



Inappropriation: A Novel

Lexi Freiman

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“This is a daring book, thrillingly of our moment.” -- Emma Cline, author of *The Girls*

A wildly irreverent take on the coming-of-age story that turns a search for belonging into a riotous satire of identity politics

Starting at a prestigious private Australian girls' school, fifteen-year-old Ziggy Klein is confronted with an alienating social hierarchy that hurls her into the arms of her grade's most radical feminists. Tormented by a burgeoning collection of dark, sexual fantasies, and a biological essentialist mother, Ziggy sets off on a journey of self-discovery that moves from the Sydney drag scene to the extremist underbelly of the Internet.

As PC culture collides with her friends' morphing ideology and her parents' kinky sex life, Ziggy's understanding of gender, race, and class begins to warp. Ostracized at school, she seeks refuge in Donna Haraway's seminal feminist text, *A Cyborg Manifesto*, and discovers an indisputable alternative identity. Or so she thinks. A controversial Indian guru, a transgender drag queen, and her own Holocaust-surviving grandmother propel Ziggy through a series of misidentifications, culminating in a date-rape revenge plot so confused, it just might work.

Uproariously funny, but written with extraordinary acuity about the intersections of gender, sexual politics, race, and technology, *Inappropriation* is literary satire at its best. With a deft finger on the pulse of the zeitgeist, Lexi Freiman debuts on the scene as a brilliant and fearless new talent.

Inappropriation: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review *Inappropriation*: A Novel for online ebook

Stephanie says

What did I just read? From the unlikable characters to the almost non-existent plot to attempting satire with Millennial sensibilities, this was a miss for me.

Paperback Paris says

—The review below was authored by Paperback Paris Staff Writer, Jasmyne Ray. [Read more.](#)

I can honestly say that I've never read a book like **Lexi Freiman's** *Inappropriation*. It's funny, with jokes usually told at the expense of some other minority group, or in this case, our not-so-lovingly socially dim protagonist, Ziggy Klein.

With Ziggy, Freiman paints a truly pitiful picture of an impressionable girl (or specifically, "bisexual genderqueer") and later transhuman cyborg when she starts using a GoPro to record the Cates, a clique of popular girls at her school. When she befriends Tessa and Lex, she's plunged headfirst into a world of misinformed political correctness and butchered feminist politics. Both girls are minorities in their own right: Tessa is disabled with a prosthetic arm and Lex was adopted from Bangladesh. Together the pair seeks out to enlighten Ziggy on these subjects, using Donna Haraway's essay "**A Cyborg Manifesto**" as a guide while dropping truly cringe-worthy one-liners.

For instance: "Moses made the Israelites wander the desert for 40 years so that they would forget their bondage. Which explains the amnesia between third-wave and postfeminism."

And I just *have* to share this one: "The prison-industrial complex is making it nearly impossible for black people to stay straight."

As if she wasn't confused enough to begin with, what with thinking that she hears Hitler Youth affirming every negative thought she has about herself in addition to trying to figure herself out.

Of course, the entire novel is intended to be a satire, but it felt like the satire overwhelmed the actual plot of the story: a girl trying to find her identity in a world where there are different spectrums, terms, and labels for people and lifestyles. It moves through plot points at the speed of light, so fast that I would forget exactly what was going on and to flip back a few pages for a reminder. This happened mostly when Tessa and Lex attempt to wax poetic on defining who constituted as oppressed and who constituted as oppressors.

For example, when Tessa takes Ziggy on a "tour" of the carpool queue after school one day, she calls the mothers waiting for their daughters Israelites because they are "slaves to the patriarchy," and claims that the "amnesia between third-wave and postfeminism" is because Moses had the Israelites wander through the desert for 40 years so they'd forget about their own bondage.

