think so."

Like their white women classmates, the black women were separated out across the twelve residential colleges. Ezra Stiles had three black women; Branford, Calhoun, and Pierson each had four. No college had more than eight. Four colleges—Jonathan Edwards, Silliman, Saybrook, and Trumbull—had no black women at all, a situation about which the black men complained.

"There are no black women in Silliman," one of the Silliman men scrawled at the bottom of the fall housing survey. "This is one faux pas that cannot and will not be overlooked. Due to this situation, I have strongly considered transferring out of this college."

Shirley Daniels lived in Timothy Dwight, where she was one of five black women students. From her first days at Yale, though, Shirley spent a lot of her time at "the House," the nickname the black students gave to the black student center that Yale had just opened on Chapel Street. The building really was a house, with a front porch and a kitchen. "It was a homey atmosphere," said Shirley's friend Vera Wells, another of Timothy Dwight's five black women. "You could study there and just have conversations."

The House was the place where black students could let down the guard that came with being outnumbered and different. "It was a place where blacks could go where they didn't have to worry about what they said, what they did, what they believed, because of being in mixed company," said Shirley. Shirley never experienced any overt racism from students at Yale. But that did not mean it was comfortable to be one of the few black women in what was still a school of white men.

Black students had been attending Yale in sparse numbers well before there were undergraduate women. The first black student graduated from Yale in 1857, although for the next century Yale rarely admitted more than one black student per class. In 1962, Yale enrolled six black freshmen men. In 1964, there were eighteen. And now in 1969, there were ninety-six black freshmen at Yale, including twenty-five women. The class of 1973 was "the blackest class in the history of that ivy-draped institution," wrote student Henry Louis "Skip" Gates, who arrived a Yale in 1969. That did not feel very black at all, however, when 90 percent of the freshman class was white.

Many black women, Connie Royster and Shirley Daniels among them, were used to attending schools where they were part of a small minority. Connie had been the only black student in her entire high school, and before moving to Roxbury, Shirley attended army base elementary schools that never had more than a few black kids. For some of the black women students, though, Yale was their first immersion in a place full of white people. One freshman girl walked back to her dorm room after every class the first week and climbed into bed. "I wouldn't sleep. I was just hiding. I was out of my mind frightened. It wasn't so much Yale as coming to a white college."

Classroom interactions could be difficult. "They would sometimes look at me like I'm 'the black opinion'; I'm 'the female opinion,'" said Vera Wells, the junior who was in Timothy Dwight with Shirley. "It's not that they meant to be cruel. It's like I was a curiosity factor." That didn't make it any easier to be the one who was singled out. "I can't speak for all black people or all women," Vera explained to them. *I'm not your experiment*, she thought to herself.

Many of the white students cared deeply about ending the racial injustice they saw all around them. "We were searching, trying to do a better job navigating race than our parents' generation had done,"

explained one white woman freshman. Theirs was the generation that grew up with the civil rights movement. Rosa Parks had refused to give up her seat when they were in kindergarten. In middle school, Martin Luther King had told a crowd of 250,000 that he had a dream, and by the time they packed for Yale, both he and Malcolm X were dead. Yet supporting civil rights was one thing; figuring out how to negotiate an interracial friendship was another.

Close friendships between white and black students were not unheard of at Yale. The drama group with whom Connie Royster spent most of her time was mixed, and of course she and Betty were close. Lawrie Mifflin became friends with her black classmate Skip Gates after they suffered together through "Bio for Poets," the science class that humanities majors took to check off their distribution requirements. But overall, Yale was not the integrated utopia that many white students hoped for. There were not enough black students to make that possible, and even so, many white students found it hard to reach across the divide of race. They had gone to white schools and lived in white neighborhoods, and that racial isolation had left many uncertain about how to approach a friendship with someone who wasn't white. "Interactions," said one white woman student, "were awkward."

