Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman by Lindy West

Lindy West is ferociously witty and outspoken, tackling topics as varied as pop culture, social justice, and body image.


About the Author: Lindy West is a Seattle-based writer, editor, and performer whose work focuses on pop culture, social justice, humor, and body image. She's currently a culture writer for GQ magazine and GQ.com and a weekly columnist at The Guardian, as well as the founder and editor of I Believe You | It's Not Your Fault, an advice blog for teens.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to be shrill? How has the meaning of this word, or words like it, changed for you?
2. Have you heard of Lindy West or read anything by her before this book? If so, what were your impressions of Lindy and how have they changed or been reaffirmed with the reading of this book?
3. Feminism has changed since Betty Friedan first published “The Feminine Mystique” in 1963. Based on West's book, what would you say are some of the more important topics that feminists are talking about today? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
4. Many comedians argue for their right to make jokes about any topic. However, West argues that some topics such as rape, should not be joked about. What are your thoughts on her argument?
5. There are many internet-based crimes that specifically target women, from revenge porn and leaked personal photos of celebrities to trolls using social media to send harassing and threatening messages. Who are the women who are typically targets of these trolls? Have you had to deal with harassment on social media? Do you think laws have caught up with technology and these types of crimes?
6. On page 165, West writes “Comedy doesn’t just reflect the world, it shapes it.” Do you agree? How did your perception of what funny really means change when you read this chapter?
7. What did you find to be the most interesting events in this book? What, if anything, surprised you?
8. What did you find to be the funniest part of the book? What was the saddest part?
9. If you didn’t like the book, how do you think it could be improved?

(Questions provided in part by bookmovement.com and bookofthemonth.com)