# **Play4!** User Manual for the App



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Developed as part of the project Play for Your Rights! Innovative media education strategies against sexism and discrimination.

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# Introduction

*Play for Your Rights!* is a project promoted by COSPE (Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti) in collaboration with Centro Zaffiria, Casa delle donne in Bologna (Italy), Medien+bildung. com (Germany), Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies-MIGS (Cyprus) and Women's Issues Information Center –WIIC (Lithuania). It is also supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ program, with contribution from the Region of Emilia-Romagna. The project aims at **contrasting sexist hate speech**, **stereotypes**, **and gender discrimination among adolescents in social media** through educational strategies and gamification activities.

The project has developed two games; one game is analog and the other is digital. Both games deal with the aforementioned themes through playful and engaging activities. This manual focusses on one of the two games developed within the project, the digital game App *Play4!.* 

The App was inspired by the original analog card game called *Strategic Reactions.* The game and toolkit, containing different educational activities, are free to download at the following website:

- www.zaffiria.it/reazioni-strategiche-genere-e-linguaggio-dodio
- <u>www.cospe.org/progetti/61690/play4-strategie-innovative-di-</u> <u>educazione-ai-media-contro-il-sessismo-e-la-discriminazione</u>

A program comprising of 3-4 class sessions is recommended in order to further address the issues raised. Both the analog and digital games can be used alongside the other educational activities provided in the toolkit.

### ADOLESCENCE AND SEXISM

Gender-based violence is a widespread phenomenon which damages the entire population regardless of age, income, and ethnic or sociocultural background. *The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, United Nations General Assembly* (1993)<sup>1</sup> defines gender-based violence as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of freedom, whether in public or private life" [The document can be accessed at this address: www. ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/violenceagainstwomen. aspx]. Gender-based violence exists everywhere in the world. The younger population is exposed to informational and learning narratives which are based on gender stereotypes; or rather, what is "socially" recognised as "feminine" and "masculine."

Young adults are more exposed to these themes due to their specific developmental phases. These stages see young adults engaged with the creation of their individual and social identity. These narratives play a significant role, giving importance to certain events, behaviours, and relationships, while confirming and maintaining stereotypes and gender roles. Rather than respecting differences, these narratives can reinforce a culture of hatred towards someone who is different or is "other" in comparison to the "default" gender role. The use of technology in young adults has seen a sharp rise in psychological violence which happens online, as well as in person, the main one being hate speech, which incites violence and discrimination.

Furthermore, hate speech is a type of communication which can happen online or in person. It uses words, expressions, or nonverbal elements with the aim of expressing or spreading hate and intolerance, as well as inciting prejudice and fear towards the individual or group of people.

Often adolescents use a sexist language, also called sexist hate speech. The language is considered "appropriate seeing as it is culturally shared," without the awareness of why they are using it or

Document available at the link: www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/ pages/violenceagainstwomen.aspx

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the consequences it can have on the other person.

Sexist hate speech happens in many forms (both online and in person), such as:

victim blaming; revictimization; slut shaming; body shaming; sharing explicit material without consent; violent and sexualised death threats, rape, and abuse; offensive comments regarding the other's appearance, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender roles; and fake compliments or jokes, which use humour to humiliate or ridicule the target (European Council, *Combatting hate Speech - factsheets*, 2016; European Parliament *Combatting gender-based violence: Cyber violence*, 2021)<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, **social media plays a substantial role** in how much it influences gender stereotypes, implements gender roles, and represents "ideal" bodies and the definition of gender roles. These aspects are particularly important within groups of adolescents and pre-adolescents, where the **process of developing one's own social image and gender identity** prevails. During the experimental workshop activities, many aspects emerged, for example: hate speech towards girls often coincides with body shaming ("ugly, fat, overweight, disgusting") or insults relating to the sexual sphere (slut shaming or revenge porn).

It also emerged that boys are often victims of gender stereotypes that stigmatise male homosexuality ("a real man is heterosexual") and/or physical characteristics which are not considered masculine (the importance of having muscles or having a fit body), for example.