"The carpool queue has just internalized their own oppression. Like the Israelis," Tessa says. This, in turn, leads the reader on a wild two-and-a-half page rambling a-la Tessa about who is and isn't oppressed and why the girls they go to school with will end up just like their moms by marrying men just like their dads. If

you're dizzy or thoroughly confused, buckle your seatbelts because that was only pages 26 to 28.

Inappropriation starts off with a promising base of a plot: a young girl, coming into her own identity while at the same time trying to make sense of the world around her. However, with Tessa and Lex's horrendous attempts at enlightening their new friend, *Inappropriation* could be better titled *The Miseducation of Ziggy Klein*.

Sam Still Reading says

Inappropriation is like an extreme form of rocky road. It is packed full of all sorts of delicious things that you didn't know worked so well together and it's an overload of sensory feels. *Inappropriation* contains so much that I think you could read this book multiple times and find many new things to laugh and wonder at. It's very clever satire, to the point of me wondering what I wasn't getting and where I'd fallen away from the zeitgeist.

The story is about Ziggy, who starts at a new girls' high school. The hierarchy of the girls and what is popular and why immediately fascinates her. It's like she's an archaeologist studying a new species (in particular, the Cates) or an explorer as many new worlds are open to her. It also made me glad I'm not in high school now as I don't think I could deal with all the ideologies and identities that Ziggy and her classmates need to find and discover for themselves. There is sexuality, cultural identity, religion, race and degrees of feminism to negotiate, all with a number of other girls ready to rip apart your thoughts. It's a survival of the fittest where nobody knows what the definition is. It certainly doesn't help that Ziggy's mum is a little odd, holding menstruation workshops for all genders and being concerned that Ziggy's father doesn't objectify her enough. Ziggy's grandmother, a Holocaust survivor and doctor with an obsession with the digestive system and seniors' Tinder, was my favourite. This was probably because she was comfortable in her own skin and said and did what she wanted. This was in contrast with Ziggy and her schoolmates, who were awkward and uncomfortable at trying on their new ideologies, always looking out for someone to sideswipe them.

For me, *Inappropriation* wasn't the easiest of reads. The book is loaded to the hilt with satire on a number of levels. Like Ziggy, I felt kind of awkward at times that the joke was going over my head and that I'd missed something so obvious that everyone else would get. So the novel was actually pretty darn successful at making me feel like Ziggy! I felt under pressure and kind of exposed, so I really emphasised with Ziggy. Some parts made me laugh out loud, other parts had me seeking out my phone surreptitiously to Google something that I wasn't sure was true/cool/too out of it or old to understand. I think *Inappropriation* would make a great film (and okay, things a little more obvious for me) as a lot of the scenes were perfectly visualised in my head. This book isn't for everyone, but I know that some will love it to bits.

Thank you to Allen & Unwin for the copy of this book. My review is honest.

<http://samstillreading.wordpress.com>

Cassandra Austin says

Smart, savage satire.

Kristina says

This was a weird one.

Georgia Clark says

Fifteen-year-old Ziggy Klein struggles to find her place in the complex eco-systems of high school, family, the internet and society at large in this broadly eccentric satire of identity politics. It's meaty and smart but makes this fearless novel truly hilarious is Lexi's dry, offbeat eye and (what I'm calling) New Australian sense of humor. The ridiculous is sublime and Ziggy's search for her truth takes us everywhere from Sydney drag bars to rich bitch pool parties to the online alt right underbelly. A must for anyone who's ever had a circling argument about what, exactly, constitutes cultural appropriation.

Rachael says

This was a very different book for me. I could really relate to the pressures of the private school girls that the author was exploring - I have a teenage daughter myself. The angst of teens trying to both fit in and stand out was well developed. The concepts of trying to figure out their own sexuality and their own identity amongst their peers was handled well. The author also delved into the main characters relationship to her parents (and their relationship) and her sibling which influenced her as well.

I didn't enjoy everything about this book but I thought it was interesting and I have still been thinking about it long after I have finished it - so I think that is a sign of a good book.

I was given an advance copy of this book by the publisher.

