



The Leather Boys

Gillian Freeman

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'Gillian Freeman is among the finest contemporary novelists.' - Brigid Brophy, *New Statesman*

'Realistic and unsentimental ... Their relationship is handled with delicacy and has an authentic ring.' - *Sunday Telegraph*

'[S]ober and scrupulously documented ... accurately and touchingly demonstrates the unselfconscious and comparatively guiltless love which working-class men often feel for each other.' - *Time and Tide*

Dick and Reggie are 'leather boys', working-class London teens with an affinity for leather jackets and motorcycles who become friends through their involvement in a gang. For Dick, the money he gets from the gang's thefts helps to support his ailing grandmother; for Reggie, membership in the gang provides relief from an unhappy home life and a loveless marriage. When Reggie decides to leave his unfaithful wife and move in with Dick, the two soon discover their feelings for each other are much stronger than mere friendship. As they make plans for their future together, will they find the happiness they seek, or is their love doomed to end in tragedy?

The first novel to offer an authentic portrayal of love between ordinary, working-class young men, Gillian Freeman's *The Leather Boys* (1961) is a groundbreaking classic of gay fiction that remains moving and compelling today. This edition includes a new introduction by Michael Arditti, who situates *The Leather Boys* alongside other early gay works by women writers like Mary Renault and Marguerite Yourcenar and argues that Freeman's novel and its 1964 film adaptation played a vital part in liberalizing British attitudes towards homosexuality.

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