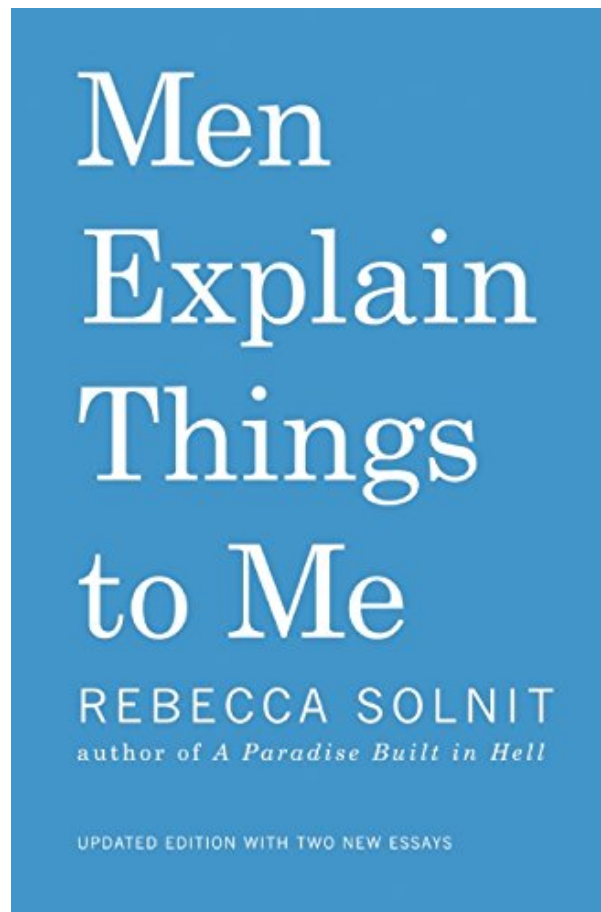


**MEN EXPLAIN THINGS TO ME UPDATED
EDITION BY REBECCA SOLNIT**



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Men Explain Things to Me

REBECCA SOLNIT

author of *A Paradise Built in Hell*

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In her comic, scathing essay “Men Explain Things to Me,” Rebecca Solnit takes on what often goes wrong in conversations between men and women. She writes about men who wrongly assume they know things and wrongly assume women don’t, about why this arises, and how this aspect of the gender wars works, airing some of her own hilariously awful encounters.

She ends on a serious note— because the ultimate problem is the silencing of women who have something to say, including those saying things like, “He’s trying to kill me!”

The updated edition of this national bestseller features two new essays, including Solnit's recent essay on the remarkable feminist conversation that arose in the wake of the 2014 Isla Vista killings.

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—The New Republic

Writer, historian, and activist Rebecca Solnit is the author of fourteen books, most recently *The Faraway Nearby*. She is a *Harper's Magazine* contributing editor.

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Most helpful customer reviews

333 of 364 people found the following review helpful.

Ladies, read this one on a train, at a park, anywhere in public.

By AOL

I've read this essay and others by Solnit all prior to their inclusion in this slim little tone with the exactly right-sized lettering on its cover. I am hugely adoring of her writing, so this review is less about the essays themselves (all fantastic) than the fact that it is a discrete volume you can, and should, be toting around in public.

Ladies, read it on the subway.

Two nights ago I was coming home from a lovely summer's walk to a favorite bookstore, where I snapped up the book. I took it out of my bag at 10:30 p.m. on a sublime Saturday night in New York, on the G train.

I was standing, but a Latina woman with her daughter on her lap craned her neck to try see the title of the book. Next to her, two other women who seemed to be out on the town for the night, were whispering to each other, "what does it say?"

The Latina woman cocked her head further and spoke up, "Men Explain Things..."

I spun on my heel and showed off the cover.

"'Men Explain Things to Me.' It's great."

"What is it about?" asked one of the women out on the town. I could tell by the tilt of her eyebrow that she thought its premise was dubious. She did not want Things Explained to her.

I scooped over to where they were sitting, and gave them a short precis of the essay's key narrative moment, closing with: "and you ladies know what she's talking about right? Has that ever happened to you?"