Furthermore, male sexuality is often considered more aggressive than female sexuality: such stereotypes reinforce gender roles which can contribute to a widespread toxic masculinity, which is damaging to both boys and girls. The examples mentioned above, and other insults reflect a solid inequality of power between men and women, which is also reinforced by the stereotypical image of the strong boy/ man, who shows his muscles but not his weaknesses; it is further reinforced by the negative comments related to appearances or sexual orientation which can damage the LGBTQAI+ community,

Involving young people in workshop activities and games helps

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them to reflect on these themes. It is a way to prevent gender-based violence and promote respect towards people's differences.

It can also be considered an essential part of a broader educational strategy aimed at dealing with emotions and encouraging empathy.

The educational tools used in the project intend to address the themes of sexist hate speech and gender-based violence through games and playful activities. **The game creates a safe space** in which young adults have fun and participate actively. The participants unveil many different emotional experiences, and they are open to discussing and debating important issues in a protected setting.

### THE APP PLAY4!

The App allows teachers and educators to organise an urban treasure hunt which guides the young adults into various places in the city or chosen area. The aim is to tackle different online hate situations which derive from those set chosen places in an urban environment. In each of the organised steps, the participants will find a QR code, which needs to be scanned via the App. This will open several social media screens (WhatsApp or Instagram) containing hate messages.

For example: in front of the gym, there are situations related to sharing images without consent, which link to body shaming themes; in front of the make-up shop, there are situations related to the stereotypical gender imagery and the phenomenon of slut shaming, and so on. The situations for each step are found in more detail in the chapter App Content (page 14).

There are four locations in the treasure hunt: a make-up shop, a comic bookshop, a skate park, and a gym. It is possible to customise the steps and adapt them to the specific context in which the game is played.

The group is divided into three teams for the treasure hunt, and each team is given a character. These characters are the same from the original card game *Strategic Reactions*: Betty, Mary, and Zack.

The participants are encouraged to tackle certain hate situations that their character is faced with in each location, and further understand how the character would feel. Finally, they need to help him/her defend him/herself and leave the hate situation the character has encountered. The three characters come up against specific dynamics and experience each situation differently. Each character's situation provides important material related to the stereotypes and difficulties encountered. Using this material, the participants can reflect and compare with the group. Groups of a maximum of 4-5 people are advised, so that everyone can focus on the task. If the group is large, each character can be played by 2 teams at the same time.

### INTERACTING WITH THE URBAN SPACE.

The game can be adapted to different environments, from cities to towns, however, if there is not the option to play in an urban space, the game can also be played inside a school, or at a summer camp. In the next chapter, there are the instructions on how to create and customise QR codes in order to adapt the game to various environments. Even though there is the option to use this game inside, it is recommended to use this game in an urban space, where possible.

The option of going around familiar places, which have their own clichés or stereotypical imagery, helps the participants to reevaluate their environment enabling a more critical outlook.

For example: after having discussed the sexist imagery of a woman placed in a shop window, the young adults will be able to recognise and reflect on the imagery which they pass every day.

As well as customising the game, such as the locations/steps, it is also possible to create an additional activity, which gives even more value to the participants' interaction with the location. For example: asking the participants to interview the comic bookshop manager about gender stereotypes in manga comics; or stopping a passerby and asking them what they think about the window display in the make-up shop. The young adults' participation allows them to explore the thoughts of the people who create, live, and experience these places. This opportunity consolidates a critical thinking analysis.

# The App Play4!

*Play4!* is a free App available to download on all mobile devices at the App Store (iOS) or Play Store (Android).



When the application is opened, the user is informed that all the answers provided during the game, and all the multimedia content uploaded, will be accessible only through the specific device used.

The privacy regulations are strictly protected, no type of content can be shared with third parties, including the developer itself.

The individual user will be able to see all their answers at the end of the game, through the "notebook" tool.

