To all of our Secret Keeper Girl fans.
We love meeting you when we get the chance.
Boys are not gross. They are great! In fact, we especially like two of them and want to thank them for everything they do to make this book and the whole Secret Keeper Girl ministry work.

Bob and Jonathan, you are our best friends on the whole earth. We love that you like us. We like you, too. You sacrifice so much to let us write and travel to speak to our Secret Keeper Girls. Jonathan put it very well when he said, “People sometimes ask me if it is hard to be away from Suzy so she can travel to minister. I remind them how many little girls come to know Jesus through Secret Keeper Girl. This is our sacrifice for the kingdom.” We love your kingdom hearts.

Thanks also to the boys…and girls…at Harvest House who make these books beautiful and “korect are spilling ’n gramr.” The boys who worked hard on this project included Terry Glaspey and Paul Gossard. They wouldn’t be a complete team without the girls: LaRae Weikert and Barb Sherrill.

Our friend Andy Mylin—who is also a boy—handcrafted the illustrations in this book. Julia Ryan, Secret Keeper Girl designer extraordinaire, designed the cover and internal pages. Isn’t everything beautiful?

And thanks especially to Jesus, who has taught us how to interact with boys the way he intended. We hope you learn a lot about that in the pages of this book.

Dannah and Suzy
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**Everything You Need to Know About Boys**

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Boys. Yucky or not so bad? You may not think there’s much need to talk about boys yet, but we think they are worth the time. After all, the Bible says that we have been created male and female to “reign over” this place called Earth together.

But boys are hard to understand, right? They don’t think like us. They don’t care about the things we do. They seem so…alien. Well, that’s why we wrote this book. We both share a house with one of those alien creatures, and Dannah even has one for a son! Turns out they’re not so bad after all. And we have some good insight for you on how to relate to them in all of their glorious boy-ness.

You’ve got this, Secret Keeper Girl!

God’s Word gives us really clear guidelines about all areas of life. In its pages we find examples of people doing things God’s way and succeeding…and choosing to do things their own way and failing miserably. We know one of the hardest parts about reading the Bible is making it work in the life you live today. So, we’ve created the Secret Keeper Girl Series. It’s part modern-girl self-help and part Bible study so you can think through how God’s truth can work in your real life.
Part one of this book—Everything You Need to Know About Boys—is self-help.

Self-help is the kind of book your parents read when they want to be a better parent or bookkeeper or gardener. In this case, you’re reading it because you want to know how to relate to boys. Self-help books advise you on certain topics. You’ll read a lot of them in your lifetime.

Don’t worry if this is your first self-help book. You may be used to chapter books and fiction. So we’ve written it in that style and it’ll be fun to read. You can do this part of the book alone.

Part two of this book—What God Says About Boys—is a Bible study.

A Bible study guides you through the Bible on a certain topic or book and enables you to do your own studying. You’ll be reading Bible verses and answering questions about them, applying them to your life. There are even quizzes and games in this part. It’s going to be fun. You’ll have to put some work in to feel the thrill in your belly for this kind of fun! You can do the second part of the book alone, but it’s much better if you do it with your mom or a group of girls.
Part 1: Everything You Need to Know About Boys
I, Suzy, grew up with two older brothers. In my house, everything was a competition. Dinnertime became an Olympic event called “Who Can Shove the Most Food into Their Mouth?” Crayons weren’t for coloring. They were meant to be broken into little pieces and then thrown at passing cars through the back window of the station wagon. Whoever hit the most cars (or didn’t get yelled at by Mom) won.

And in a pool with boys, we couldn’t just swim. Oh no. The pool had to involve contests of who could stay underwater the longest, who could swim the fastest, who could dunk whom, and who could do the best belly flop off the diving board.

One day I was the last to arrive at our backyard pool. My brothers and their friends were treading water and discussing various ways to jump from great heights into the deep end of the pool. Of course we all knew the pool rules: the only thing you jump off from is the diving board. But I had already jumped from the top of our slide, and I had seen one of my brothers’ friends take a running start from the roof of the cabana and clear the concrete. Many possibilities remained to be explored.

