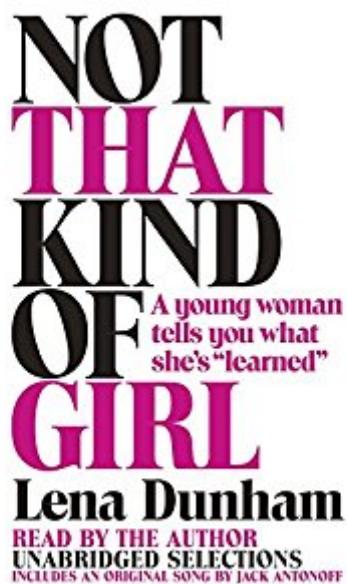


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Not That Kind Of Girl: A Young Woman Tells You What She's 'Learned'



Synopsis

For readers or listeners of Nora Ephron, Tina Fey, and David Sedaris, this hilarious, poignant, and extremely frank collection of personal essays confirms Lena Dunham - the acclaimed creator, producer, and star of HBO's Girls - as one of the brightest and most original writers working today. "If I can take what I've learned in this life and make one treacherous relationship or degrading job easier for you, perhaps even prevent you from becoming temporarily vegan, then every misstep of mine will have been worthwhile. This book contains stories about wonderful nights with terrible boys and terrible days with wonderful friends, about ambition and the two existential crises I had before the age of twenty. About fashion and its many discontents. About publicly sharing your body, having to prove yourself in a meeting full of fifty-year-old men, and the health fears (tinnitus, lamp dust, infertility) that keep me up at night. I'm already predicting my future shame at thinking I had anything to offer you with this book, but also my future glory in having stopped you from trying an expensive juice cleanse or having the kind of sexual encounter where you keep your sneakers on. No, I am not a sexpert, a psychologist, or a registered dietician. I am not a married mother of three or the owner of a successful hosiery franchise. But I am a girl with a keen interest in self-actualization, sending hopeful dispatches from the front lines of that struggle."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Before reading this book, I thought Lena Dunham could do no wrong. I love all three seasons of Girls, I've bought magazines I'd never previously read simply because she graced their covers, and I've read all of her online essays. This book is, however, too much Lena. While there are flashes of

brilliance in the book, like the essays on the hard-to-define rape she suffered, the teacher who tried to sexually abuse her, and the struggles she's had with being taken seriously by male execs in Hollywood, the majority of the book is filled with musings about her life that are simply boring. I get that Lena believes that standing up and telling your story is the bravest thing anyone can do, but your story has to be interesting in order to be worthy of being published. That's where this book has gone wrong--the publisher clearly thought that anything written by Lena would be lapped up by readers. With each individual essay, her editors clearly didn't step back and ask, 'Is this really worth publishing?'. If they had, the book would be about two-thirds shorter. The title is also misleading, as Lena does not appear to have learned very much, or rather, she doesn't take much interest in imparting her knowledge to her readers. This book has primarily taught me that Lena Dunham is excruciatingly self-obsessed and lacking virtually any self-awareness. She appears to believe that her musings on virtually anything are nothing short of brilliant, no matter how dull and irrelevant the subject matter. The reprinting of several pages of her food diary is perhaps the best illustration of this --a verbatim regurgitation of what she ate for about a week while she was allegedly on a 'diet' (it's really just a pretty standard day's eating for most people) is supposed to communicate what exactly?

I confess I had never heard of Lena Dunham before now; her book was recommended to me as a 'hilarious collection of personal essays' by someone who knows I love that kind of writing. So I went into this expecting great things from the writing itself, as well as great stories from someone who publishers apparently felt had something to say. Where do you even start to describe the appalling narcissism that is this book? I realize that memoir, by its very nature, requires a fair amount of navel-gazing. But this is so self indulgent, so arrogant in its assumption that anyone could possibly care about such meaningless insights as 'dieting is hard -- here, look at what I ate for a couple of weeks' that it's hard to feel sorry for the author even when she's telling us something more substantive and painful, like 'I didn't realize I was raped because I was so drunk and high I stupidly took a guy I hated home with me rather than admit that I thought he was someone else.' After a couple dozen pages, I became curious about this author, about why she was such a 'big deal' that she could get away with writing such garbage. And I saw that she had made her mark in television and a couple of films. Won a few awards. Did so at a young age. And...? Nope. That's it. At the ripe old age of 28 she had 'learned' enough and accomplished enough that readers would certainly be wowed by admissions that she checked out her little sister's vagina while they were playing, or that she routinely abused drugs and alcohol and felt no shame about sleeping with anyone and

everyone. My advice, young Lena? Don't write another word about yourself for twenty-eight more years. Grow up. Think about other people as something besides bit players in The Lena Show.

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