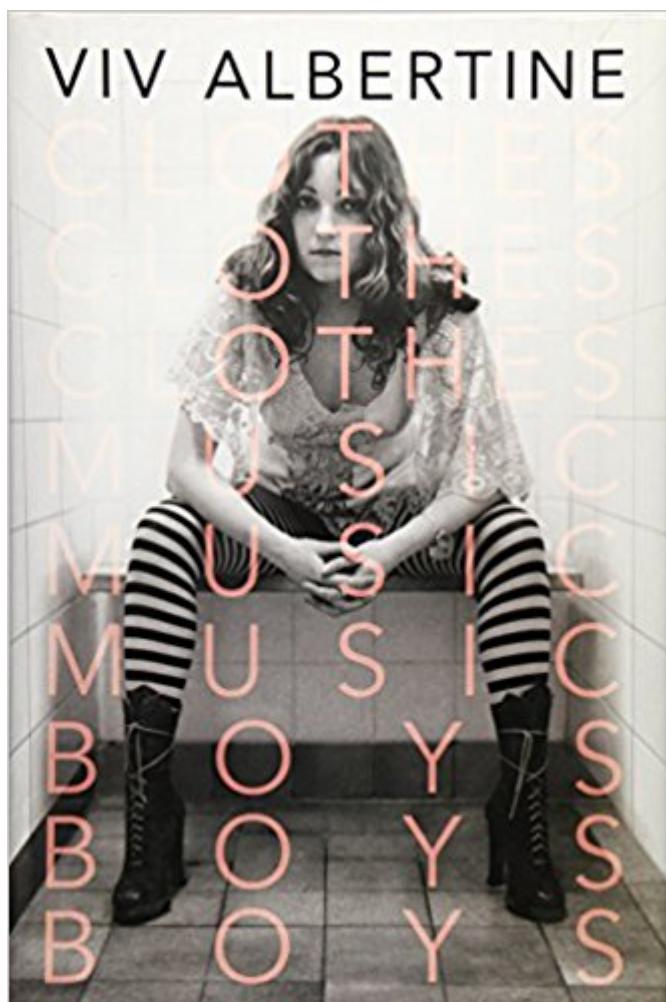


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# **Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.: A Memoir**



