



# Rejuvenile: Kickball, Cartoons, Cupcakes, and the Reinvention of the American Grownup

*Christopher Noxon*

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Once upon a time, boys and girls grew up and set aside childish things. Nowadays, moms and dads skateboard alongside their kids and download the latest pop-song ringtones. Captains of industry pose for the cover of *BusinessWeek* holding Super Soakers. The average age of video game players is twenty-nine and rising. Top chefs develop recipes for Easy-Bake Ovens. Disney World is the world's top adult vacation destination (that's adults without kids). And young people delay marriage and childbirth longer than ever in part to keep family obligations from interfering with their fun fun fun.

Christopher Noxon has coined a word for this new breed of grown-up: rejuveniles. And as a self-confessed juvenile, he's a sympathetic yet critical guide to this bright and shiny world of people who see growing up as "winding down"—exchanging a life of playful flexibility for anxious days tending lawns and mutual funds.

In *Rejuvenile*, Noxon explores the historical roots of today's rejuveniles (hint: all roads lead to Peter Pan), the "toyification" of practical devices (car cuteness is at an all-time high), and the new gospel of play. He talks to parents who love cartoons more than their children do, twenty-somethings who live happily with their parents, and grown-ups who evangelize on behalf of all-ages tag and Legos. And he takes on the "Harrumphing Codgers," who see the juvenile as a threat to the social order.

Noxon tempers stories of his and others' juvenile tendencies with cautionary notes about "lost souls whose taste for childish things is creepy at best." (Exhibit A: Michael Jackson.) On balance, though, he sees juveniles as optimists and capital-R Romantics, people driven by a desire "to hold on to the part of ourselves that feels the most genuinely human. We believe in play, in make believe, in learning, in naps. And in a time of deep uncertainty, we trust that this deeper, more adaptable part of ourselves is our best tool of survival."

Fresh and delightfully contrarian, *Rejuvenile* makes hilarious sense of this seismic culture change. It's essential reading not only for grown-ups who refuse to "act their age," but for those who wish they would just grow up.

*From the Hardcover edition.*



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