In the following screen, the user will be informed that all the questions found in the activities are written in the second person singular, since the game can also be played with just one player. However, if the App is used with lots of teenagers, it is advised to divide the group into three or more teams, allowing them to work together as a team before giving an answer.

In fact, due to the very nature of the topics covered, it is worthwhile to have an initial exchange relating to the teams' experiences right from the beginning of the game (and then further along in the Final Round Up phase, page 39).



After the introductory disclaimers, the users are faced with their first important choice in the game: which character will they be?

During the treasure hunt the players will deal with different situations that involve hate language on social media. The types of messages that they will receive will be based on appearance and stereotypes, both related to their chosen characters.

The project organisers advise to divide the group into at least three teams, giving each team a different character: this will help the group tackle different types of situations in the App.

Before starting the game, the teachers/educators will ask the teams to imagine their character's physical/emotional characteristics and personality. This will help everyone on the team to envisage the same character and share the same emotions when the time comes to reflect and discuss.

After this introductory phase, the game is ready to begin: each team will receive the first QR code which will give the clue to the first step. The order of the steps (and therefore the specific situations) will be decided by the teacher/educator depending on the group's needs and preferences (learn how to organise the steps on page 36). On the following two pages, the general structure of the game is explained. Ordinal numbers are used to refer to the QR codes and the locations involved.

### **GAME STRUCTURE**



### The next clue is revealed and, if resolved, leads the team to the SECOND STEP.

The SECOND situation is presented connected activities.

The THIRD QR code is found.

SECOND STEP

**FIRST STEP** 

# **The App Content**

# AT THE MAKE-UP SHOP



At the make-up shop, Mary is a victim of hate speech via an Instagram post, in which her usual "masculine" appearance is made to feel a burden on her.





# AT THE MAKE-UP SHOP



At the make-up shop, Zack is being teased in the comment section under one of his Instagram posts. The comments are making fun of him because he is not very "masculine."





# AT THE MAKE-UP SHOP



At the make-up shop, Betty receives extremely sexist attacks in the comment section under one of her Instagram posts. Insinuations are made about her alleged sexual behaviour.





# AT THE GYM



In the gym, someone takes a photo of Mary without her knowing. It is then shared on an Instagram page called *Guess my Gender* with the single aim of ridiculing her because of her appearance.



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picture?		te emozioni ur mury.		What would you do?
Uncomfortable				You accept and join the page activities (commenting and liking).
Angry				You accept and join the page activities, also by proposing pictures and videos.
Confused				You accept and follow the page without joining effectively page activities.
Misunderstood		T		You report the page.
Nay for You		lay for You		You report the page and explain your motivation to the person that invited you to follow.
r Rights!	)	r Rights!		r Rights!

# AT THE GYM



n the gym, someone takes a photo of Zack without him knowing, it is then shared on an Instagram page called *Alpha Alpha Gym*" with the single aim of ridiculing him because of his physical appearance.





# AT THE GYM



In the gym, someone takes a photo of Betty without her knowing. It is then shared on an Instagram page called *Spotted in the gym* where anonymous people write sexist and disturbing comments about her physical appearance.



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	Angry			Ľ	You accept and join the page activities, also by proposing pictures and videos.				
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# AT THE COMIC BOOKSHOP



At the comic bookshop, Alessia takes a photo of a manga character and sends it to her friend Mary, with the intention of showing Mary other ways of being more "feminine," in the stereotypical sense of the word.







# AT THE COMIC BOOKSHOP



At the comic bookshop, Mattia takes a photo of a manga character and sends it to his friend Zack, with the intention of showing Zack other ways on being more "masculine," in the stereotypical sense of the word.





Fiona

you 🙃

SITUATION

hey, I'm in front of a comic book store,

You say so?? I don't think we look alike

Look at that skirt! Sometimes it seems you are coming right out of a manga

But that's true! I'm just saying... don't be surprise if guys treat you in certain ways 😄

Don't push it ahahha

0

 $\mathbf{S}$ 

there are a lot of mangas on display... There's this cover that really reminds me of

■ **L** :

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# **AT THE COMIC BOOKSHOP**



At the comic bookshop, Alessia takes a photo of a manga character and sends it to her friend Betty, insinuating that her clothes are too explicit, and that is why boys behave in a certain way around Betty.





