

The Beauty Suit

author: Lauren Shields

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Synopsis

author	Lauren Shields
readBy	Tara Sands
inLanguage	english

A young feminist finds herself questioning why “hotness” has become necessary for female empowerment and looks for alternatives.

Looking good feels good. But in a society where looking good is posited as being strong, while negotiating for better pay is statistically proven to *damage* our careers, is it fair to say that wicked eyeliner, weekly blowouts, and a polished Instagram feed are the keys to our liberation? If so, if “hot” really is a good enough synonym for “empowered” why do so many of us feel, deep in our bones, that the sexy-as-strong model is a distraction? Is “pretty” still the closest to power women can get? Why is looking fierce an acceptable substitute for living in a world where women are safe?

Inspired in seminary by American Muslimahs who wear the hijab for feminist reasons, Lauren Shields took off what she calls the Beauty Suit—the “done” hair, the tasteful and carefully applied makeup, the tight clothes and foot-binding shoes—for nine months. She™d really only wanted to do an experiment. Instead, her life—especially her views on what constitutes “liberation”—changed forever.

Rooted in feminist theory and religious history, and guided by a snappy personal narrative, *The Beauty Suit* unpacks modern American womanhood: a landscape where the female body is still so often the battleground for male ideals, and where we struggle with our rights as human beings to define and exercise our freedom.

Reader's comments

comment 1: Emily Carter

The Beauty Suit by Lauren Shields is an eye-opening exploration of society's obsession with aesthetics and the pressures it imposes on individuals, particularly women. Shields embarks on a bold experiment, choosing to step away from the societal norms of beauty and documenting her journey with honesty and introspection. Her narrative is both personal and universal, as she delves into the cultural constructs that dictate how we perceive ourselves and others. The book is an inspiring call to action, urging readers to reflect on their own experiences and the impact of beauty standards. Shields' writing is engaging and thought-provoking, blending memoir with cultural critique in a way that is both accessible and profound. Her insights challenge the reader to reconsider the value placed on appearance and the freedom that comes with embracing one's true self. The Beauty Suit is a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of identity, culture, and self-acceptance. It encourages a deeper understanding of how we can redefine beauty and find empowerment beyond societal expectations.

â€"â€" Emily Carter (2026-05-30 18:19:07)