

Kieryn:

I'm Kieryn.

Eve:

I'm Hannah. This is Kitchen Table Cult.

Kieryn:

Where two Quiverfull escapees talk about our experiences in the cultish underbelly of the religious right.

Eve:

Hey Kieryn.

Kieryn:

Hey Hannah.

Eve:

How is school going?

Kieryn:

It's going. I'm avoiding a lot of it right now. I'm avoiding writing an essay that I need to write for Wednesday and also avoiding reading a bunch of motors and drives homework.

Eve:

I have not a lot of homework to do this weekend but I need to organize myself. I need to make out a schedule with all my assignments and put them in the same place and I haven't done that yet because I'm still kind of in denial that I'm back in school.

Kieryn:

That's legit. I'm trying to organize myself and figure out how to do that this semester. It's been trial and error trying to figure out how I'm going to organize homework and when that's due and studying and all that, so this year I have binders instead of notebooks and dividers, and I'm going between writing when things are due and using an app on my phone.

Eve:

Yeah, have a binder for each subject or a folder for each subject so you can put all the handouts in one place is really, really useful.

Kieryn:

What I want to do is get one of folders that has the little prongs and stick all of my syllabi in there, so I have one place to go to for my syllabi and I'm like okay, I know this is what's coming next [crosstalk 00:02:01].

Eve:

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One of my classmates has one of those accordion binders or folders and that's probably the route I'm going to go this semester. It seems like the smartest thing.

Kieryn:

That makes sense. What are we talking about this week?

Eve:

I feel like we promised our fans an episode on courtship.

Kieryn:

Yes. We seem so ready for this. We're like yeah, no, this is fine.

Eve:

Courtship may be like the single most ... I mean it's what got us both out.

Kieryn:

It is.

Eve:

It was like how badly both our courtships went. That's why we left.

Kieryn:

Yeah, it's true.

Eve:

But that's a long story. Let's just keep it on explaining what courtship is for today because I think-

Kieryn:

This could be a book.

Eve:

Yeah, this could be a book. I don't want [inaudible 00:03:05] to profit from this.

Kieryn:

Yeah, it's fair.

Eve:

These stories, we did not consent for to these stories to be used in any documentaries about courtship.

Kieryn:

Yes, thank you.

Eve:

Unless we are producing them.

Kieryn:

Yeah, no stealing of this. Thank you. What is courtship?

Eve:

I feel like it's hard to talk about courtship without talking about the revisionist history that was really common in our world. You had this idea of the Victorian era being this moral high point of humanity's history and there's this yearning to go back to it, which is funny because that's when prostitution was rampant and wages were really bad and colonialism was committing genocide everywhere and it wasn't documented and children were basically wage slaves and died all the time.

Kieryn:

The good days when it was pure and holy and women couldn't vote and children had no rights and men ruled everything and there was no question about it, white men ruled everything, there was no question about it.

Eve:

Were your parents into that whole thing?

Kieryn:

Yeah, so my parents were actually kind of a step further and before they heard about courtship and even after they heard about courtship, what they really wanted was betrothal.

Eve:

Okay, this is a different thing.

Kieryn:

Which is complete with dowries. Courtship was my parents going left.

Eve:

Aah, yeah. I understand that. Did you have a hope chest?

Kieryn:

I did. I did have a hope chest, actually.

Eve:

What's a hope chest?

Kieryn:

A hope chest is not something that you put all of your hopes and dreams into.

Eve:

No, it is.

Kieryn:

It is, but it wasn't for me because those were not my hopes and dreams.

Eve:

It was a one size fits all hopes and dreams machine.

Kieryn:

You're supposed to put in the things that you'll need for your future household. This came from the time when you had to prepare for that because it was pioneering days and there were doweries and you would be paid to be my ... You wouldn't be paid obviously, but your parents would pay your spouse to marry you because you're just a woman.

Eve:

To get you off their hands. One less mouth to feed. I remember reading the descriptions of Laura Ingalls-Wilder's. She didn't have a hope chest specifically but she had a dowry that she had put together with all of the tea towels and quilts and dresses and pieces of houseware that she had collected in anticipation of having her own home and husband one day. That was kind of ... I mean the American Girl dolls even got into a little bit. Kirsten had a hope chest.

Kieryn:

I feel like Samantha or Felicity also did or were going to.

