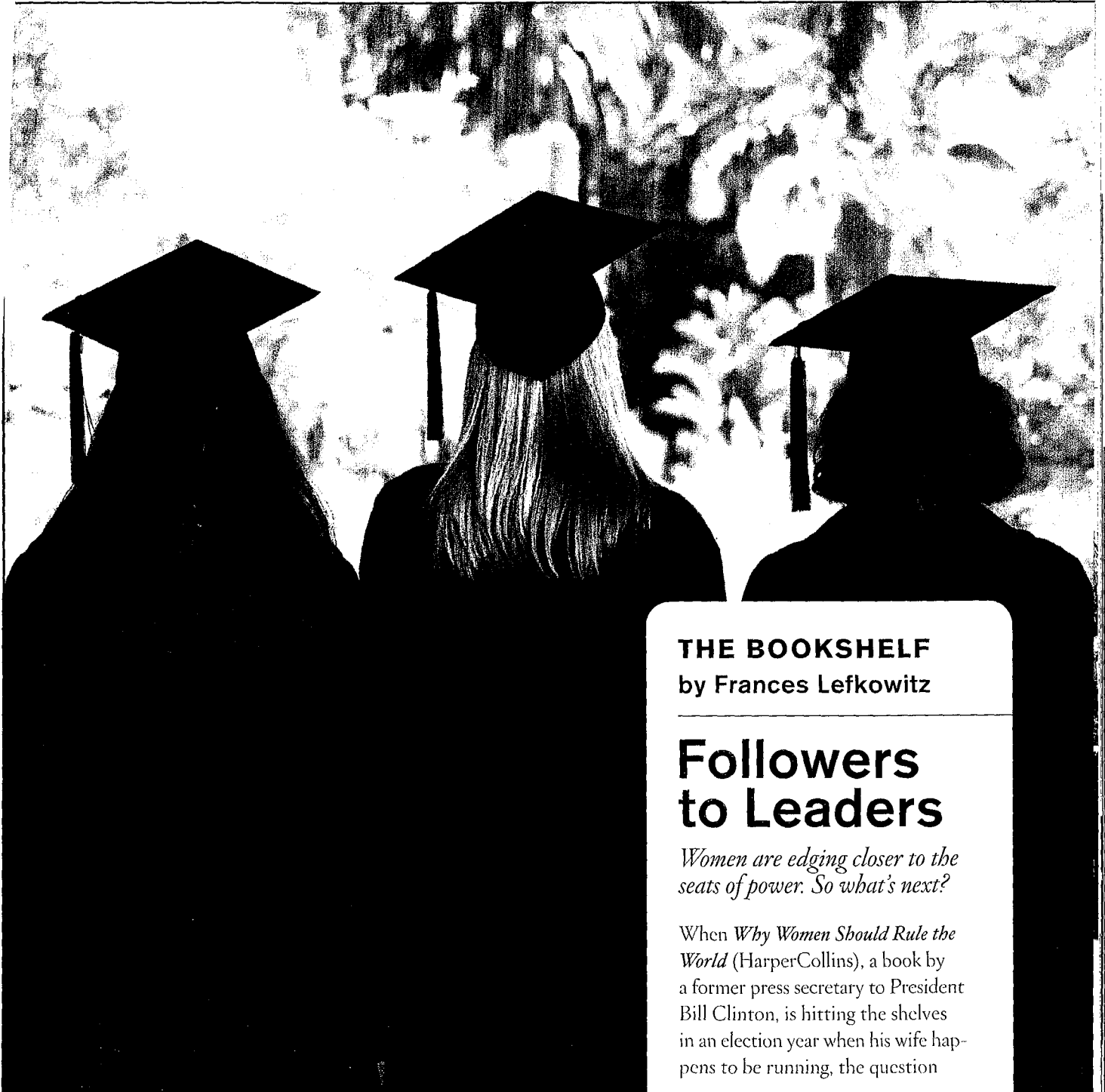


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Expert advice on books + media, money, travel, and pets



**THE BOOKSHELF**  
by Frances Lefkowitz

## Followers to Leaders

*Women are edging closer to the seats of power. So what's next?*

When *Why Women Should Rule the World* (HarperCollins), a book by a former press secretary to President Bill Clinton, is hitting the shelves in an election year when his wife happens to be running, the question

naturally arises, is it a legitimate look at women in power, or a thinly veiled endorsement of you know who? The answer is a little murky, and tends to distract us from author **DEE DEE MYERS**'s stated aim—which is to demonstrate that the world would be a better place if women filled leadership positions in business, law, medicine, and, yes, government. In fact, at times she can't seem to temper her excitement about one candidate in particular: "Ideology aside, her election—if it happens—would signal a global sea change for women. Nothing would ever be quite the same."

Motivation aside, Myers makes a lot of compelling points. She argues that women and men have different life experiences, interests, and skills, and thus when women are held back from leadership roles, their concerns get ignored. "When women are empowered, when they can speak from the experi-

ence of their own lives, they often address different, previously neglected issues," she writes. "And families and whole communities benefit." Myers presents some fascinating research on leadership styles, such as how the female "transformational" style can be more effective than the hierarchical approach. Instead of viewing motherhood as a barrier to leadership, she suggests it's the best training ground out there, teaching patience, resilience, team-building, conflict resolution, and management of difficult personalities. Interviews with female leaders such as Princeton president Shirley Tilghman, The Body Shop owner Anita Roddick, and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison are especially enlightening and encouraging.

Myers is less effective when she is discussing gender differences, sometimes coming up with generalities like, "The truth is, women are just more

practical than men." But she makes a solid case for the fairness, the practicality, and the necessity of righting the power imbalance—not just for women's sake, but for everyone's.