At this point my brothers informed me they had been doing flips from the top of the slide. “Oh yeah,” they said. “Didn’t you
see us from the house? We’ve all done one. But…you’re probably too little. It’s probably not something a girl can do.”

Back then, there was a movie I’d seen called *Back to the Future*. The main character, Marty McFly, couldn’t stand to be called a chicken. Call McFly a chicken and his eyes narrowed, his lip curled in a sneer, and he became defiantly brave. I had mastered the McFly lip curl for whenever I was told I probably couldn’t do something because I was a girl.

“I can too,” I told them, looking up uncertainly at the ten-foot-tall structure.

“Okay, I dare you,” my brother Rick said. Our pool was not a rectangle. It was kidney-shaped, kind of like an amoeba. There was a good deal of concrete between the top of the slide and the deep end of the pool. I knew Mom and Dad’s rule about not jumping off the slide was a good one. But even stronger than my sense of rule-following was the desire to be as good as the boys. I headed up the ladder with great resolve.

Standing at the top of the slide, I could see the kitchen window where Mom often spent time preparing dinner or washing dishes. Was she looking out the window now? I really hoped she would come running out the back door of the house and order me off the slide immediately. I didn’t even care if she made me come in for the day or grounded me. I just wanted to be saved. But she didn’t come out, and the boys kept taunting me from the edges of the pool. Finally, I climbed to the outside of the slide’s protective railing, fixed my eyes on the spot I wished to enter the pool, leapt, twisted, and…kerplunk! I made it! I splashed breathtakingly into the center of the deep end and emerged spitting a mouthful of water into my tormentors’ faces.

They didn’t congratulate me or applaud. They didn’t pat me on the back or welcome me into their club. Instead they looked at one another wide-eyed and exclaimed, “Sweet! It *can* be done!!” They had used me as their test dummy! I would either succeed, telling...
them they could now try a flip too, or…splat! Here’s the scary thing though. I wasn’t mad at them. I was first shocked, and then proud. I had paved the way in a competition with my older brothers. I was the first one to complete a dangerous mission. (Yes, I was found out and grounded, but that’s a story for another day.)

I looked up to my brothers. They seemed so strong and brave. And mean.

Lessons About Boys

It seems from the time I arrived on the scene as the baby of the family I was the target of all my brothers’ “pranks,” if that’s what you can call them. My mom recalls watching my three-year-old brother stick out his chubby little leg to trip me as I learned to walk. When I was four, my then-seven-year-old brother delighted in sitting on my stomach and popping balloons in my face. By the time we were seven and ten, he would pinch me when Mom wasn’t looking and I would punch him in return. I was almost always seen, and he would cackle with delight as I received the scolding. Mean, right?

But most of the time I was not the punching bag. Most of the time my brothers, three and six years older than me, were my greatest cheerleaders and defenders. They included me in sports. We rode bikes together, swam for hours on end, practiced climbing trees and walking on log fences. We skied in Colorado and scuba dived in the Cayman Islands, and I watched dejectedly as they left for their guys-only fishing trip in Tennessee each summer. My brothers were my best buddies growing up, and in many ways I learned all of my early lessons about what a boy is from these two guys.

Are boys smelly? Yes! Take it from me! To this day I can smell the grass and sweat from their football uniforms as they dumped everything to be washed in the laundry room.
They burped a lot, as well as being delighted with other body noises both real and faked.

But are boys gross? No. Psalm 139:14 says, “Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.” That verse isn’t only about girls. In fact, a guy—King David—wrote those words. Just like you and I have been fearfully and wonderfully made, so have those boys we are talking about. Yes, those smelly, loud creatures who laugh at things that aren’t even funny and are just plain awkward when life gets serious...they are fearfully and wonderfully made!