Eve:

I had a chest that I kept my art supplies in but it wasn't a hope chest, but I would ask for one. I still think a wooden chest is a gorgeous thing to have for storing blankets, the end.

Kieryn:

My chest was solid walnut or something like that, maybe it was cherry. Before I started courting, I did use it for art supplies and that was where all my art supplies lived and it was great, I loved it, it was awesome, it smelled good, it was just this beautiful chest. Then I started courting and my mom was like, "Now you need a hope chest." I was like, I have no way to resist this now, so I had to go along with it. A hope chest is where you get everything that you'll need to start your life as a married person. My mom took me to the bank to turn in some bonds that my great-grandparents had given me or whatever when I was born that she had been holding onto. I had \$1,000 in cash, so my mom opened up a bank account for me so I didn't have to carry all of that in dollar monies.

Eve:

Was that your dowery?

Kieryn:

That basically became my hope chest fund. Then we immediately went to the pots and pans supply store and I got an entire set of dishes and cookware. I basically stocked an entire apartment in this chest.

Eve:

What happened to it?

Kieryn:

I gave it away because when I was leaving, I wasn't going to be able to take this hope chest with me because-

Eve:

Because you were running away.

Kieryn:

Right, it's not really hey dad, can you drop me off at the mall with my bag and this giant ass fucking hope chest. Or just edit all of that out. I can't take the hope chest with me. What happened was, someone had gone to our church and they had been displaced from Katrina, I think because this was in 2008.

Eve:

You were able to pawn it off as being charitable.

Kieryn:

Yeah, and so they had gone through whatever it was and wound up at our church at the right time, and I was like, I need to get rid of this. Someone was like, "Yeah, we just moved here. We are literally sleeping on our floor, we have nothing." I was like, "Well, I don't have any furniture, but I have everything else that you need, please take it."

Eve:

Nice.

Kieryn:

Everyone was like wow, that's so generous of you and I was like, not really. I just need to get rid of this.

Eve:

We didn't have it partially because we were just too poor and my mom was like, that's what your bridal shower is going to be for. We have modern ways of accomplishing this. We never subscribed to betrothal. That was never on the table. Thank god or the powers that be or lucky stars, whatever. I was so grateful that we didn't ever consider betrothal. I remember reading the story of Maranatha and her betrothal story and being horrified, even when I was still in that world. I thought it was a really marvelous story but I was horrified that anyone would actually do that do someone.

Kieryn:

Yeah, this is why I was always really anxious when my parents talked me up to other Homeschool moms because my parents really wanted to be the ones who chose ... It wasn't even my parents, it was my mom. My mom really wanted it.

Eve:

Tell us what your parents believed betrothal was and why it was a good idea.

Kieryn:

My parents-

Eve:

It's kind of an arranged marriage, basically.

Kieryn:

It is an arranged marriage, which is hilarious because my parents were like, we don't believe in arranged marriages but they wanted betrothal.

Eve:

What did they see as the difference?

Kieryn:

I'm not entirely sure. I think in their minds, if it was a betrothal, it was like my parents arranged everything with their parents but if we didn't like each other, then we could call it off. There was a small element of choice.

Eve:

Of veto power vote of some kind.

Kieryn:

If we obviously weren't going to get along, I could say no or whatever. My mom really wanted to be the one who chose who I was going to marry. After my parents broke my partner and I up, my mom started trying to set me up with boys from our home church, who I despised. That's not really fair. I didn't despise them. They were nice, they were fine, but we didn't get along, we had nothing in common.

Eve:

They just weren't anybody you were in love with.

Kieryn:

They couldn't even talk to me. They didn't know how to talk to a girl who wasn't very good at being a girl. There just was nothing, there was nothing there. There was nothing in common, but my mom tried really hard.

Eve:

Okay, so in their perfect world, they would talk to the boys' parents and set it up. Would there be money exchanged?

Kieryn:

I don't know. I don't know if there would be money. I don't think they ever really planned that far, they just really liked the idea and then they read about courtship and they heard about Josh Harris and I think they liked that more because there were more rules for them and then there was more ... I think they saw it as them having more power somehow, but it was also a bit looser because it was like well, the person who was interested would come to my father and then ask my father for permission.

Eve:

It was actually less work on your parents' part. How many pieces of our life revolved around that fact, what is less work for our parents in terms of parenting?

Kieryn:

I feel like that's why my mom had so many kids because she could just pawn it off to me, so it didn't matter.

