



A Short History of Rudeness: Manners, Morals, and Misbehavior in Modern America

Mark Caldwell

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A funny and provocative cultural history of class, manners, and the decline of civility

In his smart and thought provoking new book, literary/social critic Mark Caldwell gives us a history of the demise of manners and charts the progress of an epidemic of rudeness in America. The breakdown of civility has in recent years become a national obsession, and our modern climate of boorishness has cultivated a host of etiquette watchdogs, like Miss Manners and Martha Stewart, with which we defend ourselves against an onslaught of nastiness. But Caldwell demonstrates that the foundations of etiquette actually began to corrode several centuries ago with the blurring of class lines. Touching on aspects of both our public and private lives, including work, family, and sex, *A Short History of Rudeness* examines how the rules of our behaviour have changed and explains why, no matter how hard we try, we can never return to a golden era of manners and mores.

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