## Synopsis

"Ms. Albertine's book is wiry and cogent and fearless.â| Her book has an honest, lo-fi grace. If it were better written, it would be worse."â| Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*"Forget Katniss And Tris - Viv Albertine Is Your New Hero."â| MTV.comThe Rough Trade #1 Book of the Year!Viv Albertine is a pioneer. As lead guitarist and songwriter for the seminal band The Slits, she influenced a future generation of artists including Kurt Cobain and Carrie Brownstein. She formed a band with Sid Vicious and was there the night he met Nancy Spungen. She tempted Johnny Thundersâ| toured America with the Clashâ| dated Mick Jonesâ| and inspired the classic Clash anthem "Train in Vain." But Albertine was no mere muse. In *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.*, Albertine delivers a unique and unfiltered look at a traditionally male-dominated scene.Her story is so much more than a music memoir. Albertine's narrative is nothing less than a fierce correspondence from a life on the fringes of culture. The author recalls rebelling from conformity and patriarchal society ever since her days as an adolescent girl in the same London suburb of Muswell Hill where the Kinks formed. With brash honestyâ| and an unforgiving memoryâ| Albertine writes of immersing herself into punk culture among the likes of the Sex Pistols and the Buzzcocks. Of her devastation when the Slits broke up and her reinvention as a director and screenwriter. Or abortion, marriage, motherhood, and surviving cancer. Navigating infidelity and negotiating divorce. And launching her recent comeback as a solo artist with her debut album, *The Vermilion Border*.*Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.* is a raw chronicle of music, fashion, love, sex, feminism, and more that connects the early days of punk to the Riot Grrl movement and beyond. But even more profoundly, Viv Albertine's remarkable memoir is the story of an empowered woman staying true to herself and making it on her own in the modern world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of the Month, December 2014: Viv Albertine's memoir is a book is divided almost straight down the middle. Side One is the story of her upbringing in the north London suburb of Muswell Hill: It's the mid-seventies, and the Sex Pistols are at the head of a massive, angry (or at least frustrated) cultural insurgency. Her rebellious tendencies have led her into the center of punk culture, and inspired by its outsized personalities and confrontational style, she picks up a guitar, forsaking traditional training for the DIY ethos of the day. After her band with the pre-Pistols Sid Vicious (The Flowers of Romance--a possibly sardonic suggestion from Johnny Rotten) fails to launch, Albertine joins forces with The Slits, a ska-infused, all-girl outfit that, through the force of its collective will and audacity, elbows its way to the front of a stage filled with sharp, mostly male elbows. Everyone is wearing Vivienne Westwood's provocative clothing purchased from Malcolm McLaren's infamous boutique, SEX--at least as much as they could afford. Mick Jones of The Clash wanders in and out of the story, first as a gangly proto-punk spending all of his time and loose change trying to put together a band, and later as Albertine's on-again, off-again boyfriend (the classic London Calling track "Train in Vain" was inspired by her). It's a story in the best rock & roll tradition: Initiative leads. Ability chases. Success looms. Then someone bumps the turntable. Side Two. The band has blown apart. Grownup problems ensue: education and career; marriage and kids; serious illness, divorce, and identity. The actor Vincent Gallo. Albertine moves through all of it, drawing from the same well of determination that compelled her to pick up the guitar for the first time. The two sides of the book may tell very different stories, but they share perspective and style that are both straightforward and ultimately uncompromising. If you love this music (and your library contains titles like Please Kill Me and Richard Hell's I Dreamed I Was a Very Clean Tramp), then this book is fascinating and essential. If not, it's fascinating and inspiring. It's occasionally coarse, and often terribly funny and fun.-- Jon Foro

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"10 Best Music Books of 2014" *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys* is an unflinching account of a life lived on the frontiers of experience, by a true pioneer." (#1 on the "Books of the Year 2014") *Rough Trade* "If you love this music, then this book is fascinating and essential. If not, it's fascinating and inspiring. It's occasionally coarse, and often terribly funny and fun." *Book of the Month Featured Debut* "This honest, defiant book from the Slits' guitarist is a lesson in how to look back from middle age" *no self-aggrandisement, but occasionally a quiet, defiant pride in her achievements. The list of which, I am delighted to note from her latest music, continues to grow.* *The Guardian (UK)* "[A] blazing, rueful memoir." *Greil Marcus for barnesandnoble.com* "Viv Albertine's tell-all is a razor-edged self-portrait...Shot through with humor, pathos, and sheer strength of will, Albertine tells of finding early influences in Captain Beefheart and John Lennon, going to art school with on-and-off lover Mick Jones and a nascent Adam Ant, and forming the Flowers of Romance with Sid Vicious, all before pivotally teaming up with the Slits....The book is a testament to Albertine's unbending passion for music that's uplifting and heartbreaking in equal measure." *Pitchfork, "2014 Gift Guide"* "The best rock memoir by some distance of 2014 wasn't written by a big name such as John Lydon or Bernard Sumner but by Viv Albertine." *The Guardian, "The Best Music Books of 2014"* "Crammed with wicked observations and keen memories -- especially what and whom she was wearing throughout her fashion-obsessed life -- Albertine's book is sharp and quick-witted. She knows her way around a sentence and exudes confidence. Like singer Marianne Faithfull's revelatory autobiography *Faithfull* which detailed her life as a '60s 'E&gt; girl, Rolling Stones muse, junkie and chanteuse, Albertine throughout the decades questions assumptions of femininity, propriety and creativity." *The Los Angeles Times* "An extraordinarily candid chronicle" even the most casual fans will find it a captivating and very personal account of an artist's life, of overcoming the self-doubt that lingers even in the face of artistic triumph." *Future of Music Coalition, "Our Favorite Music Books of 2014"* "A profoundly unsparing and affectionate memoir" I haven't seen anything that captures the different sides of punks so well" there is an enormous tenderness to Albertine's memoir" *Clothes* is as great as the music was and deserves a place on the shelf beside *London Calling*." *Bookforum* "The Slits guitarist chronicles what it was like to live through punk's first wave. 57 Books to Read This Fall, Fall Preview Feature" *New York Magazine* "Funny, sad, and evocative." *Sunday Times, "Pop Music Book of*