Eve:

As far as I know, courtship and betrothal came into popularity around the same time, I'm not entirely sure where betrothal came from besides the bad understanding of how history worked and romantization of those kinds of traditions. Courtship also comes from that misunderstanding of how biblical culture operated and how Victorian society operated and what actually is a moral high ground or how societies operate. I think Bill Gothard really spearheaded courtship because he started teaching at the end of the '50s, early '60s. He came a good bit before-

Kieryn:

Yeah, he was before.

Eve:

Oh, anything and he was teaching courtship pretty similarly to how Josh Harris taught it with a lot of the same principles based on parental authority and abstinence and the idea that marriage exists for sex and babies and sex and babies are linked.

Kieryn:

They cannot be separated.

Eve:

It's a bastardization of the Catholic theology of the body. The evangelicals co-opted pieces of it because it was convenient and turned it into or extrapolated from there and idealized how relationships would work. I think a part of it was a reaction to you had women being more liberated after World War II because they had to fend for themselves and they held down jobs and they were going to college. Social norms were changing in various ways. They were mortified that everybody was being slutty, basically, and wanted to tamp it down, which is funny because if you actually understand history, you know that humans have been slutty forever.

Kieryn:

Forever.

Eve:

It's not new, it's just how open we are about it. Bill Gothard, the reason that's he's important to this is that one of his disciples was Greg Harris who is one of the pioneers of Homeschooling and the father of Josh Harris. Josh grew up traveling to all these Homeschool conventions and conferences and family seminars with his dad and sat under Bill Gothard's teaching for a lot of his childhood. When he writes, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, which is heralded as the founding the courtship movement in America, he's ripping off Gothard's teaching and he's just ...

Kieryn:

He's just putting a cute sticker on it.

Eve:

Yeah, he's packaging it with now it's coming from your young, sexy, Asian-American dude with a cool hat.

Kieryn:

Yeah, it's just the same stuff that was re-packaged and it took off because ... The other thing too is the way he framed it is he was writing it at the time he was going through it, so it was written from a very in the trenches thing, which resonated with people more than Bill Gothard's lack of experience because he's never been married to my knowledge. He has no experience with anything that he's teaching.

Eve:

Bill Gothard has only been a serial sexual predator, he has not actually had a really relationship. I would go so far as to say he's a pedophile, but that's a whole other story.

Kieryn:

Oh, absolutely.

Eve:

Josh Harris, however, Josh Harris had participated in speech and debate. He was a key communicator. He had watched his dad be this super gregarious, charismatic thought leader in the Homeschool movement, so he was really primed to take the mantle. I've met him. He taught in our church and in churches I went to and the conferences I attended and I've interacted with him in various degrees. He's just a really charming person. He's very disarming and is sweet and he's a good listener. He was able to communicate all of these things in his book. What did this book say?

Kieryn:

*I Kissed Dating Goodbye* was before he had started courting and around the time he was like, dating isn't where it's at, we should do something else instead and emphasized a lot of ... It really introduced and reinforced purity culture, which is something that we talk about a lot, which is thinking about



anything remotely sexual is bad and impure and then you're ruined for life. Everything is obviously on the girl because if she didn't exist in a human form then men wouldn't have trouble.

Eve:

Right, it's basically pathologizing lust and sexuality to a degree that makes any kind of natural interest or arousal problematic and create a really toxic shame cycle where you hate yourself for having sexual desires.

Kieryn:

You do.

Eve:

You hate yourself for wanting attention. You hate yourself for thinking about sex or observing yourself going through puberty and thinking about the consequences of that. It really, really cuts to the core of your being.

Kieryn:

It's a huge part of why I didn't learn about my period or anything that had to do with reproducing and sexuality and just basic biology is because I was like, anything to do with sex is impure and will damage me for life. I just shut down, so I didn't have crushes. I didn't allow myself a crush.

Eve:

There was also this part where the idea was everything about courtship and purity culture is based on the slippery slope fallacy, which is once you start moving in a certain direction, the momentum is going to overtake you and you won't be able to stop, which is absolutely false. But the idea was that if you were aware of how sex worked, if you were aware of how human reproduction worked, if you were educated about STDs and your own sexual health and your own sexual desires, you were going to be more likely to have premarital sex. You see this in abstinence sex ed that's everywhere. George Bush, George W had influence on abstinence only sex education initiatives in countries that have high rates of HIV and in the American school system it's rampant, and it's based on this false idea that if you don't teach them about sex-

Kieryn:

Then they won't do it.

