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Opening extract from
Being a Boy

Written by
James Dawson

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FOR MUM



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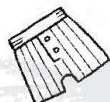
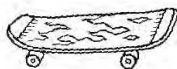
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BEING A BOY IS HARD

It's harder to be a girl because they have to push enormous babies out of a very small hole and also because we live in a pretty sexist world run almost exclusively by rich men.

Putting that to one side, it's still really hard to be a boy. In some ways it's harder than being a girl because, unlike boys, girls are encouraged to share and talk about their problems, for the most part.

In fact to the male outsider, when girls go through puberty, they are apparently inducted into what seems to be a secret sorority – the mysterious 'clubhouse' of womanhood that men cannot enter, because we do not have periods. That's fine – by the way, if your bits are bleeding, you must see a doctor NOW – but the sad fact is, that there isn't a similar 'club' for boys where we can talk about our worries and about our bodies. For girls, it's okay to share these things in glossy magazines and chat about them in online forums or at sleepovers. But, as it is generally assumed that boys are tough and don't have emotions you may feel that you are rather left to fend for yourself.

You are about to enter, or already are within, a super-weird time in your life. EVERYTHING is about to change both inside as your body tumbles through puberty, and out, as your relationships take on a sexyfun new



twist. While many girls are able to guide each other through this minefield, boys are often programmed from an early age to be **STRONG** and **TOUGH** and **HARD**, so we don't really talk about these changes.

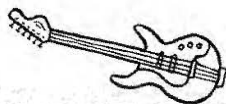
Sadly, it is pretty much what society expects of boys. Sitting down and having a long conversation about what's happening to your cock is likely to be interpreted in one of two ways:

- 1. YOU ARE GAY.**
- 2. YOU ARE MENTALLY ILL.**

You might be neither, one or both of these things, but the fact is that **WHOEVER** you are, your body is going through an awful lot of changes and this can be really scary. It's fine to admit this – it won't stop you being **STRONG**, **TOUGH** and **HARD**. In fact, speaking up, reading this book and being honest make you pretty effing brave.

Let's say you're with your chums and some loudmouth is bragging about something sexual and in your head, you're like 'what?'. But you can't say 'what do you mean?' without looking like a **MASSIVE**, **MASSIVE VIRGIN**. If you don't feel comfortable talking to any of the adults in your life, you might never find out and could end up really worrying about sex stuff. Sure, the Internet has loads of information, but it's hard to find in-amongst all the naked ladies that pop up when all you wanted to find out was if masturbation will kill you.

That said, it's possible you have a great man in your life like a dad, uncle or big brother who can guide you through the weird stuff that's



If by some quirk you happen to be one of the MILLIONS of boys who don't like the items listed then society could make you feel like a freak and you may well have to pretend you like certain things to fit in.

It's about to get complicated now. Are you sitting comfortably? We can never know if it actually *feels* different to be 'male' or 'female', but I know this – we are only 'male' because a doctor said so when we were born. You might be sitting there, reading this, thinking that you don't feel very 'male' even though you have boy bits. This is super-common, by the way.

The Gender Question

Some boys want to be girls. Some girls want to be boys. Some boys and girls do something about this and CHOOSE their gender identity, sometimes permanently with hormone treatment or surgery, sometimes temporarily. You might hear this being called 'transgender', 'trans' or 'genderqueer'.

I think this is a very brave thing to do because most of society wants you to be MALE or FEMALE and would like you to stay that way, thank you very much.

In the eyes of most people, you get only TWO options. This is why gender is so poo, because even bloody POPCORN comes in sweet, salty and butter! There is still such a terrible lack of understanding by most people of what it means to be male or female.

We're all HUMAN. What if we were just one big gang of equal humans? I think that would be much nicer. We all want the same things – happiness, warmth, love, laughter, sex, chips and ice-cream. The biological stuff is different for obvious reasons – but as you'll see later a lot of the relationship advice is identical for both boys and girls. If you are treating your female friends differently to your male friends, I'd politely suggest there is something wrong there.

Being a boy doesn't make you superior or even that different to girls. Got that? Brilliant.

Of course, your way of being a boy will be different to the guy sitting next to you. His way will be different to the person next to him. There are infinite ways of being a boy and they are ALL okay.

