

No More Nice Girls

Lauren McKeon

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Journalist Lauren McKeon interrogates the insidious and invisible power structures that keep women down, and shows how women “disrupt and reimagine” those structures, in *No More Nice Girls*, a book all about the paradoxes of feminist power. Here, the gulf between visible and authentic progress is acknowledged, and a question is posed: “Do we have the very concept of women and power all wrong?”

In the age of #MeToo, girl bosses, and merchandise touting feminist rallying cries like “Fight Like A Girl” and “Nevertheless, She Persisted,” it is difficult for some to believe that a power imbalance still exists between men and women. Images of women in pointed pink hats flood television screens; women stand behind podiums in presidential primaries; it is easy to believe that we have arrived, but arrived where?

Challenging her audience to reimagine power outside of “the context of men,” McKeon suggests that it’s time to “ditch our old checklists for equality” and forge a new, uncharted path. She argues that modern feminism, in playing by rules designed by and for men, is ultimately self-defeating: “Too often, shattering that ceiling means we’re left walking ... on a bunch of broken glass.”

Covering venues from governmental cabinets to Reddit, McKeon uses plain language and an army of external sources to illuminate the puppet strings of power, even in supposedly “woke” spheres. Though many examples are Canadian—the fallacy of Trudeau’s “gender-balanced cabinet,” for instance—the questions posed, and the problems probed, are global. Online harassment and “trolling” are examined in depth, including sobering statistics on the prevalence and ferocity of the very gendered phenomenon around the world.

At times difficult to swallow, *No More Nice Girls* avoids despairing, instead positing a hopeful roadmap toward a future wherein women will not just attain power, but will topple and rebuild it in their own image.

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (March / April 2020)

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