Eve:

They won't have sex. But the statistics show that actually they're just going to have sex and they're going to have unprotected sex and they're going to get STDs and they're going to get pregnant and lives are going to be derailed by their ignorance.

Kieryn:

My parents kept telling me sex is so easy, everybody just has it, it's such an easy thing to do. Then I got married and it turns sex is actually really difficult when you don't know what you're doing. If you don't know how bodies work, if you don't know how any of that happens, sex is really hard.

Eve:

My ex-husband and I spent our entire honeymoon wondering if we should be calling the gynecologist to make sure that what was happening was normal or okay and freaking out that we were doing something wrong.

Kieryn:

Yeah, it was painful. I didn't know that there were conditions that you could have that make penetration really painful and that's something that I could have found out if I'd known anything about my body.

Eve:

Right. Josh Harris wrote this book where he was like, I had a dating relationship in high school and we were super sneaky about it and we hurt each other and broke each other's hearts and then I repented and went to my parents and asked for advice and this is what we ended up doing instead. This is how you keep your heart from being broken. That was the biggest goal, how to keep your heart from being broken.

Kieryn:

Also, that if your heart was ever broken, that irreparably damaged you because your heart was ... They had a scarcity approach to love, so it's like your heart is something that if you lose, you lose forever, and you lose pieces of and then you don't have a whole heart and whoever loves you doesn't have your whole heart like that's a bad thing. But also, love isn't scarce, it grows. It doesn't work that way.

Eve:

I know, it's so funny. These are people who think that they can just keep having kids and they're going to have infinite love for all of those children but they can't see how that might translate to other kinds of love.

Kieryn:

Right. It's ridiculous.

Eve:

Full disclosure here guys, both Kieryn and I since leaving fundamentalism have been practicing ethical polyamory for a long ass time. We're coming from a certain bent where we assume that monogamy is cultural bullshit.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

Basically.

Kieryn:

Polyamory isn't for everybody, obviously. But operating from a stance of love is something scarce and I should like must hold onto and only give to one special person is ridiculous to me.

Eve:

It was treated like a fine wine where you would bottle it up and it would age and get better and then you'd give it to the one person and you would use it up and that would be it.

Kieryn:

That's it.

Eve:

It would be gone. Did you write letters to your future husband?

Kieryn:

I tried but I hated it, so I didn't.

Eve:

Same.

Kieryn:

I did make a couple of them but it was just like, this is not ... I can be writing better things.

Eve:

It was encouraged as a placebo treatment to keep you from having crushes. It was like okay, if we distract by allowing our young teens to channel their romantic and sexual energy into writing letters to their future spouse to give to their future spouse on their wedding day, then maybe they will not be distracted by actual people in their life.

Kieryn:

If you isolate them, so they don't see actual people in really life, it you know ...

Eve:

How were we supposed to meet anybody? [crosstalk 00:26:03].

Kieryn:

My parents are supposed to find that for me.

Eve:

I had a really good friend who was pretty much my only guy friend during my adolescence was this kid who I met when I was 12 and we were really good friends for a year-and-a-half and then he moved away. Then the twins were born and I was isolated and I didn't have any guy friends at church and I continued to not until college. I remember just really enjoying his company and really being excited to hang out with him. My mom pulled me aside and was like, "Do you have a crush on this guy? You need to be careful and guard your heart. You can't be too excited when he comes over." We were just building forts in the woods and playing in the creek. We were just becoming sexually aware but neither of us was interested in that. We just wanted to run in the woods and talk about missionary stories, crazy pioneer stories. We didn't have any self-awareness of that kind.

Eve:

As soon as it got turned into that by, I am assuming he had a similar conversation with his mom too, because later we visited them and he was super excited about something and was like, "Oh my god, I'm so excited." Oh my gosh, probably. He didn't say oh my god, he was a good kid. He was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm so excited. If you weren't a girl, I'd hug you right now." I just remember being so angry. I was like, what happened? I don't know that we're friends anymore. What's wrong with giving your friend a hug? There doesn't have to be anything sexual about that. I was crushed. That's the kind of thing that happens in this world.

Kieryn:

Yeah, any touch of any kind is super sexualized. My partner and I took a picture at teen pack camp where we were back to back together doing the revolution pose.

