



Save the Males: Why Men Matter Why Women Should Care

Kathleen Parker

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Tell a woman we need to save the males and she'll give you the name of her shrink. But cultural provocateur Kathleen Parker, who was raised by her father and who mothered a pack of boys, makes a humorous case for rescuing the allegedly stronger sex from trends that portend man's cultural demise.

Save the Males is a shrewd, amusing, and sure-to-be-controversial look at how men, maleness, and fatherhood have been under siege in American culture for decades. Kathleen Parker argues that the feminist movement veered off course from its original aim of helping women achieve equality and ended up making enemies of men. With piercing wit, this nationally syndicated columnist shows us how the pendulum has swung from the reasonable middle to a place where men have been ridiculed in the public square and the importance of fatherhood has been diminished—all to the detriment of women, who ultimately suffer most.

The real losers, should we continue on our present course, are not just grown men and women but our children. Young people involuntarily drafted into the squabbles of their parents' generation and raised in a climate of sexual hostility—also known as the “hookup culture”—may be fluent in porn, but their vocabulary is painfully limited when it comes to relationships.

While Parker gleefully skewers the silly side of the human experiment—“like men in dresses and sperm shopping”—she offers sobering statistics on the impact of the anti-male culture on the institution of the family and on relationships.

Exploring our burgeoning “slut culture” and the vividly narcissistic prevalence of vagina worship, *Save the Males* softens no edges. Parker tackles some of the more taboo subjects in today's sexual politics and culture wars with perceptive analysis and a stinging sense of humor that will have America talking—and chuckling—about saving the males.

Save the Males: Why Men Matter Why Women Should Care Details

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Rachel Smith says

I cannot recommend this book enough, a MUST READ. Excellent chapters covering how men are being systematically eliminated from a society that is being increasingly feminised. "Deadbeat dad", "Sitcom Doofy Dad", absent "weekend dads", the unfairness of custody and the family courts - every word is so true.

Men need to be allowed to be MEN, and we should all stop wanting them to be shaved waxed plucked sensitive himbos, and let them go out to the shed and do manly stuff with tools, or let them have armpit hair and clean engine parts on the kitchen table now and again :D

Joanna says

The thesis and conclusion almost saved this book, but not quite. Men matter, and women should care-- everyone should care--I couldn't agree more. But for a book to drive this point home, I would highly recommend *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* instead (the only other book I've read on this topic).

Parker is a journalist, and perhaps that is why her book focused on the dramatic, the sensational, the headlines. I found her humorous approach fine at first, but it quickly became distracting as it escalated to a level of biting sarcasm and crude language that I didn't enjoy combing through to get at the heart of the matter. The disappointing lack of objectivity in her writing was a major blow to her credibility. She did, however, successfully stereotype various groups of both men and women in a very unflattering light based on a small, extreme subtype of the population, while at the same time criticizing others for doing the same thing. It's as if being controversial and offensive was as important to her as protecting boys and men.

Her basic points are legitimate, and I can only hope those who are introduced to the topic of saving males through her book will be able to sift through the detritus and develop an increased awareness of how we can be a force for good in the lives of boys and men.

Emily says

Whether you agree with Parker's thesis that a culture of feminism is harming American men, a problem remains with this book: she does not offer many solutions. Most of the book is complaints and examples of men in danger, but with no ways to fix them.

For example, Parker discusses how pornography and the "hook-up culture" hurt men, warping their brains and hindering their intimate relationships. But what can we do to fix this? And who is to blame for pornography's effects on men? The women who participate in pornography? Or the men who use it to the extent that it interferes with their relationships?

She also discusses an orientation program for college freshmen about drinking, partying, and date rape. A

freshman boy leaves the program terrified, and tells his father he'll never go on a date again.

What's the solution here? We should stop teaching teenagers about date rape because it freaks them out? How would that help men again?

Later, Parker gets sick of writing the word "vagina." I don't know why. Apparently the word bothers her. So she starts referring to a vagina as "you know what" and "that v-word." If vaginas bother you so much, why devote so much ink to them? And if the word is okay for doctors, it's okay for me.

James Perkins says

Feminism has gone so far as to render men nearly irrelevant, popular culture belittles them as stupid and clueless, and then people complain there's no chivalry any more. Is it any wonder? As western men struggle with the idea of what it is to be a man in today's world, Ms Parker paints a clear picture that shows the poor state of modern gender relations and explains how we got here. Instead of male-bashing, she shows how the more extreme feminists have not only undermined their own campaign, but managed to hurt women and children into the bargain. She also gives clear examples of feminist approaches that just don't work in practice, such as encouraging women in the army to engage in combat in the front lines of a war zone, and the rise of slut culture, seen by many as "empowering" so women can make their own choices, but actually hurting them in a more salacious manner. Her prose is erudite and witty, citing plenty of research to back up her claims. It's also nice to have a woman's perspective on this issue; a man who had produced a similar volume would probably have very little chance of publication. The only shortcoming in this book is that she offers no workable solutions other than a general call to our higher natures to respect others. Unfortunately, as history and life today shows us, this does not come automatically to the human being.

