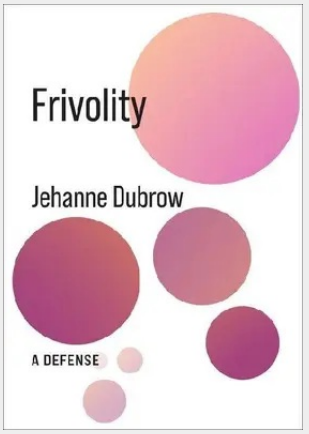
Dubrow

Frivolity

A Defense

Why must everything be so important—so dour and solemn, so grim and austere? How about a feather boa, some frilly lace, and a bright splash of pink? In Frivolity, Jehanne Dubrow stands up for the seemingly shallow and trifling, calling for a reconsideration of what we find worthy and what we dismiss. This book is a provocation. It offers a defense of the pursuits, objects, and people denigrated as frivolous, asking why we so readily scorn them and why, in particular, the label is so often tied to femininity and queerness. Its 101 sections move lightly across literature, art, and popular culture, from Susan Sontag, Sei Shonagon, Jane Austen, and Mozart to Barbie, Nora Ephron rom-coms, exclamation points, and Dubrow's own "Year of Perfect Skin." Written in a lyrical style, this book takes both an intimate and a rigorous approach to thinking about the frivolous, blending personal essay with scholarship. For Dubrow, frivolity is a way of affirming the importance of joy and silliness. And don't we need a little more of both these things in an era made all too serious by autocracy and terror?



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