"I will defeat all obstacles that dare enter my path", shouts Love. "I will endure forever" it resounds. Erich Segal, author of the infamous novel, "Love Story", made his intended theme loud and clear. In this novel we as readers are bathed in the notion that "Love conquers all." While love is a powerful tool in motivating many of us, and often the drive behind our determinations to face bumps in the road, it rarely does so without cost or compromise. Segal's overall theme, "Love conquers all", should be read as "Love conquers all with a little help from reinforcements”. Segal addresses many significant messages throughout the book that touch on Gender bias, Race, and Class. Without the assistance from these troops and others, "Love" wouldn't even be at the front lines.

One of Segal's hidden messages falls under Gender bias. In this novel we find one sex giving up much in order to have the other. In writing this novel, although the intended audience was largely female, Segal asks us as women to recognize the fact that if we want the man and therefore a better life, we must deny ourselves. The two main characters in 'Love Story" are Oliver Barrett IV and Jenny Cavilleri. Oliver Barrett IV is a student at Harvard and Jenny a student at Radcliffe. Oliver and Jenny meet at the Radcliffe library where Jenny works. Oliver is in search of books in less demand than at his school and makes such a request of Jenny. In their first meeting Jenny makes reference to his appearance, "You look stupid and rich". He attempts to deny that statement and she references that she is smart and poor. She then continues the repartee
with an enticement to get him to ask her out. "What the hell makes you so smart?" asks Oliver. "I wouldn't go for coffee with you," she answers. "Listen-I wouldn't ask you." "That," she replies, "is what makes you stupid." Within the next paragraph the two are out to coffee. Soon they are dating and what follows is a denouncement of those things important to her. We hear of her going to his hockey game, and he forgetting that she was out side waiting for him after the game. Oliver ponders, "Any way I was alone again. I let my whole pleasantly aching body slide into the whirlpool, closed my eyes and just sat there, up to my neck in warmth. Ahhhh." The thought finally occurs to him that Jenny is waiting outside in the freezing cold (hopefully) and rushes to get dressed. Who is waiting but Jenny. The girl waits in the freezing cold for the guy while he sits in a hot tub. Oliver views Jenny's friends as losers. He calls them "wonky" and they are painted as wimps, "those that neither threw nor received punches". There is barely a reference of Jenny ever hanging out with her friends. Oliver, the male, is touted as more important because of his jock status and Jenny as simple because she lives to hear the stories of his conquests over his opponents during the games.

Segal notes that Oliver thinks highly of himself and less of Jenny. We see that Oliver is appalled that Jenny would make him wait for their date while she is on the phone and sets out to 'put a stop to this usurpation of his time." Jenny spends all her time at his place and not until the 6th chapter is there even a reference from the author that Oliver has any interest in Jenny's life outside of himself. In their conversations Jenny down plays her abilities to Oliver's stating that she plays music just "okay", not "All-Ivy" like him. One major act of self-denial comes when Jenny mentions to Oliver that she has received a scholarship to study music in Paris. Oliver pleads for Jenny to not leave him. She makes one last attempt to get him to recognize her dream. He basically responds with
"blah, blah, what about our marriage", something that he had not mentioned until there was a possibility that she wouldn't be around. The ultimate denial comes when Oliver is angry with Jenny for intruding in the feud between he and his father. He yanks the phone from her hand and the socket and screams at her to, "get the hell out of his life". In all of his anger he doesn't even realize she has run out the door. After a search of the town, he later finds her sitting on the steps of the apartment waiting for him. "Jenny, I'm sorry---" "Stop!" She cuts him off and very quietly says, "Love means not ever having to say you're sorry." The female not only gives up her friends, her interests, and her dreams to get the man, but also her self respect and need for safety and security. In other words, get ready ladies to "just be". Expect your dreams to stay buried, your friends to disappear, and your worth to go down the drain, because according to Segal, those are the costs that accompany Love.

Being female is not the only military ranking for Jenny. She also belongs to the troop, "Financial Loser". From the beginning of the novel, Segal lets us know that Jenny is poor and Oliver is filthy rich. She, after all, is the poor girl attending Radcliffe, chasing after the rich boy at Harvard. It would be socially unacceptable for the rich male to go after the poor female. The author makes constant reference to their statuses. Love is not the self-standing warrior that the author wants us to believe it is. We see that for Jenny it is a privilege for her to be received by Oliver Barrett IV. The two contrasts of social class are portrayed throughout the novel. Within the first chapter we see that Oliver's family has donated a hall to Harvard, a colossal monument to his family's money, vanity, and flagrant Harvardism. Jenny comes from a humble background. Her father, "some sort of baker guy" as Oliver refers to him, lives in Cranston, Rhode Island. His only contribution to society is Jenny and some Italian pastries. Jenny calls herself a social zero when talking with Oliver about her plans to go to Paris. The
difference in classes is illustrated when Oliver and Jenny plan to meet his parents. On approaching the grand estate, Jenny comments that there are no houses only trees. Oliver replies that the houses are behind the trees. It was at least a half a mile from the entrance to the property with other buildings lining the way. This is contrasted when Oliver goes to meet Jenny’s dad. Jenny is said to have lived on a street called Hamilton Avenue, a long line of wooden houses with many children in front of them, and a few scraggily trees. Merely driving down it, Oliver felt like he was in another country. People sat on their porches with nothing better to do than watch Oliver park his MG, or so Oliver thought.