David says

Holy crap, this is an awful book. I knew before I started it that Parker had a somewhat controversial thesis: feminism has a significant and deleterious effect on men. While most feminists are, well, pretty much every woman I know, there is a small but vocal minority that does in fact seem to hate men, or at the very least sees oppression by the patriarchy *everywhere* and blames men for every difficulty in life. Parker could have had, in my opinion, some legitimate issues to raise. But she blew it big time.

The first warning flag came when I noticed that the approving quotes on the book jacket are from Peggy Noonan, Bill Bennett, and George Will. Not a good sign. Then early on in the book, Parker approvingly cites "research" by the American Enterprise Institute, well known for picking results and then scrounging for data.

And it just goes downhill from there. Apparently, only violent rape, using physical force, is rape. Did you know that? Which is kind of odd, since not long after that, Parker introduces the idea of "emotional incest" in single-parent homes. She complains in incredulous tones about a teacher who used the pronoun "she" instead of "he" in situations of unspecified gender. Yes, that sounds odd. Which I think is a good thing - it sounds odd, and so makes you stop to think about it, and realize that always using "he" is quite odd too. And hopefully advance to using a gender-neutral pronoun ("they" works in singular too).

The problem is that while Parker does have some decent points, they are drowned out by seas of inanity and insanity. So many people have such strong feelings about gender relations that it's difficult to have a calm, sensible discussion about them, but sadly this book does nothing to change this.

Parker reiterates throughout the work that she's a feminist, women had it hard, men can be bad, etc. These constant qualifiers seem at best ineffectual, and more likely disingenuous. People who are actually moderate and pragmatic don't spend pages agonizing over very rare (and in any event harmless) things like vagina parties that turn into lesbian orgies. I mean, really.

Jeffrey says

Save The Males by Kathleen Parker

To be fair, I admire some of Parker's columns. She is a very talented writer and the book uses facts and research to support most of her claims. Yet, I feel that the subject itself was a mixed bag, as was the book. There is inequality between the sexes. There will most likely always be an inequality due to the simple fact that men and women are inherently different. Any argument that does not account for such a fact will be heavy-loaded with emotion and will lack reason. That said, I do believe that we are not where we need to be to make the sexes as equal as possible. Women, still get the low end in the work place. I will not mention pay disparities because I see that as a red-herring. What I see is that women are put in places or situations that few men would tolerate in the work place, whether it is fetching coffee, organizing parties or picnics or supplying birthday cards and cakes. I know that I use female workers to wrap my gifts (I ask as a friend, but it would never occur to me to ask a male co-worker). I admit this because I am for the most part, the least sexist conservative individual I know.

Parker's thesis is correct; there is a war on men and on masculinity. Yet, as a male I do not feel the need for her defense. In one particular space she argues that men should be exempt from child support payments as long as they have no say on abortion. Well, I used that gambit as a freshman in college, a friend walked over and gave the best advice a young college man will get – Don't forget your jimmy hat (meaning ALWAYS WEAR A CONDOM). Men do have a say in the conception of a child. They can abstain from sex or take the necessary precautions to avoid disease and pregnancy. The constant battles over abortion need not be between the sexes, it is a matter that is unique in every case. She also argues about the need to make restraining orders and evictions harder to obtain. If this policy were implemented, it would mean more dead and or abused women in the short and long terms. A less naïve approach would be restraining orders that do not stay on the permanent record and do not curtail any constitutional freedoms (which in itself may be a violation of due process).

Overall, the book is a highly readable account from a conservative activist point of view. I disagree with a lot in the book, but Parker backs up much of her work with stats. I applaud her there. This is a book that should be read, if only to see the growing gap between us on these issues. I may not agree with her, but she brings up many important issues that need to be addressed as a society.

Marshall says

Pardon me for judging a book by its cover, but after 200 pages, I still have no idea what this book has to do

with saving males. The most obvious questions to ask are, *what are we saving males from?* and *how does one go about saving males?* Is there some charity organization we should send money to, to help this endangered species?

In fact, I couldn't quite put my finger on what she was trying to say. Most of the book is just aimless rambling. To its credit, it's well-written and fun to read, but ultimately devoid of much substance. Its claims, when it actually makes them, are entirely without supporting evidence.

Toward the end, in the chapter, *Celebrity Sluts and America's Ho-Down* she launches a relentless attack against the evils of pornography and prostitution, and the ways they harm women. The funny thing about this is that it was impossible to tell whether this was a feminist argument or a traditionalist argument, as the position and arguments of both camps are the same. But again, I failed to see what the hell this had to do with saving males.