# AT THE SKATE PARK

MARY



In a group chat a voice note is sent which mocks Mary because of her appearance. The voice note says:

"Hellooo! So, we're gonna meet up at 4 at the skate park. Probably also Mary will be there... Gosh...Have you ever seen such a tomboy?? She must me the greatest lesbian in the world!"





# AT THE SKATE PARK



In a group chat, someone writes that Zack is too feminine and nerdy to be in the friend group.





# AT THE SKATE PARK



In a group chat, Betty is the only girl in the chat. She receives explicit sexual advances from the boys in the group.





## **THE FINAL QUIZ**

Play for Your Rights!

Once all the steps are completed, a final test is given to the team (the final QR code). There are six questions.

This is the only section where there are correct and incorrect answers: after the quiz is finished, feedback is given to the players based on their knowledge of the themes raised in the game.

All the results, from *Crazy!* to *Argh* include suggestions for the participants to continue and broaden their knowledge around the themes.







### **THE RESULTS**



### **CRAZY!**

You have answered all the questions correctly, our warmest congratulations!

### Continue >





### WHERE TO POSITION THE STEPS

When organising the treasure hunt with the App "Play4!", the first thing to decide is where to position the four steps/locations.

As shown in the previous pages, the characters find themselves in situations characterised by their environments. Mary, Zack, and Betty are victims of hate speech from posts on social media and messages. The hate speech they experience is connected to the locations: a comic bookshop, a make-up shop, a gym, and a skate park.

If these places are available, the most obvious option would be to position the clues in these types of places. This way the group of participants will find themselves in front of a gym, right at the moment when they have to tackle the situation about the "stolen" photos in the changing room, or during the workout. This will enable the participants' empathy towards the subject matter. However, it is not always possible to easily access and find these four places within a few minutes walking distance of each other. In a smaller environment, for example, billboards or posters which use beauty stereotypes for the make-up shop, a bike path for the gym, any meet up point such as a bar, or small park for the skate park, and so on, are perfectly suitable for the treasure hunt.

Instead, if the game is played inside a school, there are many different spaces which can represent the various situations.

The QR code for the make-up situation could be placed next to a bathroom mirror, the code for the gym could certainly be in a changing room, the code for the comic bookshop could correspond to the library and the skate park code could be in the hang out area in school (for example a courtyard, school gates or the vending machines).



Boys and girls from the High School Sabin in Bologna carry out the make-up situation activities in front of a make-up shop.

It is important to acknowledge that the clues do not need to necessarily correspond to the four locations based on the situations, therefore the QR codes can be positioned in any place at all.

### WRITING THE CLUES

In the preparatory phase of the game, the most complex step regards writing the clues.

The first question to ask is: what level of difficulty will the group have while doing this task?

Nothing excludes the teacher/educator writing obvious clues such as "Go to 55 Main Street!" or "Run to the library!".

Instead, if the teacher/educator wants to challenge the group with clues or riddles, then that is up to the teacher/ educator's imagination. From the project developers' experience, they found it very useful (and much easier) to create clues ending in a rhyme and written in the first person. There are many websites which have lists of rhyming words to help write the clues.

### Some examples:

I have a million stories / but cannot tell them, / I'm a silent place, / there's no mayhem. > ANSWER: LIBRARY

Many people use me, / looking for some tone. / Come and get fit, / you may hear someone groan. > ANSWER: GYM

The boys and girls have fun thinking about the answers (also scoring points, at the same time, see page 38) and working together for a few minutes while finding the solutions.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

In every situation, it is possible - but not compulsory - to add an extra activity, which will be seen by all the teams.

This activity was set up to allow the participants to interact with the urban space. It must be a place that the organiser knows and understands well; it must be an ideal place for the young adults to develop a critical analysis.