the Year" (UK) "A frank and fearless account of sex, drugs and life on the cultural frontline." "Esquire Weekly" "[A] bold, empowering work." "Publishers Weekly" "Viv from the get-go was fabulous, exciting, cool and inarguably integral to the history of punk. Her book, an eyewitness account of love, chaos and reflection, is a gender slashing, guitar smashing report from the radical front." "Thurston Moore" "I saw Viv Albertine of The Slits" "How do I feel? Lucky." "I realized I hadn't really witnessed fearlessness in a long time, at least not at a rock show. As one of my friends put it, more succinctly: 'This was one of the punkest things I have ever seen.'" "Carrie Brownstein (Portlandia) reviewing Viv Albertine show in Brooklyn for NPR Music in 2009" "Oh @viv\_albertine I salute you. Such honesty!" "Nigella Lawson on Twitter" "Viv Albertine was a member of all-female punk band The Slits. That's a fascinating story in itself, but her upbringing and, more importantly, her frank and visceral style make this a really gripping read. Shocking and enjoyable." "The Bookseller (A Top 5 Monthly Bookseller Choice for June)" "While we see the world through Albertine's eyes, it's the rare, raw, glimpse into the birth of punk that makes this book so relevant." "Hearing the story from a woman's point of view makes for very interesting reading." "The pace is sharp and punchy, just like punk lyrics." "Rarely can a book be so personal yet still resonate with a whole movement--and beyond." "Stylist Magazine (UK)" "[Albertine's] book is both a bold chronicle of her personal ups and downs and a historical document that blows holes in the established punk narrative in which men are the major players and women merely window dressing." "The Independent (UK)" "With a title that is an incantation and a picture of the gorgeous author on its cover, Viv Albertine's autobiography is quite something. It promises a punk snog'n'tell, but is a real tease: strident, uncertain, compelling, with a structure that jerks all over the place via snapshots of Albertine's life. This is maddening and magnificent all at the same time." "Suzanne Moore, The Guardian (UK)" "Unflinching, candid, revelatory: the perils of being a pioneer." "Jon Savage, award-winning author of *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock, and Beyond*" "A brutally honest book about the blood, guts, sweat and tears that went into becoming a woman in the Seventies. You don't need to be a fan of the Slits or even punk to be gripped from the off." "The Telegraph (UK)" "Her voice is important in the back story of women in British rock, but she is now as original and interesting an entertainer in words as in music." "The Times (UK)"

Here's what I tweeted when I finished the book:"Finished superb memoir #clothesmusicboys by @viv\_albertine last night. Wonderful book - entertaining, moving, sad, amusing, profound" And I don't need to say a lot more - it was really was that good. Viv Albertine was the guitarist of iconic 1970s English punk band The Slits. When that band broke up, she disappeared into a marriage in which her creativity wasted away. This is the story of how she got to that point and how she resumed her creative life after 25 years' obscurity. It's also the story of some very bad (and some very good) choices, taken with a fierce commitment to independence, and the emotional price she has had to pay for that independence. Along the way, there are fascinating portraits of Sid Vicious, John Lydon, Mick Jones, Ari Up and many other famous figures of the punk era; unexpected connections with musicians and actors as diverse as Steve Howe of Yes and Tom Hiddleston; and the voice of a fine storyteller. This is, so far, my favourite book of 2014.

