



How to Become a Scandal: Adventures in Bad Behavior

By Laura Kipnis

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A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice

We all relish a good scandal. Why do people feel compelled to act out their tangled psychodramas on the national stage, and why do we so enjoy watching them? The motifs are classic?revenge, betrayal, ambition, madness?though the pitfalls are ones we all negotiate daily. After all, every one of us is a potential scandal in the making: failed self-knowledge and colossal self-deception?the necessary ingredients?are our collective plight. *How to Become a Scandal* is "an extremely smart, funny, acid, and beautifully written meditation on a scary truth that we all try desperately to ignore" (David Shields, author of *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*).

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

We all relish a good scandal—the larger the figure (governor, judge) and more shocking the particulars (diapers, cigars)—the better. But why do people feel compelled to act out their tangled psychodramas on the national stage, and why do we so enjoy watching them, hurling our condemnations while savoring every lurid detail?

With "pointed daggers of prose" (*The New Yorker*), Laura Kipnis examines contemporary downfall sagas to lay bare the American psyche: what we desire, what we punish, and what we disavow. She delivers virtuoso analyses of four paradigmatic cases: a lovelorn astronaut, an unhinged judge, a venomous whistleblower, and an over-imaginative memoirist. The motifs are classic—revenge, betrayal, ambition, madness—though the pitfalls are ones we all negotiate daily. After all, every one of us is a potential scandal in the making: failed self-knowledge and colossal self-deception—the necessary ingredients—are our collective plight. In *How to Become a Scandal*, bad behavior is the entry point for a brilliant cultural romp as well as an anti-civics lesson. "Shove your rules," says scandal, and no doubt every upright citizen, deep within, cheers the transgression—as long as it's someone else's head on the block.

Amazon Exclusive: Tina Brown, Editor-in-Chief of *The Daily Beast*, Reviews *How to Become a Scandal*

A brilliant curtain-raiser on exactly why it's so delicious to watch self-destruction, *How to Become a Scandal* is a must-read for anyone unable to look away from another's fall from grace. Laura Kipnis argues that it takes two to make a scandal and cuts through the tangled relationship between the scandalized victims and us as the voyeurs, noting that the audience is equally to blame for whipping up such frenzy. A thoughtful and juicy take on familiar targets (Linda Tripp and the NASA love triangle among them), Kipnis sees what we all do: some scandals are just thinly veiled self-sabotage. And the best stories



aren't self-contained; they're far-reaching, full-blooded dramas, complete with a cast of characters who overtake the global stage. Of course, scandal's an all-inclusive monster, but a bigger star and more disturbing details make for an even better flameout. Kipnis astutely points out that the ceremonial shunning of whistleblowers, plagiarists, and cheaters is cathartic and neatly packages something amorphous: why America jumps on the wagon all over again each time someone violates social mores with lust and betrayal and jealousy. Reading her clever book is like sitting in a front-row seat at Scandal Theory 101—and serves as a cautionary tale for those tiptoeing on the edges of indignity. Revisiting the denouements of James Frey, Sol Wachtler et al is a strangely elegant exercise in how to crash, burn, and ultimately survive. *How to Become a Scandal* is as transfixing and engrossing as the tremendously chaotic tales she recounts with exacting detail.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Two very public downfalls and two very public uproars guide us through the contemporary infernal regions of scandal: the downfall of the lovelorn astronaut, Lisa Nowak, and an unreasonable judge, Sol Wachter, and the uproar set off by Linda Tripp and James Frey. Familiar as they may be, Kipnis (*Against Love*) freshly illuminates her subjects' plights, while scrutinizing the public delight in their misfortune, wearing her learning so lightly that the reader is easily seduced by her quick wit and her camouflaged erudition. Kipnis ties psychoanalysis and reality TV, detectives and literary critics, talk show hosts and sociologists, along with the scandalizers and the scandalized into a persuasive bundle: Scandals aren't just fiascos other people get themselves embroiled in while the rest of us go innocently about our business, she argues. We all have crucial roles to play. A deliciously flippant tone serves the reader the juicy details we savor so about scandal, while tossing in some timeless questions and speculations about the deeper meaning of it all (free will, moral luck, the stranglehold of desire, the difference between right and wrong) as though they were mere garniture. This is a dead serious book that's an utter lark to read.

