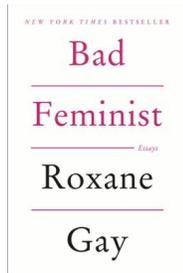


# Books by the Stack

## *Bad Feminist* by Roxane Gay



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 readers 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.

**Why you'll like it:** Amusing. Thought-provoking. Society and culture. Engaging.

**About the Author:** Roxane Gay's writing has appeared in Best American Mystery Stories 2014, Best American Short Stories 2012, Best Sex Writing 2012, Oxford American, American Short Fiction, West Branch, Virginia Quarterly Review, NOON, The New York Times Book Review, Bookforum, Time, The Los Angeles Times, The Nation, The Rumpus, Salon, The Wall Street Journal's Speakeasy culture blog, and many others. She is the co-editor of PANK and essays editor for The Rumpus. She teaches writing at Eastern Illinois University. She is the author of three books--*Ayiti*, *An Untamed State*, and *Bad Feminist*.

### Questions for discussion

1. What essay resonated with you the most and why?
2. What is your definition of a feminist? Who is this person? What type of values do they hold? What actions do they take?
3. Roxane Gay writes, "I sometimes cringe when I am referred to as a feminist, as if I should be ashamed of my feminism or as if the word "feminist" is an insult. The label is rarely offered in kindness." Why do you think Roxane, and the other women she mentions in "*Bad Feminist: Take One*," shy away from being called a feminist? What common misconceptions do people have about the words feminist and feminism?
4. Roxane points out her feminist failings: listening to rap music, wanting to be taken care of, liking the color pink – contradictions that make her a "bad feminist." What do you think are the characteristics of a "good feminist?" Is there such a thing as a bad or good feminist?
5. Do the issues Roxane Gay discusses in her book affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?
6. What evidence does Gay use to support her ideas? Is the evidence convincing, definitive, or

speculative? Does the author depend on personal opinion, observation, and assessment? Or is the evidence factual—based on science, statistics, historical documents, or quotations from (credible) experts?

**7.** What solutions does Gay propose to the issues she raises in *Bad Feminist*? Who would implement those solutions? How probable is success?

**8.** Talk about specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?

**9.** How controversial are the issues raised in *Bad Feminist*? Who is aligned on which sides of the issues? Where do you fall in that line-up?

**10.** What have you learned after reading *Bad Feminist*? Has it broadened your perspective about a difficult issue—personal or societal?

(Questions adapted from *LitLovers and Word Press* [blog](#) by Taylor Henriquez)



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