In the non-stop stream of celebrity autobiographies available, Viv Albertine's *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes, Music, Music, Boys, Boys, Boys* is in a class by itself. Eschewing the standard form of chronicling events in long, wistful chapters of excess, Albertine goes for short entries of brilliance. The woman knows how to write, crafting observant and blunt bits of streetwise prose to describe the many mini-moments that make up this great book. The gangs all here; sex, drugs, rock and roll, but that's only a part of it. After the days of punk, The Slits, and notoriety had faded, Albertine tackled the next stage of her life, one in which she tried to have something approaching normalcy, only to find herself beset by a host of physical maladies which left her an empty and depressed shell of the renegade she once was. It's in this second half of the book that the reader is jettisoned from appreciative fan to empathetic confidant, a powerful transformation to be certain. Throughout her tale, the author is relentlessly, brutally, and heartbreakingly honest. It's easily the most intimate autobiography I've read, one in which the reader isn't just consuming the sterile recounting of actions, but rather becoming enmeshed in a spellbinding, painful, and wry confessional. It's essentially linear, but has some disjointed chapters that seem to have no purpose save to give you one more anecdote or life observation. I can best compare it to a long conversation with someone wherein the drinks or drugs flow, the talk rambles, and nobody is bored. Hers is a story as unique as she, but it's her ability to unflinchingly express the raw innermost thoughts she was experiencing during those moments that make this book so special, so personal, and so endearing. The book is an easy read, told in two parts, mirroring the two very different eras of her life. By the end of the book, I had fallen so utterly and completely in love

with this woman, that she's ruined every other woman forever. Beneath the stunningly beautiful woman is an intelligent, thoughtful, courageous, and utterly absorbing person who I wish I had the privilege of truly calling my friend. This book will have to suffice.

If you read autobiographies for the shock of occasional recognition, to relate and be inspired by another's falterings and courage, to laugh along with how silly, horrible and cool we all can be in turns -- this is a fabulous read. One of the very few books I've rushed home to read in ages. A first hand account of a woman's experience to become whole and free through music between 1950s female oppression and the 1980s Reagan/Thatcher backlash is so rare, and luckily this one is so entertainingly written. I started listening to punk while they were together as a band but had never heard The Slits, my loss. Listening now to them, and to Viv's Vermillion Border, I'm in love with her zingy, moody guitar style as well. Looking forward to more of her music. And here's a spoiler that won't ruin it for you, at the end she still believes in love. Maybe because her ability to love and respect others, even the really trying ones, is an Amy Poehler-like thread that weaves through the story holding it (and her?) together. Thanks for getting your voice back Viv, it's an important one.

Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys: A Memoir--a great title for a wonderful memoir! The title is based a comment by Viv Albertine's mother when Viv was a teenager, saying all Viv was interested in was clothes, music, and boys. Although I suspect that is true for many teenage girls, Viv stands out by how she throws herself into punk fashion, music, and the boys in the bands. I know only a little about the 1970s musical era in this memoir, but that didn't impact my enjoyment of the book. Viv's drive to learn, to play, to experience music and life is timeless. For the first part of the book, Viv is young, reckless, and free, surrounded by music and boys. In the second half of the story, a more mature Viv has sought out stability, created a family, and struggled with her health. But underneath her carefully constructed life, there is still a flicker of desire to be more, do more, and learn more. Clothes, Music, Boys is a well-written and engaging memoir. One doesn't need to be a fan of 1970s music, early punk fashion, or girl bands to appreciate the coming of age story of a creative, sometimes lost, woman.

What began as a modest memoir of punk rock memories & related celebrity namedropping cascaded into a torrent of betrayal, cancer & the perseverance that seems to be demanded for middle age survival. So it's much than a rock star TMI-tell all, though there's plenty of that. I mean, you get your Mick Jones & The Clash as well as Sid Vicious & Johnny Rotten, et al. But you also get the

challenge of marriage, the passion for giving birth & enough, uh, female troubles to take out a lesser woman. In other words, the full messy scope of life rather than sanitized greatest hits. And it's told breathlessly, w/ humor & an unrelenting introspection. Very moving.

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