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Review

"Scandal has never had it so good. . . In *How to Become a Scandal*, Laura Kipnis delivers consumers of high and low culture that rare twofer, taking material that self-respecting people are supposed to resist and treating it with such smarts that the reader feels nothing short of enlightened. Her book is filled with sensational subjects, but Kipnis delivers all the thrills." *The New York Times Book Review*

"A brilliant, funny take on our downfall-a-minute age." *People*

"Informative and extremely witty." *Chicago Tribune*

"Kipnis expertly rebuilds the tension of each case, unraveling the details of her subjects' downfalls so methodically that I held my breath....She treats her subjects with great humanity and an empathetic there-but-for-the-grace-of-God reverence." *The Washington Post*

"A must-read for anyone unable to look away from another's fall from grace. . . . Reading her clever book is like sitting in a front-row seat at Scandal Theory 101--and serves as a cautionary tale for those tiptoeing on the edges of indignity. . . . *How to Become a Scandal* is as transfixing and engrossing as the tremendously chaotic tales she recounts with exacting detail." *Tina Brown, The Daily Beast*

"Thrilling. . . Hypocrisy, hubris, and self-delusion are delightful intellectual tangles in Kipnis's hands." *Bookforum*

"Thought-provoking examination of scandals past and present. . . with the benefit of this provocative book, we can now understand why [scandals] will continue as long as human society exists." *The Buffalo News*

"Highly entertaining and wickedly smart." *The Oregonian (Portland)*

"A deliciously flippant tone serves the reader the juicy details we savor so about scandal, while tossing in some timeless questions and speculations about the deeper meaning of it all. This is a dead serious book that's an utter lark to read." *Publishers Weekly, starred review*

"Those who think they are playing to an unseen audience often find that they are abruptly on stage without a stitch. Why do they need this validation and why do we so much enjoy providing it? In *How to Become a*

Scandal Laura Kipnis investigates the dirty habits of the heart and illuminates the secret places of the psyche, speculating brilliantly and amusingly about the trouble to which people will go to get themselves exposed.” ?Christopher Hitchens, author of *Hitch-22*

“Laura Kipnis is scarily smart and enviably funny, and with *How to Become a Scandal* she emerges as a Tocqueville for the age of Gawker. You'll never read Page Six in the same way again.” ?Rebecca Mead, author of *One Perfect Day: The Selling of the American Wedding*

“Read Laura Kipnis's new book if you're hoping to become the object of a media feeding frenzy. Read it if you're hoping to avoid one. This is cultural criticism of a high order.” ?Jacob Weisberg, author of *The Bush Tragedy*

“An extremely smart, funny, acid, and beautifully written meditation on a scary truth that we all try desperately to ignore: we are deeply divided animals, and we are drawn to the creation of our own demise.” ?David Shields, author of *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*

“Excruciatingly fascinating and as fun to read as all the tabloid fodder we pretend we're not following, *How to Become a Scandal* deftly reveals our halls of infamy to be halls of mirrors. Laura Kipnis has written another fabulously intelligent book.” ?Rivka Galchen, author of *Atmospheric Disturbances*

“In the future, historians will have to read *How to Become a Scandal* if they want to understand this bizarre century. Laura Kipnis writes about the central conflicts in our society, the great comedies of manners, with the profound wit and broad sympathy that we used to find only in ambitious novels.” ?Michael Tolkin, author *The Return of the Player*

“Laura Kipnis has the rare ability to keep her wits about her even as she treads into areas where most nice people would not go. As Kipnis so astutely observes, each epoch gets the scandals it most needs, but at their root is just the inexorable, inexpungible, humiliating fact of being human.” ?Keith Gessen, author of *All the Sad Young Literary Men*

“A brilliant original analysis of our culture's addiction to scandal. Kipnis illuminates her subjects with such wit and perception that she raises the art of critical writing to new heights. Brava.” ?Patricia Bosworth, author of *Marlon Brando*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephen Stover:

What do you ponder on book? It is just for students because they are still students or that for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Just simply you can be answered for that concern above. Every person has several personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great in addition to important the book *How to Become a Scandal: Adventures in Bad Behavior*. All type of book is it possible to see on many sources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

Donna Beckman:

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Eddie Drennan:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read some sort of book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a guide. The book How to Become a Scandal: Adventures in Bad Behavior it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book provides high quality.

Olga Snider:

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