

Call Them by Their True Names: American Crises (and Essays)

Rebecca Solnit

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Rebecca Solnit wants you to act. She wants you to abandon naive cynicism and reject resting in anger. She wants you to engage the issues and go about the hard work of effecting change. And she believes that you can do it. Given the fiery elegance and brutal intelligence that binds the essays of *Call Them By Their True Names* together, she's got the argumentative chops to convince you to begin that work now, in the midst of a period that she acknowledges is dark. Acting has never been more important.

Solnit's essays are lucid and acerbic, building her audience up and calling out those who hold others down. They have no patience for middling evasions, and demolish those who resist feminism, fairness, and progression. They demand that we consider present challenges, from income inequality to climate change, with nuance, and they insist upon concerted, knowledgeable action. Theirs are hefty tasks, and Solnit acknowledges as much—but this hard work is worthy work.

There are essay collections that rile and those that rouse, and Solnit's book is firmly in the latter camp. It awakens a temptation to go out into public and shout its words at complacent passersby, waiting for those who are kindred to emerge and join the fight. Their perspectives righteous and their conviction absolute, these essays are a rallying cry, a balm, and a sparkling manifesto, all rolled into one. Solnit's voice is the call to resistance that we need.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (June 14, 2019)

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