



## Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised as a Man

By Norah Vincent

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**Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised as a Man** By Norah Vincent

**A journalist's provocative and spellbinding account of her eighteen months spent disguised as a man.**

Norah Vincent became an instant media sensation with the publication of *Self-Made Man*, her take on just how hard it is to be a man, even in a man's world. Following in the tradition of John Howard Griffin (*Black Like Me*), Vincent spent a year and a half disguised as her male alter ego, Ned, exploring what men are like when women aren't around. As Ned, she joined a bowling team, took a high-octane sales job, went on dates with women (and men), visited strip clubs, and even managed to infiltrate a monastery and a men's therapy group. At once thought-provoking and pure fun to read, *Self-Made Man* is a sympathetic and thrilling tour de force of immersion journalism.

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**Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised as a Man** By Norah Vincent **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The disguise that former *Los Angeles Times* op-ed columnist Vincent employed to trick dozens of people into believing her a man was carefully thought out: a new, shorter haircut; a pair of rectangular eyeglasses; a fake five o'clock shadow; a prosthetic penis; some preppy clothes. It was more than she needed. "[A]s I became more confident in my disguise... the props I had used... became less and less important, until sometimes I didn't need them at all," Vincent writes. Gender marking, she found, is more about attitude than appearance. Vincent's account of the year and a half she spent posing as a man is peppered with such predictable observations. To readers of gender studies literature, none of them will be especially illuminating, but Vincent's descriptions of how she learned, and tested, such chestnuts firsthand make them awfully fun to read. As "Ned," Vincent joined an all-male bowling league, dated women, worked for a door-to-door sales force, spent three weeks in a monastery, hung out in strip clubs and, most dangerous of all, went on a Robert Bly-style men's retreat. She creates rich portraits of the men she met in these places and the ways they behaved—as a lesbian, she's particularly good at separating the issues of sexuality from those of gender. But the most fascinating part of the story lies within Vincent herself—and the way that censoring her emotions to pass as a man provoked a psychological breakdown. For fans of *Nickel and Dimed*—style immersion reporting, this book is a sure bet. (Jan. 23)

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Vincent's first experiment in cross-dressing came on a dare from an acquaintance who was a drag king. When she experienced the intoxicating invisibility and safety that came from wearing the disguise, she wanted to learn more. For 18 months, she disguised herself as a man, renamed herself Ned, joined a men's bowling league, visited strip bars, and dated women. Along the way, she found that the freedom and privileges enjoyed by men were counterbalanced by a constant testing and severe limits on emotions. She also found women to be distrustful, ever ready to criticize men for being emotionally distant yet clearly preferring men who met stereotypical images of strength and virility. Vincent is frank about her experiences--the hard business of sexual transactions devoid of emotions, the easy bonding between men, fear of sexual attraction among men, and, ultimately, the explosion of her own notions of sex roles. She also explores the guilt she feels about her deception. Writing from the perspective of a gay woman who had a view of the male world that women don't get to see, Vincent finds unexpected complexities in the men she meets and in herself as well. *Vanessa Bush*

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Review

A thoughtful, entertaining piece of first-person investigative journalism . . . *Self-Made Man* transcends its premise altogether. . . . So rich and so audacious . . . [I was] hooked from Page 1. (David Kamp, *The New York Times Book Review*)

Vincent's account of how she 'became' a man is undeniably fascinating." (*Los Angeles Times Book World*)

Eye-opening . . . *Self-Made Man* will make many women think twice about coveting male 'privilege' and make any man feel grateful that his gender is better understood. (*The Washington Post*)

[Vincent] can be as perspicuous and exact as Joan Didion or Gloria Steinem at nailing a hitherto disregarded

truth about the sexes in a single elegant and witty phrase. . . . This is a brave and often fascinating book, with Vincent . . . offering us perspectives that are entirely fresh and new. (*The Times*,London)

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