



The World of Normal Boys

K.M. Soehnlein

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Winner of the Lambda Literary Award

"This first novel is so eloquent because it is hellbent on collaring the reader and telling him or her the whole passionate story." --Edmund White, author of *Our Young Man*

"This is a rich and unflinching book." --*The New York Times Book Review*

"Extraordinary...an exhilarating experience...that Soehnlein has produced as his first novel a work of such maturity and excellence is little short of astounding." --Fenton Johnson, author of *Scissors, Paper, Rock*

The time is the late 1970s--an age of gas shortages, head shops, and *Saturday Night Fever*. The place, suburban New Jersey. At a time when the teenagers around him are coming of age, Robin MacKenzie is coming undone. While "normal boys" are into cars, sports, and bullying their classmates, Robin enjoys day trips to New York City with his elegant mother, spinning fantastic tales for her amusement in an intimate ritual he has come to love. He dutifully plays the role of the good son for his meat-and-potatoes father, even as his own mind is a jumble of sexual confusion and painful self-doubt. But everything changes in one, horrifying instant when a tragic accident wakes his family from their middle-American dream and plunges them into a spiral of slow destruction.

As his family falls apart day by day, Robin finds himself pulling away from the unquestioned, unexamined life that has been carefully laid out for him. Small acts of rebellion lead to larger questions of what it means to stand on his own. Falling into a fevered triangle with two other outcasts, Todd Spicer and Scott Schatz, Robin embarks on an explosive odyssey of sexual self-discovery that will take him beyond the spring-green lawns of suburbia, beyond the fraying fabric barely holding together his quickly unraveling family, and into a complex future, beyond the world of normal boys.

"Karl Soehnlein's stunning first novel reads like a cross between the film *American Beauty* and Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story*." --*The Advocate*

"*The World of Normal Boys* is a work of authenticity, as relevant to those who lived a similar coming-of-age experience many years ago as it will be to those who are living that experience now." --*Bay Area Reporter*

"An amusingly detailed and largely accurate picture of life in the Jersey 'burbs." --*Publishers Weekly*

"Full of tension and suspense, Soehnlein's well-paced debut novel is a fresh look at one boy's sexual awakening in the 1970s and his journey to find a place where he can fit it." --*Booklist*

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