Nat says

This is a 2.5 star read for me....

Inappropriation was a struggle to read from the start for me.

I couldn't connect with Ziggy and while I can appreciate this book is Literary Satire, I am the wrong audience. There are parts of this book I laughed and enjoyed the humour, but for the rest of the time I wasn't connected. It seems I am not alone in these views from other reviews.

This is one of those books that were too far from the genres I usually read and even more further out from the new genres to give a crack. Thanks to Allen & Unwin for my free review copy, but Inappropriation isn't my cup of tea.

Caitlin Mccluskey says

I tried to get into this book and just couldn't. The writing style is interesting but the story just hadn't gripped me by page 80 so I set it down.

Deb says

3.5 would be a better rating.

A coming of age book which well expressed the pressures of the students of a private school for girls. Throughout the story, the girls are trying to fit in a variety of ways. Some are very funny, others are not. Relationships between friends and with parents are explored. Inappropriation gives the reader a lot to think about.

Rikke says

I'm aware that this is a satire, and I did like it, at least to some extent.

Especially the needing to make sense/fit in/stand out felt painfully real..

I didn't love the storyline as a whole though, or the mc for that matter, and while it's clearly never the intent to enchant the reader with a pleasant tale of neatly resolving ones insecurities, it didn't make for an awesome read this way either.

It's different and it's Australian, which helped make it okay.

Also it wasn't as if I expected it to be something else. I do realize it's titled INAPPROPRIATION, and I did skim the blurb. I just can't be blown away by it, just for the sake of it.

In the end I just didn't enjoy it as much as I had hoped.

Anne says

Inappropriation is wickedly acute satire that at times is just too over the top. While this was an excellent critique of modern culture, it's just not a great story. Freiman will be an author to watch if she can focus more on storytelling that isn't eclipsed by bludgeoning satire.

Sharah McConville says

This is an unusual story about 15 year old Ziggy Klein and her experiences at a private girls school. I have to say that I didn't really enjoy this story. Thanks to Allen & Unwin for my ARC.

Theresa Smith Writes says

Inappropriation is quite an unusual novel, the style of which is best described as literary satire. I've definitely never read anything like it before. It felt to me like an amalgamation of *Southpark*, *J'aime Private School Girl*, and *Black Comedy*. I was torn between laughing at the acerbic wit and cringing at the inappropriateness of it all. Which was kind of the point of the novel.

Ziggy swings from one identity crisis to another, constantly weirding people out while misinterpreting everything. She was overly consumed with her own sexual identity, her gender identity, her political identity, her feminist identity, her Jewish identity, her human identity, and her lack of friends – the latter of which could be explained in large part by the fact that she wore a go pro permanently strapped to her head, recording everyone and uploading the videos to the internet without permission. There was a lot going on with Ziggy, a kind of strange exaggeration of what teenagers might be going through as they come of age in a society that is overwhelmingly focussed on 'isms', self-labelling, and the avoidance of offending people by means of going out of your way to offend people.

Inappropriation is sharp and clever, perhaps a shade too much so at times because it's a very busy book and I often lost track of what was actually going on in amongst the sea of acidic observation. To my mind, there was too much of a focus on sexuality throughout the entire novel, and one scene in particular involving Ziggy and her younger brother's friends, who were all thirteen, was way too icky for me. Ziggy pushes the envelope a bit too far on many occasions, sometimes with remorse, at other times with startling self-gratification. This is a discomforting read, on so many levels, but also decidedly on point at times.

Inappropriation is really a novel you will need to judge for yourself. I neither liked nor disliked it, but I do acknowledge that Lexi Freiman makes some valid points via her sharp observations and snappy scenes of introspection and dialogue. It's a bold novel, certainly not for everyone, but I have no doubt it will at some stage be labelled a cult classic. I do think it would make a brilliant film.

Thanks is extended to Allen & Unwin for providing me with a copy of *Inappropriation* for review.
