



# Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities

*Ken Corbett*

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Familiar and expected gender patterns help us to understand boys but often constrict our understanding of any given boy. Writing in a wonderfully robust and engaging voice, Ken Corbett argues for a new psychology of masculinity, one that is not strictly dependent on normative expectation. As he writes in his introduction, “no two boys, no two boyhoods are the same.” In *Boy Hoods* Corbett seeks to release boys from the grip of expectation as Mary Pipher did for girls in *Reviving Ophelia*.

Corbett grounds his understanding of masculinity in his clinical practice and in a dynamic reading of feminist and queer theories. New social ideals are being articulated. New possibilities for recognition are in play. How is a boy made between the body, the family, and the culture? Does a boy grow by identifying with his father, or by separating from his mother? Can we continue to presume that masculinity is made at home? Corbett uses case studies to defy stereotypes, depicting masculinity as various and complex. He examines the roles that parental and cultural anxiety play in development, and he argues for a more nuanced approach to cross-gendered fantasy and experience, one that does not mistake social consensus for well-being. Corbett challenges us at last to a fresh consideration of gender, with profound implications for understanding all boys.

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