



Shrewed: A Wry and Closely Observed Look at the Lives of Women and Girls

Elizabeth Renzetti

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Why are there so few women in politics? Why is public space, whether it's the street or social media, still so inhospitable to women? What does Carrie Fisher have to do with Mary Wollstonecraft? And why is a wedding ceremony Satan's playground?

These are some of the questions that bestselling author and acclaimed journalist Elizabeth Renzetti examines in her new collection of essays. Drawing upon Renzetti's decades of reporting on feminist issues, *Shrewed* is a book about feminism's crossroads. From Hillary Clinton's failed campaign to the quest for equal pay, from the lessons we can learn from old ladies to the future of feminism in a turbulent world, Renzetti takes a pointed, witty look at how far we've come — and how far we have to go.

If Nellie McClung and Erma Bombeck had an IVF baby, this book would be the result. If they'd lived at the same time. And in the same country. And if IVF had been invented. Well, you get the point.

Shrewed: A Wry and Closely Observed Look at the Lives of Women and Girls Details

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Author : Elizabeth Renzetti

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From Reader Review Shrewed: A Wry and Closely Observed Look at the Lives of Women and Girls for online ebook

Beth says

A wise, witty combination of autobiography and feminism. I like how Renzetti touched (albeit briefly) on how the patriarchy also negatively impacts boys, and how we need (and how we white women are finally waking up to) intersectionality in feminism. It was a quick, engrossing read and I laughed out loud a few times, which is always a bonus in my book.

*Thanks to NetGalley for the ARC, provided by the author and/or the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Amber Daugherty says

I finished this book and immediately felt like I'd just made a new best friend - happy, optimistic and understood. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to read about other women's experiences so that we know we are not alone. One essay in Shrewed talks about that asshole voice in your head that tries to talk you out of moving forward, and offers advice for how to tell it to shut the hell up. Another essay talks about how achieving 'balance' isn't aspirational because all of the amazing life moments happen when we're floating, flying, unbalanced. Women are incredible and we need more than ever to lift each other up and learn from one another. I would recommend this book to any and every woman who's been struggling - especially this past year - or looking for suggestions on how to change the status quo. Buy this for your friends, mothers, sisters, daughters and most importantly yourself. Elizabeth Renzetti has created a manual, a tool, a manifesto -- and you're going to want to read it.

Jenna says

God bless Liz Renzetti

Lata says

A quick though emotional read of Elizabeth Renzetti's personal and professional experiences with misogyny, though she does write a little also about the extra hurdles and barriers in place for women of colour and those in the LGBTQ community. And this is written from a North American perspective, so there isn't much about women throughout the world. That said, Renzetti's does cover, in an accessible manner, what it was like growing up and working as a journalist and what she encountered while doing so.

Sarah says

A quick read about sexism and the lives of women with some interesting observations and insights. I found

myself agreeing with a lot of the author had to say... but that the book didn't have all that much new to say.

As with many books like this, I found this to be kind of an echo chamber -- yes, I agreed with a lot of what Renzetti had to say, but *I'm* not one of the ones whose mind needs changing, who needs convincing to join her side. I don't mean to direct these comments at this book specifically, but it has made me think more about whether I'll pick up similar books in the future, and is symptomatic of this sub-genre (or whatever you want to call it) as a whole. I recently got *Misogynation: The True Scale of Sexism* out of the library and took it straight back after only reading the introduction. Because I knew that the content would just further dispirit me - **I'm** not someone who needs to stop being misogynistic or change my behaviour, and I realised that reading it would just make me more frustrated at how things still aren't changing, with regard to street harassment, workplace sexism and the like. Authors of these types of books are preaching to the choir, and unfortunately the people who really need to change the way they look at things or are part of the problem are unlikely to ever pick up a book on the topic.

I didn't mean for this review to turn into a mini-rant but writing out my thoughts just made me think about all of these things. This is a well-written and at times amusing collection of essays about the lives of women and girls, the things we experience and the challenges we deal with in today's society. I'm just not 100% convinced on how necessary it was.

A Lib Tech Reads says

Shrewed: A Wry and Closely Observed Look at the Lives of Women and Girls
Elizabeth Renzetti

Rating: 4/5

Note: Special thanks to House of Anansi for providing an ARC for review.

I thoroughly enjoyed this compilation of Elizabeth Renzetti's essays on feminism. There was never a moment where I felt like I was being told off for not rolling up my sleeves, picking up my picket sign, and shouting at the government through a loudspeaker about the injustice many women have to face. Instead, Renzetti's work is meant to create more **awareness** about questions you should ask yourself, regardless of what gender you identify as, about women's roles and influences in politics (and many other industries dominated by men) and social media.

In a society where every woman is being told that they're either being too much of a feminist or not doing enough as one to support our fellow woman, it is difficult to choose a nice balance in the face of such criticism. However, Renzetti does a wonderful job highlighting the progress many resilient women have made throughout the ages. With every issue such as online bullying, harassment in the workforce or the misogynistic dialogue of an ignorant being, the focus remains on the positive that also comes in hand: **women refusing to back down or be silenced and scared into submission.**

This was an uplifting and very humorous read that includes short anecdotes of Renzetti's own tenacious mother and letters to her children. She's unafraid to touch upon topics like game gate and white feminism (even calling herself out!) I was highly anticipating this book and am so appreciative the publisher's sent an ARC to me. This is one I'll be recommending to students.

Rachel Mantas says

A very interesting collection of essays. I enjoyed this book immensely, but was a little let down by the final essay. I did like what she share about other women who gave commencement speeches but found hers a little drab. I think she could do better. But then maybe she didn't want to give away the good stuff before she got asked to give the actual speech.

