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Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women And The Rest Of Us



Synopsis

Part coming-of-age story, part mind-altering manifesto on gender and sexuality, coming directly to you from the life experiences of a transgender woman, Gender Outlaw breaks all the rules and leaves the reader forever changed.26 black-and-white illustrations.

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Customer Reviews

I've read many books on feminism and gender, most of the Ms magazine ilk, and all of one mind, spouting the message that William can have a doll, and Sally can be a doctor when she grows up. Mainstream feminism is carrying this message into the 21st century almost unchanged from the late 1960's. This type of book always leaves me feeling a little unsatisfied.Kate Bornstein has written and book that attacks gender roles at the root, and not the flower. She is a male to female transsexual, in that she was identified as a boy at birth, and raised accordingly (there's a picture from her Bar Mitzvah), and was later surgically altered to look like a woman when she stands naked. She has a woman's body, and a female name, and prefers the pronoun "she," but Bornstein

does not claim a gender in the way gender exists as a social construct. Few things are as personal as gender, and no one has a right to dictate another person's gender, or even that a person claim a gender. She talks about men, and women, and everyone in between. The "everyone in between," however, are not sexless celibates nursing their melancholia in solitude; they are sexual beings like anyone else. Bornstein, by dispensing with gender, opens up sexual possibilities that were previously unthought of. There's lots of sex in this book. This book is not an apologetic for transsexualism, or gender dysphoria. If anything, it is in your face regarding not only personal choices, but anyone who would dare to judge someone else's choices. This is not a plea for understanding, as books on transsexualism usually are, not a heart-breaking tale of emotional pain, rejection and confusion.

As someone often mistaken for a woman, and as an Anthropologist, I highly recommend this wonderful, whimsical, Enlightened view of the Society vs. Gender dilemma. People often do not realize that a person must read stacks and stacks of books, to even come-close to comprehending WHY Gender is such a Big Deal in most cultures (especially American culture, which is extremely Repressed and dysfunctional). I have been asking myself Gender-related questions since I was a small child. Unfortunately, being raised in an environment that precluded the possibility of asking my parents any questions, or talking about such things in any other circumstances, all I had were Books. Obviously, Kate has read her fair share of books, magazines, Psychological arguments (I mean views), etc. Luckily, she wrote about her research, personal experiences, the challenges involved with living "Alternative Lifestyles" and society's response to people dropping out of the tribe.... The most inspiring and interesting concept I found in this work, was the idea that "Gender" is a "Tribal" concept. If you do not act the way your Tribe ("Male," "Female" / "Man," "Woman") WANTS you to act, you get kicked-out. I enjoy studying Anthropology and this concept makes more sense than a lot of the other theories I have read. When Kate puts things into perspective, and shows (easily) that the Man Tribe vs. Woman Tribe theory is in-action every day, in most cultures....it is like a Revelation. When you read this book, you realize that Males act as-if they are a Phallic Cult & Females act as-if they are a Non-phallic Cult.

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