"Mmm-HMM." "You know it has." And a few little cheers and murmurs erupted from the half-dozen women in the train car. We all smiled. I went back to the book, and the women who were out on the town started talking about how Frankie was doing the exact same thing last week, and had no idea what he was talking about.

76 of 81 people found the following review helpful.

Some Thoughts On/For Conservative Readers

By Ian

I bought this book for my brother-in-law shortly after my sister gave birth to a daughter. I thought it would be a fun “Hey, you have a daughter, this might be a good thing to start thinking about”-type gift. And so he didn’t feel totally alone while reading it, I bought myself a copy as well.

Solnit is clearly a powerful mind and talented writer. Her prose is strong and forceful, and she writes with stirring— at times contagious— conviction. The book’s most powerful essays (“Men Explain Things To Me” and “#YesAllWomen”) are intelligent, clear-sighted looks at a massive, difficult, dangerous topic. It’s saddens me to applaud Solnit for her courage in writing this, if only because that acknowledges the typical backlash against women who speak out against misogyny, but she IS courageous and that alone warrants commendation.

The book starts out with a funny, almost playful anecdote about being mansplained to by a pompous idiot at a party in Aspen, but then quickly moves into darker waters. Solnit goes on to use politics, art, history and new media as springboards for discussing the interconnectedness of cultural misogyny and how mansplaining and rape can be viewed as existing on a continuum. Towards the end of the book she summarizes this nicely: “It’s a slippery slope. That’s why we need to address the slope, rather than compartmentalizing the varieties of misogyny and dealing with them separately.” (p. 134) It’s a new way of looking at an ancient problem, articulated in a way that I don’t think I’ve heard before, and Solnit rounds out her case by anticipating counter arguments (i.e. men being falsely imprisoned for rape) and responding to them to the degree that they deserve.

So here’s the part where I complain: While her arguments are culturally important and her writing is strong, Solnit’s rhetoric seems, at times, deliberately hyperbolic and meant to divide readers. On pg. 57 she describes the case of Ariel Castro, a man accused of imprisoning, torturing and sexually abusing three women as being “a vicious version of the traditional [marriage] arrangement.” Later on in the book (p. 153) she takes a similar swipe at capitalism: “There’s more that we need to be liberated from... a system that serves environmental destruction and limitless consumption...” And beyond that there’s a general celebration of revolution, (non-violent) anarchy, as well as Solnit’s insistence that this is, indeed, “a war.” In other words, if you’re traditional / conservative / old-fashioned, then chances are you’re probably going to feel pretty alienated while reading this, if not all out attacked. I don’t consider myself conservative, but there were still times when I felt myself getting defensive. With that said, I was less annoyed with this on ideological terms than I was by what felt like a tactical mis-step. Simply put: This is a wise book. This is an important book. A lot of people should be reading it and absorbing it’s message. And I could suddenly feel thousands of readers— good people who’s minds are ready to be expanded— fleeing from it’s very positive message, because they were being lumped in with rapists and murderers. I was frustrated because I felt like the book was preaching to the choir and, in-so-doing, entrenching conservatives deeper into their current belief systems.

One could argue that this book isn’t intended to convert and so it’s unfair to judge it by those standards; that it’s a celebration and reminder of what’s already been accomplished in the fight for gender equality, and that now it’s up to someone else to write the gentler, more palatable book that eases *The Other Side* into progressive thinking. And you know what— that may very well be the case. In the meantime, I encourage conservative thinkers who are interested in reading this to do so with an open mind instead of just looking for things to disagree with. Because the fact of the matter is that the vast majority of what’s discussed in this book really has nothing to do with superficial left / right politics and everything to do with how we want our nieces/daughters to be treated as they grow up in the world. And that feels like something we can all agree on.

111 of 121 people found the following review helpful.

This book was really good. It opened my eyes to a lot of ...

By kungfugirl922

This book was really good. It opened my eyes to a lot of information of which I was sadly unaware. But a fair warning: It is very upsetting. I got angry and depressed after I read this and realized how pervasive is the subjugation of women in our society. It gave me the courage to stand up and not let people silence me.

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