One day maybe that will be true. Maybe she will give that speech and I hope like anything we get more women in leadership, not just in politics but all over the world. So many spaces for women leaders to help make good change happen. I only worry about her analogy to the futuristic comedy sketch in the second last chapter that instead of it taking only minutes to finish the summit, there won't even be a summit to have. I rarely think of myself as a pessimistic individual, but the way of the future seems more like we are doomed and if anything, once a women is in power, all the shambles and disgrace of past governement will come crashing down on her head with them yelling "it's her fault." Even though it will just be the mess they left us.

I will try to be an optimist for my god-daughter, and continue to care for the environment for her to grow old in, but I cannot fully image a rosy future with some of the important piece Elizabeth points out.

Saira says

I started this book before I had the time to read it, so ignore how long it took for me to finish. This made me feel angry, and sad and hopeful and bitter and empowered along with a whole other spectrum of emotions. It isn't the best thing to read before bed and I need a break from any more feminist essays for a while because my heart can't handle it.

Emmkay says

Delightful and witty (but also sometimes very moving) collection of feminist essays. Not new ground, but enjoyable, thought-provoking, timely - that good stuff. Highlights included Renzetti's writing about her mother (a nurse and single parent in the 70s and, from the sounds of it, a real hoot in her 80s), her interviews with interesting women including PD James, and her thoughts on women in public life. Looking forward to reading some of the other books she mentions!

Carolyn Harris says

I thoroughly enjoyed this collection of essays about the challenges women face in society. Highlights include an analysis of work life balance and how being busy becomes a status symbol in itself, the complicated cultural attitudes regarding women's ambition, and the literal cost of being female as products marketed toward women often cost substantially more than equivalents for men. Renzetti's own life experiences are woven into the text. The book ends with inspiring advice for women and girls, which I hope Renzetti eventually gets to deliver as a commencement address.

Tara Million says

I really enjoyed reading this collection of feminist essays. They were interesting, well written, funny, and thought provoking. I hadn't heard of Elizabeth Renzetti before I read her book but I'll certainly keep an eye out for articles by her now.

I thought the essay on that self doubting voice in your head and how it puts you down and prevents you from trying things was really good. It's nice to know other women hear that voice too! I also liked Renzetti's observations on how women compete to see who's the busiest and use being overwhelmed with responsibilities as a badge of honour. I've certainly seen that happen and I hate that game. The essay about the recent American election was fascinating. I was appalled to read about the hate mongering that happened and the venom that was expressed towards Hillary Clinton. But it was also wonderful to read about the Women's March on Washington that followed.

Overall, this is a very strong addition to feminist literature that is both fresh and modern but also pays homage to established feminist works. I suspect that the style of these essays would particularly appeal to younger women.

Erin says

It's nice that we both more or less agree on Sam Neill in *My Brilliant Career*. ^_^
...

Unfair things I realized (or at least became more cognizant of) while reading this:

1) Men spend great wads of money on entertaining themselves (cars/trucks/bikes/ATVs/snowmobiles/&c, TVs, computers, booze &c, games/video games, movies, TV, gadgets, things that happened to be on sale even though they didn't need them, anything advertised on TV that is not a baby-care or feminine hygiene product); women spend great wads of money on looking good for and making themselves attractive to men (clothes and shoes, accessories, makeup, miracle serums/creams/elixirs of youth, perfume and scents and deodorants, hair removal, hair care, nail care, injections, nips & tucks, implants, diets, exercise classes and equipment, subscriptions to magazines that dictate style and give tips on catching a man/pleasing your man/looking good for your man/bringing slippers and bourbon when your man comes home from work/&c... = hundreds of billions of dollars annually worldwide). IMAGINE if men earned less than women but spent hundreds of billions of dollars (annually, worldwide) on looking good for women, and women earned more than men and could spend their extra cash on entertaining themselves! Wow!

Of course that dichotomy is oversimplified, and everyone spends money on other things, like food and rent and taxes (and perhaps men are expected to pay for those things, in many households. Especially ones where they are the primary or only breadwinner, go figure). I suppose I'm just particularly bitter when I think back over the past few months and compare my purchases with those of the men in my life. The generalization looks like it has some truth to it. Maybe it's my fault and maybe I shouldn't cave to external pressures and maybe I should retreat to a lighthouse with my cat to live in blissful solitude, far from the madding crowd.

2) Women are punished for misbehaving; men are supported, encouraged, applauded for doing so. ("Boys will be boys!" "She was asking for it.")

3) I believe I am worthwhile; I know I am intelligent and capable. Because I am a woman, that makes me a feminist. If it's a dirty word—well, it's not the first one I've been called.

Anna says

This has really been the year of reading books of essays by women, especially books of essays decrying the absolute shit state of our world, and stressing the importance of feminism. And thank god for that. Renzetti's book reminds me of Feminasty, in that it tackles the really grim stuff with a wry, whip-smart humour, which seems so necessary right now. If we don't laugh, we might cry. So we laugh.

Ellen says

3.5 stars. Well written look at feminism in 2017. This book is at times both discouraging and encouraging (and also, quite funny from time to time). All in all an interesting book, but really nothing terribly new - sadly.

Sharon says

Elizabeth Renzetti, on imagining if she'd be invited to give a convocation address: "The graduates of tomorrow — particularly the women, at whom this book is aimed — should be thinking about living large. Yes, that's what I'd talk about, if only some enterprising college administrator would ask me to expound on the topic....Do not allow yourself to be diminished. Expand like a flower, like a heated gas, like a beautiful rising loaf. Expand into yourself, and never apologize for it."

Once this book gets around, she will, undoubtedly, be invited. Clearheaded and calm, but with passion seeping through, Renzetti, a long-time columnist for The Globe and Mail, expounds on many topics, always with interest. One strongly feminist white woman's perspective.
