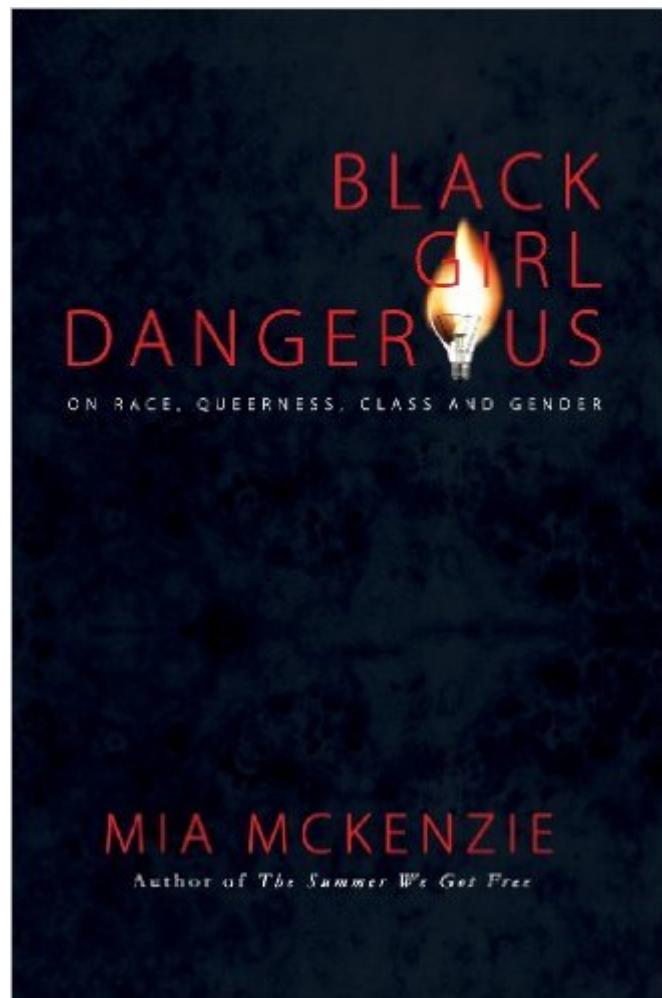


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Black Girl Dangerous On Race, Queerness, Class And Gender



Synopsis

Mia McKenzie, creator of the enormously popular website Black Girl Dangerous, writes about race, queerness, class and gender in a concise, compelling voice filled at different times with humor, grief, rage, and joy. In this collection of her work from BGD (now available only in this book), McKenzie's nuanced analysis of intersecting systems of oppression goes deep to reveal the complicated truths of a multiply-marginalized experience. McKenzie tackles the hardest questions of our time with clarity and courage, in language that is accessible to non-academics and academics alike. She is both fearless and vulnerable, demanding and accountable. Hers is a voice like no other. "One of the most provocative and insightful writers of our generation." -Aura Bogado, Colorlines "A fierce voice among a generation of queer and trans folk of color." -Janet Mock, New York Times Bestselling Author of "Redefining Realness" "Tough-love activism at its best-straightforward, challenging, whip-smart, and uncompromising." -Andi Zeisler, Bitch Magazine

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a white girl who was under the impression she wasn't oppressing people, this book made it painstakingly clear I have a lot to learn, and a lifetime of understanding in front of me. Mia writes with a clear poignancy and force that one has to reckon with. I loved this narrative on the life I live, on the life people of color live. Read it. Hopefully it will change your world too.

Black Girl Dangerous is a collection of work from writer Mia McKenzie's blog and website.

