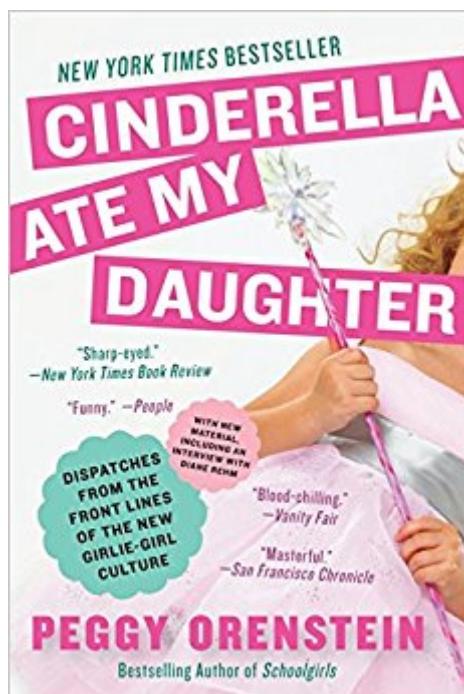


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# Cinderella Ate My Daughter: Dispatches From The Front Lines Of The New Girlie-Girl Culture



## Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling author Peggy Orenstein, now available in paperback—“the acclaimed” *New York Times Magazine* contributor and author of the groundbreaking *New York Times* bestseller *Schoolgirls* grapples with where to draw the line for our daughters in the new girlie-girl culture. The rise of the girlie-girl, warns Peggy Orenstein, is no innocent phenomenon. Following her acclaimed books *Flux*, *Schoolgirls*, and the provocative *New York Times* bestseller *Waiting for Daisy*, Orenstein’s *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* offers a radical, timely wake-up call for parents, revealing the dark side of a pretty and pink culture confronting girls at every turn as they grow into adults.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Product Description The acclaimed author of the groundbreaking bestseller *Schoolgirls* reveals the dark side of pink and pretty: the rise of the girlie-girl, she warns, is not that innocent. Pink and pretty or predatory and hardened, sexualized girlhood influences our daughters from infancy onward, telling them that how a girl looks matters more than who she is. Somewhere between the exhilarating rise of Girl Power in the 1990s and today, the pursuit of physical perfection has been recast as a source—the source—of female empowerment. And commercialization has spread the message faster and farther, reaching girls at ever-younger ages. But, realistically, how many times can you say no when your daughter begs for a pint-size wedding gown or the latest *Hannah Montana* CD? And how dangerous is pink and pretty anyway—especially given girls'

successes in the classroom and on the playing field? Being a princess is just make-believe, after all; eventually they grow out of it. Or do they? Does playing Cinderella shield girls from early sexualization—or prime them for it? Could today's little princess become tomorrow's sexting teen? And what if she does? Would that make her in charge of her sexuality—or an unwitting captive to it? Those questions hit home with Peggy Orenstein, so she went sleuthing. She visited Disneyland and the international toy fair, trolled American Girl Place and Pottery Barn Kids, and met beauty pageant parents with preschoolers tricked out like Vegas showgirls. She dissected the science, created an online avatar, and parsed the original fairy tales. The stakes turn out to be higher than she—or we—ever imagined: nothing less than the health, development, and futures of our girls. From premature sexualization to the risk of depression to rising rates of narcissism, the potential negative impact of this new girlie-girl culture is undeniable—but yet armed with awareness and recognition, parents can effectively counterbalance its influence in their daughters' lives. *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* is a must-read for anyone who cares about girls, and for parents helping their daughters navigate the rocky road to adulthood. An Exclusive Note from Peggy Orenstein As a mom, I admit, I was initially tempted to give the new culture of pink and pretty a pass. There are already so many things to be vigilant about as a parent; my energy was stretched to its limit. So my daughter slept in a Cinderella gown for a few years. Girls will be girls, right? They will—and that is exactly why we need to pay more, rather than less, attention to what's happening in their world. According to the American Psychological Association, the emphasis on beauty and play-sexiness at ever-younger ages is increasing girls' vulnerability to the pitfalls that most concern parents: eating disorders, negative body image, depression, risky sexual behavior. Yet here we are with nearly half of six-year-old girls regularly using lipstick or lip gloss. The percentage of eight- to twelve-year-old girls wearing eyeliner or mascara has doubled in the last TWO years (I ask you: shouldn't the percentage of eight-year-olds wearing eyeliner be zero?). A researcher told me that when she asks teenage girls how a sexual experience felt to them they respond by telling her how they think they looked. Meanwhile, the marketing of pink, pretty, and “sassy” has become a gigantic business: the Disney Princesses alone are pulling in four BILLION dollars in revenue annually. As I immersed myself in the research for this book, I began to trace a line from the innocence of Cinderella to the struggles Miley Cyrus has faced in trying to “age up,” which in turn was connected to how regular girls present themselves on Facebook (where identity itself becomes a performance, crafted in response to your audience of 322 BFFs). It seemed that even as new educational and professional opportunities unfurled before my daughter and her peers, so did the

