

The title of this book could be taken as a tongue-in-cheek retort from feminists, who are often accused of not having a sense of humour. It is also a call for defiant reflection, even a little defiant, in which the contributors ask, "Who is laughing and why?" As stated in the book, "Feminist laughter can be wild, triumphant, bitter, glib, fearful, erotic, emancipatory, on and on. We must treat feminist laughter not as an obligation but as an opportunity to exercise the full freedom over our bodies and our voices."

Each of the ten essays in the book deals with a different aspect of feminist humour or feminism. Topics explored include the evolution of feminist humour, the need to laugh especially during sad times, finding humour and connections among those who have survived sexual violence, the unruliness of mothers' humour, using humour to reclaim stereotypes and an interesting and very humorous connection between feminism and vegetarianism.

In her essay, "Lighten Up! Life as a Vegetarian Feminist, or the Most Uptight Person in the World," Margaret Betz writes that "humour, seriousness and anger pose a tangled mess of cultural norms and expectations for women." She discusses navigating the "social landmines" of feminism and similar ones related to vegetarianism that have earned her a reputation of being uptight. Humour is her way of dealing with all of this. She writes, "Humour is indispensable to a lot of contemporary feminist writing and activism," citing authors who use humour and sarcasm to make their points.

The book does have its serious moments, and perhaps a few too many. At times you might forget that you are reading about humour. However, the final essay, "That Time I Tried to Date a Frat Boy" by Alyson Rogers, brings some much-needed comic relief while offering points for discussion about men, women and humour.

If, as the old adage goes, "You can catch more flies with honey than vinegar," then using humour to illuminate the points of feminism is about more than lightening up; it is a tool that builds community and uproots patriarchal beliefs.