Each piece offers a reaction to personal observations, conversations, and current events that represent broader social disparities from the writer’s perspective. BGD is a powerful contemporary work of social dissidence, central in which is a focus on the roles gender, race, class, and sexual identity play in forming an individual’s sense of self-worth, personal freedom, and social agency. *Spoiler:* If you’re a person of privilege who feels a little fussy about marginalized people speaking up for themselves, BGD will be an uncomfortable read. It might, though, prove to be the perspective-altering reality check you most need. Mia McKenzie allows her own experiences as a queer person of color to illustrate the ways in which inequalities permeate into the most intimate and defining aspects of a person’s identity. McKenzie’s works were written for an online audience between 2012-2014 and typically have an implied assumption that readers are up-to-speed on the news stories or social movements that are central to her discussion. For this reason, McKenzie’s commentary is to be understood at times within the specific context that it was written, as an immediate and unapologetic response to an evolving event or discussion. Some of the most compelling moments in BGD are those in which McKenzie strives to empower others who, like her, experience multiple layers of discrimination and exclusion. The tenderness with which she speaks about self-love as an act of resistance is both inspiring and heart-wrenching. For the most part, though, this collection can be characterized as a determined affront to the ways in which white people earnestly deny their own privilege while they dominate every position of power, every conversation, and justify excluding, devaluing, and erasing the lives of people of color. McKenzie uses highly controversial topics, such as the Newtown shooting, to expose the hypocrisy of white liberals, and includes tongue-in-cheek instructions on how to oppress white people as a way of illustrating the fallacy of “reverse-racism.” In this aspect, BGD is set apart from any other collection or essay I have ever read. Potentially, the confrontational tone present in some of the book might be interpreted as resorting to “call-out” rhetoric, further disengaging those to whom the criticisms are intended. McKenzie, in fact, addresses this critique and defends her approach in one of the selections. There remains to me, however, a small degree of ambiguity on this point. Ultimately, this book provides a sound voice of clarity in a society that remains constantly embroiled in tensions created by systematic inequalities. The direct and unpretentious manners in which topics related to women, gender, and sexuality studies are explored with depth also makes *Black Girl Dangerous* a useful teaching tool for students and activists. My own perspective having been dramatically expanded, I would definitely recommend this book.

AMJ - Mia McKenzie's *Black Girl Dangerous* is an anthology of journal-like entries which were originally posted on the author's personal blog, which was of the same name as the book, as a sort of activist performance of breaking the silence. It is a collection of selected entries, which are paired with the author's retrospective analyses of the original posts and responses. Each entry consists of a short synopsis of events which the author noted via personal encounters, social media, and national news networks, as well as a personal analysis of those events as they pertain to issues of gender, sexuality, and race through the lens of a queer Black feminist. As a WGSS student, I found the book to be very insightful and provoking through its presentation of an intersectional alternative to the traditional heteronormative White feminism which has often been taught in WGSS courses. I also found it to be helpful and inspiring through its exemplification of a tangible version of feminist activism which is most feasible and effective in the digital age of the 21st century. Additionally, the author's ability to be reflective and self-critical at times within the book is quite refreshing. I especially liked the entries in which the author called out her own friends and communities, questioning their responsibility in perpetuating some of the issues that are discussed. I felt that it offered a more realistic vision of feminism which acknowledged humans as imperfect and ever-changing beings, rather than flawless idols of social justice and moral upstanding. Overall, its greatest strength is its authenticity, specifically its conversational tone and personal approach. It makes feminism more appealing and far less intimidating in a world where the "F" word has been stigmatized. However, this same strength is the greatest weakness of the book, too. While the book provides an excellent example of realistic everyday feminism, it does not provide scholarly research based conclusions. Due to the nature of the writing style, there are not citations or references to solid statistics, studies, definitions, or concepts that are pivotal to any functional feminist study, discourse, or practice of WGSS subjects. Additionally, the information provided is primarily opinion based and must always be assessed with consideration to the author's biases. This relates to another issue, which McKenzie herself mentions in the opening of the book: it does not include the dialogue and commentary amongst readers of the entries on the blog. Therefore, the response that the entries elicited is not fully understood, the discursive context in which certain things were said is lost, and the progression of ideas which is often achieved through open responsive dialogue is unavailable. Alone, the book simply does not hold up; it can only really be appreciated if some prior familiarity to concepts and events are present. Ultimately, it is a worthwhile investment for anyone studying WGSS. Although it does not establish a foundation for feminism, it does function as a rare example of ways in which feminism can be expanded, personalized, and critiqued.

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