A white sophomore from Queens felt it too. "We didn't want to offend; we weren't quite sure," she explained. "We gave a certain space to the black students." Sometimes when Shirley Daniels entered a room full of white students, she could feel a ripple of discomfort.

There was no denying that Shirley stood out, whatever the racial makeup of the crowd. "Shirley had a lot of leadership presence about her," said Carol Storey, a black premed student from Los Angeles. Shirley was articulate and insightful and not shy about sharing her views, but she had a big laugh too, the kind that made you smile along with her. She wore her hair in a tight Afro and had wire-rimmed glasses. When she walked in a

room, an aura of certainty swept in along with her. "She was very bright," said Sam Chauncey, who knew Shirley through his work as Brewster's point man on increasing black student admissions. Shirley did not have white friends at Yale, but that was through her own choice. She was oriented instead toward the black students at Yale and the black community of New Haven that surrounded it.

Coeducation arrived at Yale right when black students nationally were embracing Black Power's vision of "racial solidarity, cultural pride, and self-determination," and Yale was in step with the times. "We knew we had dreamed white dreams long enough," wrote student Skip Gates, who may have been friends with Lawrie Mifflin but also wanted to spend time among fellow black students. "To understand, to preserve ourselves as black people…we turned inward individually and collectively."

Black students sought one another out at mealtimes, and nearly every black student joined the Black Student Alliance at Yale (BSAY), which was in its third year in 1969. And while most black students did not major in Yale's Afro-American studies program, many took at least one Afro-American studies class. The distance between white and black students at Yale came from both sides, albeit for different reasons.

On weekends, most of Yale divided by race. The white social committee chairmen almost always hired white rock-and-roll bands for their mixers, but the black students liked to listen to soul music, and so the BSAY hosted its own Saturday night parties. When smaller groups gathered in someone's dorm room, they were white or black but not often both. When black students got together, "we might be playing music, or watching a movie, ordering some pizza, or playing some cards," said Carol Storey. "We played Bid Whist. That was the African American game."

Some white students resented black students' desire to spend time with one another. "If black students won't be friendly and eat with me at dinner," wrote junior Jeff Gordon, "then let them fight their own battles." Connie

Royster could have explained to him why black students ate together: "There is a comfort in being with your own," she said, "especially if you're feeling like an outsider." That was an answer that white women at Yale were beginning to understand.

Connie did not spend much time at the House herself—she was always in one play rehearsal or another—but Shirley was there more often than not. Some of the black students Shirley met at the House were unlike any she had ever known. Shirley's father was a career serviceman in the army, her mother a schoolteacher-turned-homemaker. Shirley had never before met anybody whose parents were millionaires, but she met them at Yale, and the wealthy students she met there were black. Far more of the black women students, however, came from families that knew what it was like to come to the end of the week without much money left over.

There were poor white students at Yale, to be sure. One sophomore woman had a male friend from deep Appalachia with an accent so thick that at first she could barely understand him. He had never watched a television before coming to Yale. But only 4 percent of the white women students were classed by Yale's financial aid office as "economically disadvantaged" compared with more than half of the black women students. Shirley Daniels was thus an outsider on three counts at Yale: she was black, she was a woman, and she was working class.

Shirley marveled at the wealth of Yale: the thick oriental carpets, the gilt-framed portraits, and the wood paneling on the walls of her room in Timothy Dwight. Yale's buildings were "extraordinarily beautiful," said Shirley. "And the meals were out of sight." The black students found out about a black cook who knew how to make the food they had grown up with: collard greens, sweet potatoes, cornbread, fried chicken, and black-eyed peas and rice. Shirley nicknamed him "Candy." Yale rotated its cooks from one residential dining hall to another, and up at the House,

they all knew Candy's schedule. "Wherever Candy was, all the black students went there for dinner," said Shirley. "I don't care what college it was; we were there." Like the House, Candy's food was a refuge. "We would just look forward to it," said Shirley. "For all of us, it brought back home."