For example, during the experimental phase of the App, in Bologna, the organisers encouraged the students to collect different opinions from people passing by, or the owner of the comic bookshop (the owner was asked before if the shop could be used as a location).

If there is the option of an extra activity, it is important to consider these three essential points:

- Only open questions are allowed. Multiple choice questions or requests to upload photos cannot be used.
- 2. The extra activity is seen by all the players, regardless of the teams' characters.
- The extra activity does not need to be added to all the steps. The activity can be added to just one situation (or two/ three).



Examples of hypothetical additional tasks.

### **GENERATING THE QR CODES**

Once the decisions have been made regarding:

- the locations,
- the steps,
- the clues giving the right directions to the following step,

• the possibility to add an extra activity, it is, then, possible to generate the QR codes that will create the game adapted to the specific needs of the group.

The codes are available at the website: <a href="http://www.zaffiria.it/play4\_create/">www.zaffiria.it/play4\_create/</a>

In the first screen, the clues must be inserted. These will take the participants from one step to another step. The website will also ask the organiser to insert the order of the steps. The order of the 4 situations is not established beforehand.

In the second screen, potential extra activities can be inserted.

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TOORT EXIENS TO.		
AFTER THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS FIRST SPOT THEY WILL READ THIS OTHER CLUE:	Write here your clue	180
↓		
THIS CLUE WILL TAKE YOUR PLAYERS TO:	Make-up shop ~	
AFTER THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS SECOND SPOT THEY WILL READ THIS OTHER CLUE:	Write here your clue	180
S.		
THIS CLUE WILL TAKE YOUR PLAYERS TO:	Gym	
AFTER THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS THIRD SPOT THEY WILL READ THIS OTHER CLUE:	Write here your clue	180
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The two screens of the website to generate the QR codes.

### Et Voilà!

On the next page, there are examples of the QR codes that can be downloaded, printed, and placed in the steps for the game. It is possible to even try now, scanning the codes, here below (the codes will show you easy clues tha indicates

SHOW THIS QR TO THE PLAYERS TO START THE GAME



PLACE THIS QR WHERE YOU WANT TO DO THE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO Make-up shop



# PLACE THIS QR WHERE YOU WANT TO DO THE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO Comics store



generic places). The very first code (top left) should not be hidden, but simply given to the players when the organisers say "GO!". This first code will start the game and reveal the first clue to find the first step.

# PLACE THIS QR WHERE YOU WANT TO DO THE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO **Skatepark**



### PLACE THIS QR WHERE YOU WANT TO DO THE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO Gym



### PLACE THIS QR AT THE END OF THE GAME TO LET YOUR PLAYERS START THE FINAL QUIZ



### **SKIPPING A STEP**

During the workshop, it may happen that not all the group can reach all the situations given.

For example, if the time available is not enough to play all the four steps (it is estimated that around 2 hours are necessary to play the full game in an urban environment, with a 10-minute walk between each step), or, if there are specific reasons, to avoid a certain type of situation (in case one participant is feeling particularly vulnerable).

In these cases, it is possible to simply skip the step. In order to do this, one can easily insert the different clue into the previous step. The new clue will lead the team to the following code, therefore skipping and avoiding that step.

When the QR codes are ready to print, the step with the notice "activities related to \*step #x\*" will be deleted.



An example of using the generator to skip the gym situation.

be seen.

### HOW TO PLAY IN AN URBAN SPACE

This final point addresses how to make the most effective use from the urban setting, which is adaptable to the group's specific needs.

When the game is played in an urban space, maybe during school hours, it is not always feasible to allow the teams to move around on their own.

If it is compulsory to move altogether as a group, a scoring system is suggested to play the game. This means that the 3 teams (imagine 1 team per character, but there could also be more), once they have found the clue, they can communicate it "secretly" to the organiser, who gives 3 points to the fastest team for solving the riddle, 2 points to the second fastest and 1 point to the third team. These points can be added to the points totalled in the "Final Quiz" and then the organiser will announce the winning team.