Eve:

Oh god, I remember this.

Kieryn:

That was scandalous.

Eve:

Yeah, you guys were like ...

Kieryn:

It's like our shoulders were touching, our butts almost touched.

Eve:

I remember-

Kieryn:

Don't you dare give anyone a front hug if you have boobs because your boobs will squish and that will lead to impure thoughts.

Eve:

We had a youth group that met once a month and I was able to go to that because parents were required to go. I remember they had this whole demonstration where a brother and a sister were showing you appropriate and inappropriate hugs for people of our age and it was demonstrating the side hug and then the front hug. It was really uncomfortable because there was this guy up at the front giving his older sister a front hug and sexualizing that experience as don't do this guys, this is too sexy, with his sister. This is the thing. Everything became hyper sexual.

Kieryn:

Everything.

Eve:

Because it was such a scarcity mindset, fear-based thing, this fear of the unknown just snowballs. This fear of yourself just snowballs.

Kieryn:

They make the slippery slope.

Eve:

Yeah, it doesn't exist until they make it, basically. I thought I was a sex addict in high school because I liked to masturbate fairly regularly.

Kieryn:

Oh my god, I was horrified at myself for masturbating.

Eve:

I was so angry that the church had a conference for men about lust and sexual purity and didn't have any sort of corresponding conference for women because I was like, but I need to be attending this, I wish I could sneak in.

Kieryn:

Women aren't supposed to have a sex drive at all or feel anything or anything like that. They don't have any of those needs.

Eve:

I didn't realize that any of my friends had anything like that. I think I was an anomaly, and that's again why I thought it was such a problem. When my ex-husband I were courting or one of our first conversations once we made it official, I was like, "We need to put really firm boundaries in place because I'm scared of myself." I was literally terrified. I was super excited to finally be courting someone because I really liked him, but I was also really scared because I really liked him and I didn't trust myself and I thought the instant we touched I was going to explode and it was going to be end of the world.

Kieryn:

Suddenly babies.

Eve:

Suddenly like a spontaneous sex implosions.

Kieryn:

I legit thought until I was about 16 when my mom decided to explain how sex worked that basically what happened there was just this transit tube from one person's belly button to the other person's belly button and that's how it happened. I didn't know how that worked. It made sense that hugging was a bad idea because it's obviously just communicated through air.

Eve:

I had a Homeschool family friend who was probably 10 or 11 and was like, "I'm going to get pregnant." I was like, "Why?" She was like, "I just learned how babies happen." I was like, "Okay." She was like, "I realized last year I took a nap in the same bed as this other guy who was our friend and so that means we slept together and so I'm going to get pregnant."

Kieryn:

Oh, god.

Eve:

I was just like, "That's not how it works." That kind of misconception was really common.

Kieryn:

Yup, because obviously the best way to teach kids is to leave them in ignorance for their life. It's the only way to stay out of trouble.

Eve:

The whole idea of I Kissed Dating Goodbye was wait, abstain, you're not ready to get married. What were the things that they thought made someone ready to get married. We have different experiences on this point.

Kieryn:

For me, my parents basically thought I was ready to get married when I was 12 and was capable of having children because I had a period, and running the house and doing the budget and all of that. I didn't have any friends that I wanted to go run and play with because I didn't have any friends, so I was very mature and responsible. I was pretty much ready to go in their eyes as soon as I was bleeding. But for someone to marry me, my parents wanted them to have a job and a car and be able to support me not working because it would be bad for me to work and that would ruin our marriage inevitably.

Eve:

How?

Kieryn:

Because if a woman is outside the home where there's other men who aren't her husband, who knows. Some of this also comes from, I think my mom had an affair when I was young, so I think a lot of that fear stems from that as well as the bible verse where a woman's place is ...

Eve:

In the home, yeah.

Kieryn:

Raising kids. The Proverbs 31 woman thing.

Eve:

I heard something the other day where somebody was like, "Yeah, that bible verse is about a woman running everything while her man is at war. It's not supposed to be a daily life model." I don't know.

Kieryn:

Right?

Eve:

Oh, man. That chapter-

Kieryn:

It doesn't seem like something anyone can do all of the time. It's abusive and ridiculous and it's absurd that we're glorifying that.

