



Standup Guy: Manhood After Feminism

Michael Segell

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Three decades after American women changed their strategy in the battle of the sexes, how do men really feel? About themselves? About feminism? Is it still possible for men to be heroes? Aggressive pursuers of status and dominance--their traditional goals? In this candid dispatch from the front lines of the gender war, journalist Michael Segell delivers some provocative answers.

As a columnist for *Esquire* and an editor at *Cosmopolitan*, Segell began to document a serious disconnect between American men and women, a seemingly unbridgeable divide between what men and women say in public about sexual roles and their very real private thoughts and desires. Women today expect that they will be fulfilled both professionally and personally. But often, Segell found, men are secretly too angry and resentful to woo, or stay married to, women they view as competitors. The result for men: a passive-aggressive approach to women, a historic aversion to intimacy (the euphemistic "lack of commitment"), and a rapidly declining marriage rate. Even, astonishingly, a new mode of payback: sexual withholding.

After interviewing disaffected combatants, married and single, on both sides of the ideological divide and tracing the causes of men's pain and confusion, Segell embarked upon a search for the kind of man who can end this sexual stalemate--a man who doesn't retreat from successful women. Over time, a portrait resolved: Both a lover and a fighter, he's tough and competitive yet loving and compassionate, stoic yet emotionally sophisticated, skilled in the bedroom and the boardroom. In short, a standup guy.

Deep in an all-male universe--at men's retreats and in locker rooms--Segell limns the evolution of a new masculinity, a model that reaffirms traditional male virtues, the durability of manly friendship, the immutability of the ancient laws of sexual attraction, the delights of marriage and children, and the importance of the bond, however challenging and strained, between fathers and sons. Along the way, he turns his focus upon himself, offering moving accounts of the events and relations that have shaped his own vision of what it means to be a man. Finally, through keen analysis of sexual manners and rhetoric, Segell offers a blueprint, for both sexes, for a *détente* in the thirty-year gender war.

Intelligent, direct, and deeply felt, drawing upon comprehensive research and personal history, *Standup Guy* will enlighten and inform men and women alike.

This is a book about men--Big Men and "rubbish men," athletes and aesthetes, philanthropists and presidential philanderers, babes and bullies, warriors and wimps, ladies' men and louts, and surfers, censorious censors, and CEOs.

It's a book about male obsessions--or as my wife puts it, sports and sex. But it's also about the durability of manly friendship; the pure tough heart of little boys; the virtues of dominance and aggression; the utility of emotional constraint; the willfulness of the penis; the calming delights of marriage; and the challenging, often dangerous bond between father and son. It's a book about the immutable laws of sexual attraction, and the persuasive power of a slow hand. It's about the dawning of personal insight, catharsis, and change. --
from the Introduction

From the Hardcover edition.

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