

DOMESTIC EXTREMIST: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WINNING THE CULTURE WAR

(PEACHY KEENAN)

September 13, 2023

My aunt, one of my father's two sisters, died in 2020, at the age of eighty-five. She never married, because when she was young, she convinced herself that what mattered was having a career—in her case, as a virologist. She attended all the best schools: Miss Porter's; Bryn Mawr; and Harvard Medical School, graduating in 1959. She was pretty, quirky, engaging, but most of all, she thought she was always the smartest person in the room. She believed, she knew, that by placing career over family, she would earn a Nobel Prize. She did not get a Nobel Prize.

My aunt loved nothing more than children. But she denied marriage to herself to follow the Zeitgeist of her youth, that sold by the odious Betty Friedan and other destructive harridans (including my grandmother), which said that motherhood was contemptible. As the years ground on, and nothing stellar materialized in her professional life, she became a very difficult person, a diagnosable paranoid (my grandfather on my mother's side was a psychiatrist, and so he told me). She fought constantly with her colleagues at every university she worked, to the extent of bringing conspiracy-minded lawsuits.

Other than her brother, my father, who died a long time ago, I was the relative closest to her. She had no friends where she lived. Thus, as she declined, I brought her to Indiana, to be close to my family, where she talked endlessly of the past, often only interpretable by me, who knew the stories of her youth. Then she died. They coded it as the Wuhan Plague, but that was a lie, no doubt done to grab more money. In truth, she simply lost the will to live, probably because my family was forbidden to visit her, and she dearly loved her grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

The extended family held a graveside memorial service the following year, after the stupidity surrounding the Plague had abated. It was a good event. However, there was one false note. Over the grave, my surviving aunt gave a long discourse about how her sister had struggled professionally for decades—because she was a “strong woman” and a “feminist” at a time when that was supposedly not allowed. Not a word of

this was true; it was simply retconning the truth to shore up the decayed feminist ideology which had destroyed the happiness of my dead aunt. All being a so-called feminist did for her, whom I loved, was ensure a life of pain. As she told me once, in a rare moment of introspection, with a catch in her voice, "I've been so lonely for so many decades." This fate is what Peachy Keenan wants you, and your daughters, to avoid.

It is hard to convey truth to young adults. Although the idea that the young always rebel against the generation preceding them is a total myth, a self-serving ahistorical lie spread by Boomers to justify their crimes against our society, it is still a Sisyphean task to fight back against the all-pervasive propaganda machine the Left has created, which both whispers and shouts lies into children's ears from their earliest years. As a parent, or as any adult offering wisdom, finding a way to stand out in the noise is therefore crucial. That is one reason Keenan's book is so valuable—because its unique combination of humor and serious messages is far more likely to be heard than would be yet another book that simply bemoans the modern world.

Domestic Extremist is a book directed at women. Part autobiography, part mirror for princesses, part social commentary, Keenan offers a path for women to follow, though men get a few mentions. She is very clear that her own youth was in some ways misspent, and only by good fortune, and fairly late, did she recover from the damage done by feminism. But recover she did, and that is something that should give hope and confidence to all young women. Most importantly, rather than imagine some perfect Instagram tradwife life, Keenan talks to real women in the real world, which is a refreshing departure from much writing on the Right.

The title is, naturally, a play on words. Its core meaning is that Keenan is, regards herself as, and recommends that women be, "extremely domestic"—that is, centered around the home. Its secondary meaning is an acknowledgement that our Regime is violently opposed to, and will oppose with violence, women recentering themselves. No doubt, as with mothers who complain about homosexual pornography being forced on their young children in school, or fathers who complain about trannies raping their daughters in the school bathroom, the Eye of Sauron has noticed Keenan, and placed her on lists of enemies with whom to deal.

True, it seems unlikely that our corrupt FBI is going to roll up on Keenan some morning with a SWAT team. She jokes about the no-knock raid, discounting it because her advice “has exactly zero to do with violence.” But then, just a few years ago many of today’s actions of the terroristic Department of “Justice,” including their Gestapo-style tactics against the thousands of peaceful heroes of the Electoral Justice Protest and our illegitimate Regime’s filling of the jails with political prisoners, would have seemed impossible. And, after all, the Left tells us that words are violence, if they are the wrong words, and so by that standard Keenan is most definitely guilty of crimes against the state. Maybe, as a friend of mine said to me once a few years ago, when it was more obviously a joke, we can be shackled to adjacent benches in the Ministry of Love.

That said, Keenan is explicit we are in a war—a culture war (though I note that historically the boundary between cold and hot culture war is porous). Moreover, her aim is not simply to prevent sad stories such as those of my aunt; it is to save our entire civilization. A very bold, and very worthy, goal. To win the culture war, we, and our children, must become anti-feminist. Instead, women must remain “authentically female.” In a sense, this isn’t hard, because feminism is the essence of unreality, so in order to be anti-feminist, you simply have to hew to reality. But in another sense, it is very hard, because facing reality is often less fun than pretending, and the forces arrayed against reality are extremely powerful.

This is the point of Keenan’s book—to narrate what is, and to recommend, reality. It is hard to review this book because it is complete in itself. There is little to add to either Keenan’s analysis or her prescriptions, and the reader, any reader, benefits from reading it. She may have knowledge revealed to her, or she may have confirmed to her what she already knows, or she may gain strength in a plan that she has already begun to execute.