Eve:

It's inhumane. My family thought that I, again linked that whole you're able to reproduce and run a household at 12 or 13. That's about when you should be able to do both of those things. But I think that my parents thankfully, because they had liberal arts degrees, education, and grew up in the Bay area, they both assumed that I was going to go to college. This is really uncommon in our communities, the assumption that your daughter is going to go to college is very rare. But I was raised with that assumption, and I think part of it was that my grandmother had been a public school educator and both of my grandparents on my dad's side had post baccalaureate degrees. They believed that they had something to prove to those grandparents that why that homeschooling worked, and so sending me to college was a way of justifying their decisions to homeschool and be like, "Look, she can go to college, we did just fine."

Eve:

The idea was that I needed to finish my degree before I got married and that whoever I was going to marry needed to have a job, a car, be financially stable and my father believed that being financially stable meant you didn't have any student loans because he was of the debt is sinful and slavery school of thought, which is not realistic and incredibly privileged in our day and age.

Kieryn:

Yup.

Eve:

That threw a wrench into things later because my ex-husband did have student loans and that was what my father used to try and break us up for a while. They also believed that we should be able to get married immediately as soon as we started courting. The whole idea was don't play with fire, don't open this door until you're willing and ready to commit to something. Most of the couples in our community who were getting married through courtship, they were probably ... They'd start courting and then two or three months later they'd be engaged and then the engagement would last as long as it took to plan a quick wedding. None of these were shotgun weddings, these were just like, we're not having sex and we really want to have sex, so let's get married ASAP.

Kieryn:

Yeah, my parents were similar with that too. As soon as we started courting, they really wanted us to get married immediately. They were really angry that I wasn't engaged three months later, but I was not even 17, so-

Eve:

Didn't they hold you responsible for that?

Kieryn:

Yeah, they did. They gave us an ultimatum that was basically get engaged or break up and I was 17 and neither of us wanted to be married while I was still a minor. They blamed me for that because they told me that I had to be the one to end it because they couldn't control my ex because my ex was a dude, so obviously, I'm the one they can control. When I was like, no, I don't feel like god is telling us to break up, they were like, well, then you can't talk to each other and broke us up instead because my dad's authority superseded mine.

Eve:

I was crushing on this guy and my father met him. My father was not impressed with him. He's a big extrovert and monologuing was common, he's also autistic and these are pretty normal things for someone who is neuro divergent and my father is a big introvert and really got rubbed the wrong way by this guy, and was just like, "He didn't ask me a single personal question about myself. Clearly, he's a self-absorbed person with bad character. Why are you interested in him? I was like, "Because I like him, it's that simple."

Eve:

We were told to hold off for six months while they corresponded and my father evaluated his character and gave him homework of things to work on. I don't even remember what exactly the things were. But we had this whole rule where my father, for reasons that are beyond me, I'm guessing it was due to person experience and personal failure, but he had this rule where no engagement of any of his children was going to be longer than six months because that was the point where temptation would be too great and you would slip up and have sex.

Eve:

After we'd been courting and were ready to get engaged, my ex had graduated before I did, a year ahead of me, and he wanted to come back for homecoming and propose then. He asked for my hand in marriage and my father was like, "Yes, but when are you planning on proposing?" He was like, "I want to propose at homecoming in October." I get this call and he's so angry at my dad and he's like, "I can't believe he did this. He said, I cannot propose to you at homecoming and I wasn't going to tell you I was going to do this but I have to talk to you about this because I don't what else to do. But I was going to propose at homecoming and he says I can't because if we were getting married at the end of school, it would be in May, which would be seven months out and that would be more than six."

Kieryn:

Oh my god.

Eve:



My father was to the letter very strict about this six-month engagement rule. That's why we got married in January because I was like, I can graduate early. I have the credits. We were like okay, cool. We won't have an engagement that's longer than six months, we'll just get married faster. My father was not happy because we basically played his own game by his own rules and beat him.

Kieryn:

Yup, yup, yup.

Eve:

How did the rest of your courtship go?

Kieryn:

For three months, to my parents' knowledge, we didn't talk. Not three months, six months. This happened in the summer. Then I ran away and we were obviously still talking but I know how to clear my browser history. It's a good tip if you need to communicate with people, just clear your browser history always, change your password. Oh my god, my parents, after they broke us up, demanded that they see what I was doing on my computer and were over my neck all the time to make sure [crosstalk 00:42:27].

Eve:

Yeah, I remember you basically disappeared.

