



# Promiscuities : The Secret Struggle for Womanhood

*Naomi Wolf*

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"There are no good girls; we are all bad girls, in the best sense of the word."

--Naomi Wolf

In this provocative and highly personal new book, Naomi Wolf speaks to women with searing honesty about a subject that has long been taboo: our sexual coming of age. Today, teenage girls' sexuality is everywhere put on display. Erotic messages aimed at them are intense and conflicting; yet in a society without rites of passage to guide girls to adulthood, the signposts pointing out how to grow into a self-respecting and healthy sexual womanhood are few.

Promiscuities follows a group of adolescent girls as they gradually become aware of themselves as sexual beings and discover what our culture tells them being female means. Drawing on her own experiences as well those of her contemporaries, Naomi Wolf reveals the secrets of our coming of age: the sexual games, forbidden crushes, losses of virginity, and rites of initiation. She also uncompromisingly examines the darker territories of abortion, the influences of the sex industry, and sexual violence that underlie contemporary girls' struggle for womanhood. By bringing into light our relationship to the "shadow slut" that conditions our sexual development, Promiscuities explores how the sexual experiences of the adolescent years determine women's sense of their own value as adults, and envisions how we could better guide girls through the "normatively shocking" landscape they now inhabit. Finally, Wolf looks at the popular culture of the recent past, as well as at the history and mythology of female desire, to show how our "liberated" culture still fears and distorts female passion.

Bold and candid, funny and revelatory, Wolf's stories illustrate the fear and excitement, the fantasies and sometimes crippling realities, that make up a young contemporary woman's journey of erotic and emotional discovery.

This is Naomi Wolf's bravest, most engaging, most thoroughly argued, and most important book to date. If *The Beauty Myth*, which helped to change what women see when they look in the mirror, was a benchmark, Promiscuities will be a landmark: an exceptionally frank sexual memoir of an individual as well as of a generation that will help change the way women perceive and talk about their own sexuality. An invitation to a better way of teaching girls the value of being female, Promiscuities is also a call to women of all ages not only to claim but also to celebrate the extraordinary nature of their sexuality.

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