Segal lets us see behind the scenes the responses of the rich to the poor. When Jenny meets Oliver’s parents, his mother sizes Jenny up, checks out her costume (clothes) and asks where her people are from. When Oliver meets up with his father for lunch at the Harvard Club days later, he asks his dad what he thought of Jenny. "Father, you haven’t said a word about Jennifer." "What is there to say?" "I think Jennifer is admirable for a girl from her background to get all the way to Radcliffe." Because of the difference in social class, Oliver's father accuses him of rebellion in his desire to marry Jenny. "Father, I fail to see how marrying a beautiful and brilliant Radcliffe girl constitutes rebellion. I mean, she is not some crazy hippie--" Oliver declares. "She is not many things", his father replies. Finally his father denies him the time of day if Oliver dare marry her. Oliver may not have been rebelling fully when he married Jenny but he did know that her financial status would rub his father the wrong way. The only time the two are referred to as equals is when they both graduate magna cum laude, and at that it is only academic equals. Segal wants us to believe the difference in upbringing and privileges mean nothing when it comes to Love. The extreme difference in class that Segal sets before us makes it difficult to believe that it would have no bearing on the success or failure of the relationship. Although
Oliver put up with their current financial restraints he was none too eager to land a lucrative job that would get the dirty word "scrounge" out of their vocabulary. He makes multiple attempts to get away from his father and the famous name, but he can't wait to get back to the lifestyle of the rich. He even uses his famous name to establish credit. To be poor was to be dirty and disrespectful. It equated to being less than. Since Jenny was poor she must be less than. To marry the rich would finally give her a social standing worthy of noticing. Jenny however doesn’t mind her finances, Oliver is the one who sees being poor as a detriment, not the state of mind it actually is. The author leads us well into the trenches of class. The acceptable and unacceptable, the rich and the poor, one a victor the other the defeated. Love conquers all as long as its army is financially supported.

To increase the reinforcements for Love, Segal has Jenny enlisted in a supposed deplorable ethnic background; she is an American of Italian descent. To be one from such a culture supports the calling of being poor. Within the first chapter Jennifer introduces herself just such a way. "I'm Jennifer Cavilleri" she said, "an American of Italian descent." We have not only learned that she is a beautiful woman but that she is poor and Italian all within the first 3 pages. The author shows us that Oliver blames Jenny's desire of goodwill between he and his father on her heritage. 'Y got my first inkling of the cultural gap between us...when it came to accepting the fact that my father was made of stone, she adhered to some atavistic Italian-Mediterranean notion of papa-loves-bambinos, and there was no arguing otherwise." To say her relationship with her dad was good was to say it was because of tradition not real feelings. Oliver was being disrespectful according to Jenny, which represented the Italian Mediterranean syndrome not common courtesy. Jenny even refers to her ethnicity when referencing a reason why marrying her would bother his father. 'It's impossible to get to Oliver
Barrett III", Oliver states. "Unless maybe if you marry Jennifer Cavilleri. . . ", Jenny replies. Oliver's introduction to Jenny’s dad went quite differently than when Jenny met his parents. At the Barrett's they were met with a maid showing them into the home and to his parents, Jenny's family is on the streets waiting her arrival. Coming to her father, she was met with a warm tight hug. Oliver and his father barely met his eyes. Oliver sees the relationship between Jenny and her father as abnormal, partly due to her Italian upbringing. Segal has classified eating pasta with being Italian and poor. Since Jenny is supporting the two of them, she must be cooking nothing but spaghetti and other noodle dishes. Jenny tells Oliver to learn to like spaghetti. Segal shows us that Jenny in turn learns to cook every conceivable pasta recipe. Why the author has denied the Italian culture as valid is unknown. Italians are seen as poor subculture in comparison to the Barrett's lineage. Segal wants us to view Jenny as independent and proud to declare her ethnic background. However, he then contrasts the value of being Italian by the disparaging remarks made by Oliver. If we listened to the author, would we want to be Italian? The answer is no. If you are Italian, you cook pasta all day, have no money, make no contributions to society and live in desolate depressing areas.

According to Segal, love should be able to overcome these types of differences. But instead it seems to accentuate them. How much has it cost Jenny to join the army of Love? She enlisted for a lifetime of marriage and gave up her life to do it. Jenny was the only participant in costs and compromise. Apparently our author sees there only being one General and one Soldier in the forces. To conquer all through Love the soldier will throw out all hopes of advancement, chase after the wealthy Superior, and proclaim the lack of self-worth as if it were a coveted victory. Segal asks us to sign on the dotted line and believe in the
adage "Love conquers all". Segal does not however want us to read the fine print.

[THIS PAPER HAS A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT DOES NOT REMAIN NEUTRAL IN ITS ANALYSIS. IT IS TOO CLOSE TO KUSHMAN IN THAT REGARD. BUT IT CLEARLY ILLUSTRATES THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTENDED AND UNINTENDED MESSAGES.]