When all the teams have found the clues, the whole group can move on to the next step/location.

Instead, if it is possible for the different teams to move on their own, for example, maybe the game is played in a controlled space such as a school, or if there are enough adults to accompany each team, in this case it is important to create different sets of QR codes.

The clues that are used inside each of the codes are the same for all the teams. However, the clues must be inserted into the generator 3 different times, selecting a different order for the different steps every time.

This means that the teams will set off at different times and to different locations just like a classic treasure hunt.

In each place, the teams will find 3 different codes, but they will need to scan the code dedicated to their specific character.





### SCORING

Depending on how the game is organised, there are two scoring systems which can be used to determine the winning team.

The App gives the results for the final quiz (page 27). The team with the highest number of correct answers "wins." This is the first type of scoring system.

The second scoring system can be used when the game is played in an urban space and the group needs to move all together to the different steps.

To keep the competitive nature of the treasure hunt "alive," and stimulating the participation and sense of competition between the teams, one can simply give extra points to the fastest team for finding the solution to the clues.

### The scoring system is:

- 3 points to the first team,
- 2 points to the second team,
- 1 point to the third team.

At the end of the game, using this method, the organiser will count up all the points, plus the points received from the final quiz, then the organiser will announce the winning team.

It is unhelpful and counterproductive, to give points to the team who finishes all the activities first.

This is because the participants would focus on doing the activities quickly and not concentrate on the task at hand.



### **FINAL ROUND UP**

An important part of the game is to return to the classroom after the game has finished and allow time for the participants to reflect and share their experiences. It is recommended to organise a session a few days after the game, so that the participants remember the themes and situations during the game, and they also have time to reflect on their experience.

All the answers given, and the photos taken during the game are saved in the "notebook" on the homepage. This means that it is easy for the user to remember all the steps and later reflect together with all the other participants and discuss everyone's experiences.

It is important that the round up session is held by the same organiser who coordinated the game, so that everyone's experiences are followed throughout the program.

Every step of the game can be told from three different points of view, related to each different character. Each team played with a different character and the players are not aware of the other teams' situations and character. It can be useful to project every situation on the board so that it is visible and comprehensible to everyone.

After having shared the different situations of each character, it is possible to discuss how the participants reacted and ask the rest of the class if they would have acted differently and why.

The difficulties the characters faced, and the types of solutions devised during the situations can help the group to further discuss the most common stereotypes. How can these stereotypes incite violent behaviour and hate speech?; which strategies should be adopted to stop these situations and help those who are having a difficult time?; which strategies can create a different language and outlook?

Generally, the game and discussion help the participants to speak out about their personal experiences, which they may recognise in many situations. In this final session, the organiser's role is to welcome all the participants' observations and help the group to discuss and compare their ideas in a constructive way.





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### Project partners:









MEDITERRANEAN



### App content

Alessandra Falconi (Centro Zaffiria) Chiara Aliverti (Centro Zaffiria) Cecilia Piazza (Centro Zaffiria) Nicoletta Landi (Cospe) Silvia Carboni e Angelica del Borrello (Casa delle Donne per non subire violenza) Rugile Butkeviciute (WIIC) Kristina Kiselyte (WIIC) Jurate Tamosaityte (WIIC) Maria Angeli (Migs) Daniel Zils (M+B)

### Manual written by

Alessandra Falconi (Centro Zaffiria) Chiara Aliverti (Centro Zaffiria) Cecilia Piazza (Centro Zaffiria)

App Development **Zeno Menestrina** (Centro Zaffiria)

*Graphic design* **Cecilia Piazza** (Centro Zaffiria)

*Illustrations* **Adriano Siesser** (Centro Zaffiria) *Play4!* is an interactive app aimed at contrasting hate speech and gender stereotypes among young adults between the ages of 12 and 18 years old.

This manual illustrates how to use the digital Urban Game. It also further explains other ways to personalise and adapt the game to the specific needs of the group(s) of teenagers.

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### Play for Your Rights!

Imagine being Betty: what would you reply to the comments below your post?