path that encouraged them to equate identity with image, self-expression with appearance, femininity with performance, pleasure with pleasing, and sexuality with sexualization. So much is at stake, for mothers with girls of all ages: How do we define girlhood? What about femininity? Beauty? Sexuality? Our choices will tell our girls how we see them, who we want them to be, our values, expectations, hopes, and dreams. Do we want them to be judged by the content of their character or the color of their lip gloss? I'm the first to admit that I do not have all the answers. Who could? But as a mother who also happens to be a journalist (or perhaps vice versa), I wanted to lay out the context—the marketing, science, history, culture—in which we make our choices, to provide information and insight that might help parents, educators, and all of us who care about girls guide them toward their true happily-ever-afters. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Orenstein, who has written about girls for nearly two decades (*Schoolgirls*), finds today's pink and princess-obsessed girl culture grating when it threatens to lure her own young daughter, Daisy. In her quest to determine whether princess mania is merely a passing phase or a more sinister marketing plot with long-term negative impact, Orenstein travels to Disneyland, American Girl Place, the American International Toy Fair; visits a children's beauty pageant; attends a Miley Cyrus concert; tools around the Internet; and interviews parents, historians, psychologists, marketers, and others. While she uncovers some disturbing news (such as the American Psychological Association's assertion that the "girlie-girl" culture's emphasis on beauty and play-sexiness can increase girls' susceptibility to depression, eating disorders, distorted body image, and risky sexual behavior), she also finds that locking one's daughter away in a tower like a modern-day Rapunzel may not be necessary. Orenstein concludes that parents who think through their values early on and set reasonable limits, encourage dialogue and skepticism, and are canny about the consumer culture can combat the 24/7 "media machine" aimed at girls and hold off the focus on beauty, materialism, and the color pink somewhat. With insight and biting humor, the author explores her own conflicting feelings as a mother as she protects her offspring and probes the roots and tendrils of the girlie-girl movement. (Jan.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I don't know if I can write a review that will do justice to this book, but I at least want to say a few things about my reading experience/thoughts/opinions. First off, I thought the writing was intelligent and engaging. Orenstein includes a quite hefty Citations/Bibliography at the end of the book that

provides references for the sources she mentions in the text (there are no notations in-text, which make for easy reading). I felt that Orenstein research her topic thoroughly, and I liked how she didn't automatically make the conclusion to burn everything pink/princess. Sometimes, I had trouble following from one chapter to the next, one thought to the next, but there was a lot of information and I read this pretty quickly so part of that could be just me. Orenstein's final conclusion seem to be something that would be obvious: it's the parents' job to pick and choose what is best for the daughter, to remind her that she is more than just her outward beauty, that she is a person whose thoughts and feelings aren't defined by outward appearances. I do appreciate such a conclusion, but it seems rather underwhelming. Also, Orenstein hints at people "fighting back" against the heavy marketing to children (similarly to the fight against obesity), but there are no big conclusions or "steps" you can do for this. (Though if you follow her Facebook page, you will find some of her suggestions there.) However, I really enjoyed reading this, even though I do not have a daughter of my own. I think parents with daughters would definitely appreciate at least a look at this to get them aware of what is in store for their Little Princess. Brought to you by: \*C.S. Light\*

Peggy Orenstein is not a hater. She simply ventured into trying to find out what was up with the sudden onset of fairy wings, all things PINK, and the idea that a little girl must not only BE a princess, but stay a princess. The result is *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*. What she found out is astounding in terms of the commercialization of childhood. I had read once that a girl will make a baby of a piece of wood or a stuffed husk, that mothering is a natural feminine instinct. Maybe, maybe not, says Orenstein. The first American baby dolls were pushed when it seemed the birthrate was declining. What better way to remind women that their natural job is to be a mother than to train her as a child to care for a doll. Along came Shirley Temple. Along came Snow White, and all the other Disney princesses, which are now a multibillion-dollar industry. Orenstein argues that the "girlie girl" culture is seen by moms as "safe" and "fun," when in reality it tends to stereotype female "beauty" characteristics and sexualize the pre-teen. Girls like to play dress up. They dress up as ballerinas, fairies, and princesses. When I was a child, we dressed up in our moms' old formal dresses, high heels, and the luckiest of us received Annie Oakley outfits! It is the stagnation in the phase of princess that concerns Orenstein (and me) to a great extent. Whether you live in a Barbie-free house or are inundated with PINK and GLITTER, it is an interesting dissertation to read. Girls can be smart, kind, and also pretty. Their whole world should not be one big fairy tale.

I truly felt captivated by this book within the first few pages. For those that are mothers of daughters,

this is a good read depicting all of the marketing and possibly natural attractions towards all things pink for girls. Along with this, the author finds a way to instill wanting more for ourselves as women and for our daughters in this male-driven world.

This book will put the clothes on the emperor. We have always known how he was dressed. We have always known how much influence he had. We have always known we should keep him away from our daughters. This book offers no real defences against the emperor but reveals many of his hiding places we parents may not have discovered on our own. If you are worried about your baby girl or other little ones you may care about, then read this book. Good luck.

As a woman who plans on starting a family in the next few years, I was fascinated by this book. It focuses on how difficult raising a daughter is when she is constantly being marketed to in ways that promote beauty and sexuality (even, perhaps especially, in the 21st century!) as the most important markers of feminine identity. The Disney stuff is a little sad, really. I grew watching and loving movies like Aladdin. But, it's not just Disney, it's most media that seems to promote particular kinds of girlie performances as realities that then reinforce those performances as normal, natural, and expected. I think the book is a good introduction to parents (and people in general) about how understanding marketing and advertising to children connects to how children are socialized and how male and female roles, perceptions, and stereotypes follow us and are perpetuated in our adult lives. It's not a hysterical rant, and it also doesn't try to prescribe one-size-fits-all answers to the issues raised. It also helped me reflect on some of my childhood in ways that I think are useful as I consider parenthood.

Although, the book may be slightly outdated, it is still relevant today. Recommend to anyone who wants to learn more about girls and media.

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