You know, it’s interesting to think back to the time of creation. The first guy (Adam) was made from the dirt. Seems appropriate. Maybe that’s the reason guys are so comfortable with grass stains and mud. It’s what they were born from! The first girl (Eve) was formed in a much different way. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and he removed one of Adam’s ribs. From this genetic material he formed the first woman.

“The Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:21-22).

God could have made you and me from the dust of the ground. He proved it by creating Adam. But he chose to make females “out of” man. This way we know God’s intentions for sure. We are not two separate species battling it out for who is the best or the strongest or God’s favorite. We are one.

God knits each of us together as we grow in Mom’s womb, some male and some female, but we all come from the same
original human being. Just like you have been given a unique personality, so has every boy you know. Do you worry about your future sometimes? Do you sometimes get mad at yourself for being a little lazy, saying the wrong things, or messing everything up… again? So does every boy you know.

Of Course, There Are Differences

1. **Our conversations are different.** Girls tend to enjoy talking about personal things, especially about friendships. Boys tend to talk more about sports and technology. I, Dannah, don’t really like football. (Suzy likes it enough for both of us.) But my husband knows that if he will tell me the stories of the players on the field, I’ll be engrossed. So he tells me who just got engaged, or how a certain player grew up without a dad. This brings our conversation together. Bob knows our conversations are different and so he blends them together! (Smart man.)

2. **Our brains are different.** Boys are typically only good at thinking about one thing at a time. When they solve problems, they like to do so in orderly steps. This usually gives them an amazing ability to focus. Have you ever seen your brother or your dad concentrating on a problem, a game, or fixing something—and not even hear or see what’s happening around them? That’s because they’re able to put all their energy into one single task or activity.

   Girls, however, have a “bridge” between the right (creative) and left (logical) sides of the brain that boys simply do not have. Thus we can think about more than one problem at a
time and are able to go back and forth between several activities while problem-solving. You may be talking over the day’s events with a girlfriend while folding clothes for your mom and helping your little brother with his math. This is sometimes called “multitasking.” Have mercy on the guys…they’re usually not very good at it!

**Our emotions are different.** Though boys experience every emotion we girls do, they are better at setting emotions aside while they work together. This is why a boy who is your friend one minute may seem to be totally ignoring you in science lab the next, or why a boy can tell his lab partner to “back off and let me do it,” and then you may see the two laughing hysterically one minute later. What do feelings have to do with problem solving? That’s how boys think. Not we girls! Relationship is everything, and life is something to be experienced and figured out together! Nothing is more devastating for a girl than to be “left out.”

Yep, boys and girls are so different that sometimes we may as well be two different species! Of course, not all girls are emotional and not all boys are bad at multitasking. These are generalizations. That is to say, most of the time girls and boys are a certain way, but not all the time. That’s okay too—but why did God make

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**Think About It**

It’s not just human boys who enjoy running straight at one another and crashing. The behavior is common with male goats, oxen, elk, sheep—and once upon a time with a little dinosaur about the size of a large dog, called the Stegoceras - validum. Its skull actually had an extra layer of protection to prevent brain damage from frequent head-butting. Know any boys who could use that extra layer?
us different enough that we sometimes get competitive? (Ever hear someone shout, “Girls rule—Boys drool”?)

Let’s be careful. We weren’t meant to live boys vs. girls. We were created different so that we could complement one another. God made us the perfect fit to “fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground” (Genesis 1:28). God told Adam and Eve to take care of his world together.

When we’re older? As married couples one day? Sure. But even now! As classmates. As brother and sister. As kids. As teammates. God has created two of a kind, different but very similar, and we work together perfectly.

One of the best things you can do on this journey to understanding boys is to simply let them be boys. If we as girls can stop expecting boys to think like we do, talk like we do, reason like we do, and behave like we do, then we are way ahead of the game! Boys aren’t so gross after all. They are just different. And this turns out to be part of God’s plan. We were made to thrive in a world filled with variety!