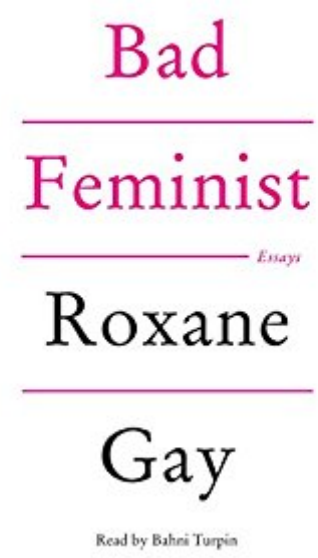
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Bad Feminist: Essays



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Synopsis

A collection of essays spanning politics, criticism, and feminism from one of the most-watched young cultural observers of her generation, Roxane Gay. "Pink is my favorite color. I used to say my favorite color was black to be cool, but it is pink - all shades of pink. If I have an accessory, it is probably pink. I read Vogue, and I’m not doing it ironically, though it might seem that way. I once live-tweeted the September issue." In these funny and insightful essays, Roxane Gay takes us through the journey of her evolution as a woman (Sweet Valley High) of color (The Help) while also taking listeners on a ride through culture of the last few years (Girls, Django in Chains) and commenting on the state of feminism today (abortion, Chris Brown). The portrait that emerges is not only one of an incredibly insightful woman continually growing to understand herself and our society, but also one of our culture. >Bad Feminist is a sharp, funny, and spot-on look at the ways in which the culture we consume becomes who we are, and an inspiring call-to-arms of all the ways we still need to do better.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t know what to expect when opening a book entitled, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Bad Feminist.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• I certainly didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t expect to read about GayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s devotion to the Sweet Valley High book series, or her obsession with competitive Scrabble, or her enjoyment of the Hunger Games books despite their literary pitfalls. She offers these reflections alongside essays lamenting violence against women and the LGBT

community, and the depressing persistence of rape culture and racism. The latter essays tend to be gritty, factual, intensely-layered with a complex and nuanced perspective; they showcase her ability to imbibe culture in all its formsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •media, news, movies, literatureÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and lay it out for us to see, think about, and agree or disagree with. In one notable essay, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The Solace of Preparing Fried Foods and Other Quaint Remembrances from 1960s Mississippi: Thoughts on The HelpÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•, Gay bemoans the ever-lingering trope of the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“magical negroÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and its presence in movies and popular literature. She writes: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In The Help, there are not one but twelve or thirteen magical negroes who use their mystical powers to make the world a better place by sharing their stories of servitude and helping Eugenia ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœSkeeterÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ Phelan grow out of her awkwardness and insecurity into a confident, racially aware, independent career woman. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s an embarrassment of riches for fans of the magical negro tropeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Pg. 210). When I read this, other movies came to mind, such as The Green Mile, in which the person of color, John Coffey, significantly improves the lives of the white people in his life but doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t save himself from being put to death by electrocution. Coffey brings animals back to life and sucks cancer from a white womanÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s body, accepting it not without distress and pain to his own person, and reassures the whites around him that he is ready to die, and in fact wants to die. Gay wishes for a day when people of color play characters other than a slave or a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“magical negroÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• or a combination of the two; she wishes for a day when the script has a person of color performing significant acts for their own destiny and not for someone else.In a world where people think increasingly in absolutist claims, such as We versus Them, and use increasingly simplified and stunted language that can hardly do justice to the many ways life is lived, GayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s writing forces the reader to consider the infinite shades of gray that exist in the world beyond the black and white, and demands through her logic that people be allowed to thrive in a variety of lifestyles, modes, and cultures and be respected and lovedÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •despite religion, skin color, gender, chosen life paths, and level of so-called femininity.IsnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t this book about being a bad feminist? Yes, but GayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s views of herself, what feminism means for her and what she thinks it should mean today are intertwined with her ruminations on literature and culture. ThereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s not just one right way to be a feminist; thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s the way of being who you are, plus feminism, and then you can be both, even if it doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t quite fit in the lines of what the perceived perfect feminist might be (for instance, Gay likes the color pink). As if sighing at the end of a lengthy conversation, she says in her last essay: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“I am a mess of

contradictions.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• We are all; yet few of us are strong enough to admit it.

Wonderful, wonderful book! While feminism was the central theme of most of the essays, Roxane Gay shares her thoughts on everything from social media to pop culture to racism. I appreciated how she let us in on her thought process and didn't come across as arrogant or self righteous. There were times when I was nodding my head and thinking, "Yes! I totally agree!" and other times where I was going, "No, no, no, no!" The point isn't whether or not you agree with her though. It's about all of these important things that come up in our culture that people spend a lot of time talking about but don't seem to spend a lot of time really thinking about. I would recommend this book to anyone, male or female, Republican or Democrat, self-labeled feminist or not. It's just a book that makes you think, and a well-written and engaging one at that.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I found it to be on point, relevant, I spoke to issues that are and have been poignant for women of all communities.

Thoughtful writing. IGay shares her own experiences to give context, texture, and perspective to the world around her. I recommend reading one or several essays at a time rather than all at once. The essays are more poignant cultural commentary than they are academic musings which is refreshing and makes them very accessible. The author uses modern media as her muse and writes commentary using her own personal experience as a lens. Some of her essays really hit home for me and others were just interesting from the standpoint of hearing about someone else's life experiences.

I enjoyed this book. I found it insightful, intellectual, laugh out loud funny sometimes and well thought out. I could relate to a lot of her positions in some of the essays. In other instances I was like, "Hmmmm....I never quite thought about it that way." I am a now a big fan.

It is an insightful analysis of issues and cultural phenomena. It is thought-provoking and helps one to identify their own biases and to evaluate critically many book and movies. I would take half a star off for slight occasional biases of her own; I think none of us can be completely unbiased

Gay's reflections on her life in and out of academia are powerful because, in addition to being an excellent and engaging writer, she's willing to share her messy, human reality with her readers. She

claims to be a"bad" feminist, but I'd argue that what she really is is an honest feminist. As a far-from-enlightened feminist myself, I find her thoughts both inspiring and challenging, and hope she continues to fight gender inequality with such humor and good will.

I liked this book and am a big fan of the authors. However, I felt she lost track of the structure of her narrative towards the last essays. They come a cross as rants and movie reviews. This not a problem since feminism is a part of all spheres of life and she is trying to help broaden our horizons. But I felt she lost track of her agenda in the Django review-which focussed. mOre on race rather than feminism. Nonetheless...a good read.

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