

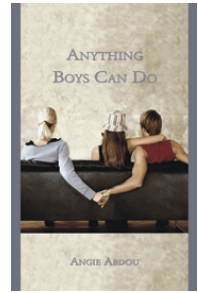
“Anything Boys Can Do”

By Angie Abdou

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Review by M E Powell Mendenhall

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Anyone who remembers this childhood taunt should read this book. It’s every bit as cheeky as the title suggests.

These twelve short stories have women protagonists in a variety of ages and circumstances. They test their limits and explore a variety of emotional and social situations.

Unconventional is an understatement for this book. In “Flannel Nightmares,” for example, our heroine is an empty-nester who goes back to work in a university library, and finds herself drawn perhaps a little too closely to the young male students who come to her for, shall we say, help. At the other end of adulthood, in “No Strings Attached,” a 20-something secretary raises eyebrows and a few false hopes on a Cuban beach holiday.

It’s not all fun and games, though. In “Not That Hard,” for example, three divorced friends drive out for a Sunday visit to a Hutterite colony, and end up with a new view of their own lives. Often there are no simple solutions, as Abdou’s main characters – and her readers – discover in stories like “Bruised Apples” or “Shady Valley.”

For a first book, this one’s a keeper. Angie Abdou was born in Moose Jaw, although she now lives in Fernie, BC. The title story appeared in Saskatchewan’s own “Spring” magazine (Fall 2003). Abdou’s work has been published in many other literary magazines as well, including “Grain.”

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