There were some passages I liked. I would like to end with my favorite, so as to not make this review completely negative. It's the very last words of the book:

"Maybe women should man the barricades and men should warm the milk. Maybe boys need to know more about Martha Washington's pickling processes, while girls should spend more time tossing truck tires. Maybe men are not necessary and women can manage just fine without them. Maybe human nature has been nurtured into submission and males and females are completely interchangeable.

"But I don't think so.

"When women say, 'No, honey, you stay in bed. I'll go see what that noise is'--I'll reconsider."

Stephen says

It's not a man's world any more. Far from it, Kathleen Parker writes: in America, men have not only been dethroned but imprisoned by a culture hostile to them. In *Save the Males*, Ms. Parker elaborates on the many ways in which the nature and contributions of men are scorned, abused, and discouraged by the prevailing culture, influenced as it is by 'third wave feminism'. The first wave feminism gave women the vote, second wave got them careers and divorces, and the third wave made them porn stars. *Save the Males* is less about men and more about the abuses of that third wave, which the author sees as not pro-women, but anti-male, and by virtue of the sexes' interrelatedness, anti-human. She raises a series of fair points, but the book's focus is wobbly.

Parker doesn't detail a campaign against men, but rather has a list of complaints about the various ways men are emasculated. Education is entirely girl-focused, she says: boys are forced to spend all day listening to soft-spoken women and denied rambunctious games of tag at recess. Women can merrily abort babies without ever consulting the fellows who contributed to the cause, divorce and child custody laws are outright malevolent to the male sex, and then there's porn! It...puts pressure on them to perform, or something. The list of attacks against men drifts into a list of ways society is degrading midway. As wretched as porn can be (and if you have doubts, read Chris Hedges' *Empire of Illusion*), the fact that it hurts men is somewhat tangential. More thoughtful are her remarks about women in the military: despite the fact that women can push buttons as well as men, we have yet to civilize warfare, which -- after plans go to hell -- is still an area where brute strength, testosterone-fueled ax-crazy risk-taking are needed. The desperate, primal struggles

which erupt in Afghanistan and Iraq need frenzied, mighty men to deal with them. Even when women are tucked away into noncombat roles on the front, the unpredictable nature of war means they'll still get caught up in it -- and that's just not right. Regardless of our well-intentioned idealism, men and women at war are still men and women. Even if women weren't so physically inferior to men, says Parker, injection of sexual tension into combat zones would suggest keeping the military from being feminized. The tribal mentality that resurfaces itself so mightily in combat will derail combat units' effectiveness when the men start worrying about their ladies being shot and raped. Given that the US has recently done away with its barring women from combat roles, that tension is worth pondering.

I'm not particularly convinced by *Save the Males* that we of the beard are in great need of saving, though Parker does raise a lot of points worth thinking about -- divorce, military policy, and to a degree, parenting. (Parker's assertion that boys need men to teach them to be men, and girls need women to teach them to be women, and thus that test-tube babies born to single mothers are deprived of half of their necessary gender acculturation, is at first glance intriguing: I'd never considered the idea that fathers teach boys how to act appropriately around women, and vice versa, but then I realized they don't, really, at least not outside 1950s sitcoms. And besides, who says we need to be taught to be men or women? If there are authentic gender roles, shouldn't they be as natural to us as breathing?) These ideas deserve more serious consideration, however, than they find here, in a book which contains one chapter on nothing but how women worship their vaginas.

Michele says

An irritating morass of cliches and dubious claims. I fully believe men matter, but this book is irrelevant.

Rebecca Young says

I did not read this whole book...probably about 40-50 percent as I turned through each chapter. But I liked what I read. She has a very blunt and in-your-face writing style, but what she said really resonated with me. She writes about why society needs men to be men (and women to be women). The first section I read was one of the last chapters titled: sex, lies, and bunker blunders. (see what I mean...it is a little edgy) but she writes with some amazingly good reasons why women should not be in battle. She does not say that they should not be in the military, but she made some very convincing arguments why they have no business being in battle...not the least of which is the male/female interaction...one example being a man's innate desire to protect a female and another being the unique ability to get pregnant. She cites one report that states that during one 6 month period in Bosnia, a female had to be evacuated every three days (!) due to a pregnancy. She also writes about how pregnancy creates an unfair advantage...a woman can get pregnant to avoid deployment. My sister is a military wife and she has seen this first hand.

Another chapter is entitled: celebrity sluts and America's ho-down. Catchy, huh? This chapter was about the complete sexualization of America and its effect on boys and girls alike. Very thought provoking and clearly written.

What really caught my eye was the front cover, so I picked it up to see what it was all about and I sure liked what I read!