Kieryn:

Yeah, I had no privacy for three months because they were just on my case. I had a laptop because my grandparents had given me one for my graduation because I graduated when I was 15. They just monitored everything. One day my mom was like, "Hey bring up your computer, I want to look something up but I don't want to move." Because she was pregnant. I brought up my laptop and I had decided to put a pass lock on it, so I would know if someone had been snooping while I wasn't around and also to keep people out. I brought it up and my mom was livid that I put a password on it. I typed in the password and I was like, "This is just a thing it made me do for security reasons when I was setting it up, I don't know." She bought it because she doesn't know.

Kieryn:

I did that and I also obviously cleared all of my history and caches before bringing it up but they lost it over changing my password to my computer. I also changed my password to all of my email accounts. That way they didn't have it.

Eve:

Good.

Kieryn:

Also, set up an alternate email account that they didn't know about and an alternate AIM account that they didn't know about. We set up a Google voice number under a mutual friend's of ours name. I could be like, I was talking to Ryan.

Eve:

Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.

Kieryn:

I did that and then I ran away on my 18th birthday and we were engaged. I stayed between my ex's place and their pastor's place or my ex's parents' place and their pastor's place because they were still living at home from while I was there. I basically just slept for the first month-and-a-half because that's what happens when you escape those environments is your body just [crosstalk 00:44:42].

Eve:

Collapses.

Kieryn:

Yeah, and I felt really guilty about being asleep so much but also I couldn't not be asleep. But everyone was understanding about it.

Eve:

Did you guys adhere to the purity culture teachings during that period or did you start having sex right away?

Kieryn:

Kind of both. In the six months between actually courting, we taught ourselves sex ed and I discovered Scarleteen and read about birth control and all the things.

Eve:

Oh my god, Scarleteen, I forgot about that.

Kieryn:

Scarleteen is so great.

Eve:

There was another website called the Marriage Bed that was also pretty educational.

Kieryn:

Yeah, surprisingly enough. I found those websites and I learned about birth control and I learned about being safe and I learned about how sex worked and all that.

Eve:

And Laci Green back before she got red pillled.

Kieryn:

Yeah, Laci Green before that was great.

Eve:

Before she stopped being great, before she started being transphobic and horrible.

Kieryn:

I actually went up in November, to campaign for a friend of mine in New Hampshire and my ex came down to the airport and we made out for real. Before that, we'd be doing this thing where we like ... We called it corner kissing because it was just the corners of your lips kissing each other. It wasn't actually kissing, so it wasn't breaking any rules. These are the extremes that you go to.

Eve:

I am very familiar with how many ways you can get around all of the rules.

Kieryn:

Yeah, so that happened and then while I was ... We would obviously make out after I moved up there and things and we fooled around a bit without getting caught magically. I think my in-laws, ex-in-laws still think or did that we were pure until marriage, and I mean technically it's true, but ... My ex-mother-in-law was excited-

Eve:

If penetrative sex is the only kind of sex you recognize, yeah.

Kieryn:

If that's the case, then I was a virgin for an extremely long time. But I think my ex-mother-in-law thought that our first actual kiss was on our wedding day. Our wedding kiss was great, it was really good. I heard her talking about like oh yeah, that was their first kiss. We're going to let her believe that, we're just going to not, we're just going to stay with that. My ex-sister-in-law kind of looked at us knowingly and we're just like, no one is going to burst that bubble. We're not going to pop that.

Eve:

I have a really good first kiss story and the drama that ensued around it, but we'll have to save that for the After Dark episode.

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

If you are subscribed to the Patreon level where you get the After Dark episodes, check it out.

Kieryn:

Yes. I feel like that is a pretty all right description of courtship and what that was like.

Eve:

It's a good intro. Oh my god, it's so bad.

This transcript was exported on Apr 15, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Kieryn:

My engagement was six weeks because we got engaged in April and married at the end of May.

Eve:

Right, and Katie was at your wedding.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

Next time we'll talk about educational neglect.

Kieryn:

Yeah, I'll have written an essay on the topic.

Eve:

It's going to be fantastic.

Kieryn:

It'll be great.

Eve:

All right. Stay tuned, subscribe to our Patreon. Thanks to Aaron for fixing our audio every time and saving us. Send us your questions. We've got a few and I think we'll answer them in our next episode.

Kieryn:

See you next week.

Eve:

Byeee.