

Boys Will Be Boys: Power, Patriarchy, and Toxic Maculinity

Clementine Ford

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Clementine Ford's *Boys Will Be Boys* is a straightforward, refreshing overview of toxic masculinity from a feminist lens.

The term “toxic masculinity” is everywhere recently, and for good reason. As women’s realities become explicit in mainstream media in the wake of #MeToo, people are using “toxic masculinity” to describe the culture that let male violence and supremacy fester under our noses. Taking its title from a common maxim that excuses such toxic behavior, *Boys Will Be Boys* scrutinizes societal behaviors that perpetuate patriarchy.

This book underscores how patriarchal societies hurt not only the women who bear the brunt of the violence, but the men whose personhood is severely limited to stereotypes. It forces them, as bell hooks is quoted as saying, “to kill off the emotional parts of themselves.” This leads to a system that hurts everyone, as Ford establishes through anecdotes, statistics, and feminist theory. Hers is an invigorating introduction to the insidious nature of patriarchal power and influence, perfect for those who have yet to read much on the topic.

Boys Will Be Boys turns a critical eye to the everyday ways we all participate in enforcing hurtful, gendered existences, from gender reveal parties to assuming women are responsible for housework and child care. Using both personal and pop culture anecdotes and references, Ford constructs a useful, approachable framework for exposing the sexism that’s entrenched in our culture. With pithy jokes and witty commentary, this is an engrossing read, and Ford’s spirited tone evokes passion for change.

If eager learners are intimidated by terms like “toxic masculinity” and “heteronormativity,” they should pick up *Boys Will Be Boys*, a provocative and bold text especially suitable for those unfamiliar with feminist ideology and looking to learn more.

MYA ALEXICE (July/August 2019)

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