Mary Lou says

Yes, yes, yes. In her conclusion, Parker writes about radical feminism and its "damage to both men and women - and especially children - while recognizing that sensible feminism isn't so much about advancing women as it is about advancing humankind. There's no such thing as a 'woman's issue' or a 'man's issue. If something is important, it's important to all." Nice summary. We're all in this together, and it's time we get back to a sensible middle ground that recognizes - and celebrates - the inherent differences between the genders and the balance that embracing those differences creates.

Brekke says

Eh, the premise was better than the follow through. I got a little lost in the sarcasm and deliberate over or under interpretation of facts.

I was particularly moved by a moment fairly early in the book where Parker is talking about Domestic Violence. She mentions that the Allstate website lists four women and their experiences. Parker quickly says that two of the women were totally justified for being there and then goes on to basically belittle the other two women and their stories because the men discussed in those cases were not physically violent. The stories include stories about these women not being able to drive their car or get a job due to intimidation or outright vandalism of property at the hands of the men in their lives. Parker speaks these women for being in these relationships in the first place, totally ignoring the reasons that they may be in these relationships in the first place. And I do get her point that emotional and mental abuse is not exactly the same as Domestic Violence, but does that make it any less of a problem? No, it does not. Should these women who are bravely speaking out so others can get help in their mentally or emotionally abusive relationships be reviled by Parker? NO, NO THEY SHOULD NOT! At that moment in the text I needed to walk away from the book for a little.

I eventually did pick it up and finish. The point she is making is very valid. In a culture that pushes for equality for women shouldn't we also be insuring equality for men?

I also thought her commentary on the "boys are stupid, throw rocks at them" shirts spot on. That would not fly at all if you replaced "boys" with "girls."

I guess I just feel the book would have been more effective had it been written with a more serious feel. I know that's not Parker's thing, but a whole book of this was just too irreverent for me.

An Addition: While discussing this book with a friend i stumbled across another problem I had with this book. Where are the solutions? Yes it sucks that divorced parents move thousands of miles away from each other and the kids suffer, but what other solution do you offer? I mean I guess getting people talking about it is a good thing, but I mean seriously. Why bring up and totally lambaste the problem, in a book no less, if you don't think you have a better answer than the one we're working with now?

Galina Krasskova says

thoughtful book, very nuanced discussions, including on abortion (very nuanced). I disagree with the author

completely about women in combat (i think everyone male and female should be trained, ready, able, and experienced in military combat and many of the reasons she cites for not putting women in combat have to do with social conditioning) but otherwise it was a good read.

Skylar Burris says

I may have given this a higher rating if I hadn't already read so many sociological/political type books. But I have, and Kathleen Parker repeats a great many of the arguments and research I have already read in other books. She organizes it all in the direction of one premise: our culture need to focus on "saving the males" by revising the reversed double-standard that has arisen in the wake of feminism, approaching the education of boys differently than the education of girls, treating men with less hostility and presumption of guilt, depicting men more positively in media, and civilizing men better by encouraging women to raise their expectations and revise their own behaviors.

I more or less agree with her arguments, although I think she sometimes overstates her case. The advantage of Save the Males over most sociological/political books I have read is that the author is quite humorous, and this makes the book entertaining. (There are occasions, however, when I think perhaps she approaches serious topics with a little too much levity, so that her remarks border on the offensive, but most of the time she made me laugh.) The humor seems to abate about half way through the book, so that the second half is not nearly as amusing as the first.

If you've never read a book about the disadvantages of being male in a post-feminist culture, or if you've never read a book that suggests that the affects of feminism were not 100% positive for women, this is probably a good place to start. If you've read plenty on the subject, it might still at least be amusing, but you won't learn anything new or discover any original arguments.

Two quotes to give you a taste of her style:

"Women have done great things, no doubt. Radium! Madame Curie, you rule! But when it comes to the kinds of inventions and events that dot history's timeline, men deserve most of the credit....Martha Washington was a great woman, to be sure, but she did not, in fact, lead the American Revolution....We have to try to deal with that."

"For those of you who skipped their women's studies classes, first-wave feminism got women the vote; second-wave got them employed and divorced; third-wave is busy making them porn stars. More or less."

Carmen Marie says

I read this book pretty quickly, but there wasn't too much new information for me as I've read Christina Hoff Sommers's The War Against Boys and more recently, I've read Leonard Sax's Boys Adrift. Kathleen Parker does make all the arguments that boys are getting short-changed in a bitingly humorous manner and easily condenses a lot of info into a compact and concise 200 pages. Our boys are definitely falling behind mostly due to misguided feminism. Kathleen Parker indentifies the problems that boys are facing and how these problems affect our girls as well. Overall, a very good read to clarify the issues facing our boys and men in

today's society.
