**10 years later, the 'Mean Girls' clique still reigns**

By Megan Angelo, New York Times | May 2, 2014



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Photo By Walter McBride/Contributor

Tina Fey on March 20, 2014 in New York City.

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Photo By Alo Ceballos/Contributor

PARK CITY, UT - JANUARY 19: Rachel McAdams is seen at Sundance Festival on January 19, 2014 in Park City, Utah. (Photo by Alo Ceballos/GC Images)

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In the 2004 film "Mean Girls," [Regina George](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Regina+George%22), iron-fisted ruler of the high school in-crowd, snaps at her sidekick, [Gretchen Wieners](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Gretchen+Wieners%22), over some newfangled slang Gretchen is testing out. "Stop trying to make 'fetch' happen," Regina snarls. "It's not going to happen."

Regina was wrong. "Fetch" did happen and still is happening. Quote that line to any young woman from middle school on, and she'll probably finish it for you automatically. Ten years after it bowed in theaters, "Mean Girls" remains a relevant pop-culture reference point and a go-to source of shorthand for female - and human - dynamics.

Written by [Tina Fey](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Tina+Fey%22), then known mainly for "Saturday Night Live," and based on the self-help book "Queen Bees and Wannabes" by [Rosalind Wiseman](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Rosalind+Wiseman%22), the movie follows the transformation of Cady ([Lindsay Lohan](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Lindsay+Lohan%22)) from the studious, home-taught daughter of zoologists just back from Africa to the insufferable pet of the Plastics, as the popular girls at her first [U.S. school](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22U.S.+school%22) are known. The cast included future stars such as [Rachel McAdams](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Rachel+McAdams%22) (as Regina) and [Lizzy Caplan](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Lizzy+Caplan%22) as Cady's outcast friend, [Janis Ian](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Janis+Ian%22).

The film, directed by [Mark Waters](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Mark+Waters%22), made $121 million at the worldwide box office. But that was just the beginning; the film has found a second life on the Internet. It's one of the most popular topics on Twitter although the movie predates the platform. Tumblr, home of memes that slap "Mean Girls" lines over photos of everything from "Hunger Games" to Capitol Hill encounters, says that in the past month alone, users have created more than 10,000 posts and 477,000 notes related to the film.

* Photo By MICHAEL GIBSON/HO

Lindsay Lohan as Cady, from left, Amanda Seyfried as Karen, Rachel McAdams as Regina and Lacey Chabert as Gretchen in "Mean Girls."

And the concept of popular types, outcasts and the ecosystem they share is still a hot one in Hollywood. Two projects based on Wiseman's subsequent books, about mothers and teenage boys, are in development. [Sean Anders](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Sean+Anders%22) and [John Morris](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22John+Morris%22) ("We're the Millers") have written "Mean Moms," due out next year. Anders and Morris also are working on the concept for a boy-centric film. And a stage musical version of "Mean Girls" is in the works, with Fey producing and her husband, composer [Jeff Richmond](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Jeff+Richmond%22), scoring.

Here, most of the principal cast members and creative team (Lohan wasn't available to comment) reflect on the past, present and future of a film that became a phenomenon.

***The beginnings***

***Rosalind Wiseman:*** People had called about turning it into a movie or a TV show, and I had no problem turning them down because it was always something cheesy. They were trying to make it about me - "You're so inspirational!" Then Tina called. I didn't know who she was. I had a new baby; I had a book coming out. I wasn't watching "SNL." But I knew it was important to her that it was not going to be stupid.

***Tina Fey:*** Rosalind wanted the movie to be positive, and I remember promising her that that was the goal - to have a positive core.

***Wiseman:*** I've found a lot of success in my life by collaborating with women who are smart and funny, and Tina fit that category. From the time I said yes until the time it came out was about 18 months.