The first part of the book covers “What They Took From You”—a complete analysis of where women have been steered wrong. And what they took from you was pretty much everything. Keenan spares nothing from her gimlet eye, nor does she ever, ever, offer any preemptive apologies, any kowtowing to the verities of the age, pretending that feminism has benefits along with costs. She just tells it straight, of what

you, a woman, were robbed. Your fleeting fertility. The unique role of women (where she cites the outstanding Mary Harrington). The very definition of “woman.” Femininity and its virtues. Men and masculinity, the necessary complements to femininity. Wedded bliss (destroyed by no-fault divorce). Your unborn children (slaughtered by abortion and birth control). Your maternal instinct (infants and children forced into always-horrific daycare). Your real job (children and home). Your parental authority. Your happiness (swamped by depression and mental illness).

It’s all done with a great deal of humor (“It is no coincidence that ‘lean-in’ is what the witch tells Gretel to do in front of the hot oven”), but with a deadly serious message. Keenan, like Ronald Reagan, though without his ultimately worthless and destructive program, is a happy warrior. She doesn’t sugarcoat anything, and she gives no quarter to our enemies, but she stays relentlessly optimistic. Unlike certain people (cough, cough) she doesn’t think that, in all likelihood, it’ll be necessary for our society to be burnt to the waterline first, in order to rebuild it. I hope she’s right.

Each chapter also has exquisitely-chosen epigraphs, including one of my favorite exhortations of all time, from Ernst Jünger’s *The Forest Passage*: “Long periods of peace foster certain optical illusions: one is the conviction that the inviolability of the home is grounded in the constitution, which should guarantee it. In reality, it is grounded in the family father, who, sons at his side, fills the doorway with an axe in hand.” (And Keenan is pretty daring to quote Jünger, for the record). All this makes the book a pleasure to read.

The second part covers “How To Take It Back,” which is paired with the third, “What Winning Looks Like.” Not for Keenan any Patrick Deneen-style pulling of punches or disavowal of the desire to actually win, and win permanently. Keenan is upbeat about winning. She points out that what feminism, and more broadly the Left, offers is life on Impossible Mode, because everything they offer defies reality. This necessarily implies that if you simply adopt a reality-based focus, life reverts to Easy Mode. Not that everything will be easy. But it will be easier, much easier, and much better. What women need, most of all, is permission, permission to do it differently than the ways into which they have been indoctrinated. “Look, you and I both know you secretly

want to be more domestic. It's what everyone would already be doing if they hadn't been bombarded with destructive anti-domestic messages their entire lives."

Very usefully, Keenan uses her own life, and how she was rescued, and rescued herself, from feminism as a frame for the success of others in doing the same. The key was her husband, who when they first started dating refused to pander to feminist propaganda. This was very attractive (I suspect, though I am decades removed from dating, but it does cohere with my experience, that being right-wing is no debility, and likely an asset, for a man in attracting women, even, or especially, of left-wing inclination). She was pushed completely into domestic extremism by marriage and children; as I say, reality will always assert itself, and it did for her.

Thus, she became an anti-feminist. The core principle, she makes clear, for "taking back," is that femininity, not feminism, is where real power lies for a woman. What flows from this is, in a sense, obvious, but again Keenan lays it all out with clarity and verve. Don't be promiscuous (dating apps, porn, or anything else that cheapens the user). Cultivate a marriage mindset. Have more than two kids. Embrace parenthood. Don't have a career outside the home (if at all possible; Keenan acknowledges the economic realities that our society has unwisely imposed on us, but also notes that most parents could live on less than they choose to). Get religion. Reclaim your parental authority. And live happily ever after, or much more happily.

Well, then, after fighting back, what does winning look like, exactly, in Keenan's vision? She refers to the 1980s as a sort of golden age, and that even going back there would be enough. Maybe. Leaving aside that we can never go back, and that I myself am nostalgic for the 80s, which as I often say were the last time Americans were truly optimistic and happy, the 1980s held not the seeds of today's evil, but the seedlings, which were already growing vigorously, and rapidly choking the life of many institutions and social practices. Plus, even if we were somehow granted the 1980s again, we'd end up in the same place soon enough anyway. No, feminism must be exterminated, root and branch, in a new dispensation.

To be fair, Keenan doesn't think we can go back. Nor does she mean we all need to homestead. She intends that we all change our ways, a

type of Great Awakening. We need to “save the planet—one family at a time.” It’s not a luxury lifestyle, and it does require adjustment. But it’s something we can do locally, within only our own family, if necessary. What we need is the will.

All this is true. Still, I suppose a legitimate criticism, or concern, is that those who need this book most are the least likely to read it. That’s not something that can be helped, but it does suggest that the impact of this book, or any hortatory book, will be limited. Among anyone who is even a little open to the message, however, this book will crystallize a great deal of inchoate thought. So although Keenan is unlikely to convert our enemies, she may convert some neutrals, and she will very likely substantially improve the chances of the receptive changing their lives greatly for the better.

Yes, given the decay of our modern world, complete winning as a result does not seem likely, or rather, it doesn’t seem likely without going backwards first. I think that the real benefit of this book is not that it will, of itself, initiate a societal rebirth, the necessary rebirth. Rather, with its help we can rescue individuals from the storm, and begin the process of welding those women, and their families, into a cohesive whole. Of course, our enemies won’t take this lying down. Keenan says “We will claim victory peacefully,” by rejecting them, and “outvoting them.” I doubt it. After all, any important election is now fortified. And even aside from that, even modest Hungary-type reforms, such as tax breaks for mothers, will never be allowed by our corrupt Uniparty. But that’s no excuse not to try—events are likely to open up cracks in our enemies’ fortifications, which can be exploited. And in the meantime, we should spread the message widely, and apply it in our own lives.