



# Women After All: Sex, Evolution, and the End of Male Supremacy

*Melvin Konner*

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“A sparkling, thought-provoking account of sexual differences. Whether you’re a man or a woman, you’ll find his conclusions gripping.”—Jared Diamond

There is a human genetic fluke that is surprisingly common, due to a change in a key pair of chromosomes. In the normal condition the two look the same, but in this disorder one is malformed and shrunken beyond recognition. The result is a shortened life span, higher mortality at all ages, an inability to reproduce, premature hair loss, and brain defects variously resulting in attention deficit, hyperactivity, conduct disorder, hypersexuality, and an enormous excess of both outward and self-directed aggression.

It is called maleness.

Melvin Konner traces the arc of evolution to explain the relationships between women and men. With patience and wit he explores the knotty question of whether men are necessary in the biological destiny of the human race. He draws on multiple, colorful examples from the natural world—such as the mating habits of the octopus, black widow, angler fish, and jacana—and argues that maleness in humans is hardly necessary to the survival of the species.

In characteristically humorous and engaging prose, Konner sheds light on our biologically different identities, while noting the poignant exceptions that challenge the male/female divide. We meet hunter-gatherers such as those in Botswana, whose culture gave women a prominent place, invented the working mother, and respected women’s voices around the fire. Recent human history has upset this balance, as a dense world of war fostered extreme male dominance. But our species has been recovering over the past two centuries, and an unstoppable move toward equality is afoot. It will not be the end of men, but it will be the end of male supremacy and a better, wiser world for women and men alike.

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