***Making (and relating to) mean***

***Mark Waters:*** Our original title was "Homeschooled." We were going to make it about someone who's been home-schooled their whole lives and then has to navigate high school. Then we came up with the Africa concept, which was a real boon because we could compare the kids' behavior to animals.

***Fey:*** I revisited high school behaviors of my own - futile, poisonous, bitter behaviors that served no purpose. That thing of someone saying "You're really pretty" and then, when the other person thanks them, saying, "Oh, so you agree? You think you're pretty?" That happened in my school. That was a bear trap.

***Rachel McAdams:*** At the heart of Regina George was a really angry kid who had no boundaries or guidance. Mark told me to listen to [Courtney Love](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Courtney+Love%22) really loud and to watch [Alec Baldwin](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Alec+Baldwin%22) in "Glengarry Glen Ross."

[***Lacey Chabert***](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Lacey+Chabert%22)***,*** who played Gretchen: I related to the part in the movie where girls are cutting themselves down, like, "My hairline is weird" - stuff people would never notice on someone else. I was never the cool kid. I wore Minnie Mouse stuff. And growing up in Hollywood, I always felt under a microscope.

***Lizzy Caplan:*** I think all girls that age are looking for their "thing." I was fairly angsty in high school. I had my hair dyed black and was into [Charles Bukowski](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Charles+Bukowski%22). For the movie, I wanted to wear tons of layers and dark eye makeup. I cooked my hair, literally burned it with a flatiron to make it stick up straighter. Only now, 10 years later, has it recovered. Honestly, I had zero idea that people wouldn't find my look in that movie very cool and kinda sexy.

***Waters:*** I felt like I was Cady even though I was a guy. In high school, I was a mathlete. But I also played basketball and tennis - not because I was interested in them, but because if you didn't play sports or have a cool car, you were a geek. I remember that feeling of, nothing's more important in the world than what's happening to me at lunch today.

***A phenomenon is born***

***McAdams:*** (The success) was surprising to me because when you're making something, you kind of have no concept of it. But this was the script that made me call my manager halfway through and say, "I will play any part in this." Tina hit a nerve about girl politics but in a nonconfrontational way.

***Wiseman:*** I didn't know it was going to be a big movie. But the first time I saw Rachel in the rough cut, I could not believe how good she was. My mom was with me, and I remember turning to her and saying, "I can't believe how perfectly she got every mean girl I've ever worked with."

***Caplan:*** I was much more naïve about the business back then. I didn't know much about, say, what a good opening weekend for a teen comedy was. But when I found out they were studying the movie in sociology classes at universities; that felt pretty big.

[***Daniel Franzese***](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=entertainment%2Fmovies&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Daniel+Franzese%22), who played Janis' gay pal, Damian: When the movie came out, I lived on the Upper East Side, next door to a school. I mean, I didn't know I lived next to a school; I'd been there for two years and never realized. But all of a sudden there were 14-year-old girls following me in their uniforms. I grew a beard, and I would do that thing like in the movies - wait until a bus came by, then run with the bus.

***N***ew generation of fans

***Fey:*** I think we mostly have TBS to thank. It's always on TBS.

***Chabert:*** Probably about a hundred times a day, people will write the "fetch" line to me on Twitter.

***McAdams:*** I recently stayed at a bed-and-breakfast in Europe, and the owner's young granddaughter asked me to write down a few lines from the movie at breakfast. I was like a deer in headlights. I couldn't remember any. And she proceeded to give me 12 direct quotes.

***Fey:*** It has this little net that catches girls as they pass through preteen and high school age. Girls will come up to me and say it helped them get through a terrible year.

***The future of mean***

***Fey:*** It's early in the process for the musical. We've been enjoying trying to write. I wish so badly we could have had it done in some form for the 10th anniversary but hopefully before the 15th.

**Question:**

1. What does the continued success of the film “Mean Girls’ reveal about western society? Use quotes from this article and the movie to help illustrate your response. You need to write at least 1 handwritten page.