

Truth, Justice, and the American Whore

Siouxsie Q

ThreeL Media (May 3, 2016)

Softcover \$18.95 (208pp)

978-0-9905571-5-9

It takes a bold free spirit to repurpose the derogatory epithet “whore” in a revolutionary context. That’s what outspoken sex-worker-rights activist Siouxsie Q does in *Truth, Justice, and the American Whore*, a powerful personal manifesto that wittily blends subversive politics with decadent kink.

Siouxsie is a bi-sex worker and activist-journalist. Selected pieces from her SF Weekly column, “The Whore Next Door,” make up the majority of the book and offer a picaresque, first-person account of Bay Area sex culture. Star Wars fetishes, bondage parties, and smart sex toys fill the pages. Siouxsie’s voice is fresh, fun, and irreverent without ever being forced or boorish.

The same voice wields intellectual heft when addressing politics, displaying a particular talent for cultural critique. The heart of the book is a persistent and impassioned defense of “whores.” Repurposed here, the word describes a smart, sexually confident woman who has no qualms using her body and personality as entrepreneurial tools to gain and redistribute patriarchal concentrations of wealth. A proud advocate of open and legal sex work, Siouxsie finds herself at odds with antiporn feminists, upper-crust yuppies, and even Hollywood royalty. Her brand of feminism rejects stigma of all types and unequivocally supports a woman’s right to do what she wants with her body.

Beyond the polemic and the kinky, *Truth, Justice, and the American Whore* is a love letter to San Francisco and the freedom and equality it represents. The book’s final sections become elegiac as Siouxsie Q moves across the bay in search of lower rent, mirroring a greater migration of the queer community. These passages, along with beautiful black-and-white photography by Isabel Dresler, add a human layer of yearning and nostalgia to an otherwise fun and forward-looking read. *Truth, Justice, and the American Whore* is simultaneously provocative and charming.

SCOTT NEUFFER (Fall 2016)

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