

## Clarion Review

Erotica

### 20 Erotic Tales

Robert Broadmind

Authorhouse

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Three Stars (out of Five)

“There should be a school for sex,” states the narrator of “Juicy,” one of the short stories in Robert Broadmind’s *20 Erotic Tales*. In this collection of unrelated, gently told stories, lessons can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere—from convent schools to the Appalachian Mountains. Students are never too old to uncover new depths. The tales range from those of first-time seductions to married couples looking to expand their bedroom repertoires.

Broadmind begins his stories with thoughtful quotes from politicians, classical authors, philosophers, and noblemen. Some are obvious, like “In love, hors d’oeuvres are the true tidbits,” by Francois Perturier. Others are more subtle, like La Rochefoucauld’s maxim, “In jealousy there is more self-love than love,” which sets the tone for the story of a woman who enjoys whips and leather.

The theme of discovered bisexuality permeates these tales; in fact, one of the narrators says, “I was surrounded by bisexuals. I was becoming one myself.” Sometimes, a man or woman flirts with a married person only to realize his or her attraction to the spouse. Most of the stories revolve around a mentor-student relationship. In “First Seduction” and “A Sort of Revenge,” the students are teenagers, whereas the students in “Hillbilly Country” and “Wife Swapping” are adults who learn to enjoy new levels of pleasure from someone who enjoys taking control. One of the strongest examples of this comes from “Hillbilly Country,” in which a friendly “Sado-Macho-Gigolo” caters to the married couple’s weaknesses and hidden dreams.

Broadmind’s writing style is much more tame, even delicate, than is typically found in this genre. He uses “my precious one” for penis and “oyster” or “tulip” for vagina, instead of crass references. Another departure from genre is the noticeable lack of humiliation and injury inflicted in the name of pleasure.

Typically, genre character development is limited in erotica, but Broadmind’s characters

find themselves changing into happier, more satisfied people. For example, one of his characters claims that “married women should learn from hookers.” The author shows, however, that sometimes this education leads to jealousy or humiliation. Such conflict gives the characters a chance to expand their emotional boundaries. Eventually, “everyone wins” when they discover what satisfies them—even if it’s not strictly traditional.

As a bedtime collection, this book is both hit and miss. Some of the stories are truly steamy, but others really fizzle. Poor punctuation and improperly quoted dialogue often leads to confusion about the speaker’s identity, and it’s frequently difficult to tell whether the narrator is male or female. There’s very little variety in style or content from story to story. All of the stories are told in the first person, but sometimes the narrator who was talking *about* a lover suddenly begins to talk *to* the lover, as if there’s a new person in the scene. In addition, the cover design is more appropriate for a college-level art textbook than a collection of erotica.

*20 Erotic Tales* will appeal to an audience that is searching for light bedtime reading with characters who enjoy bisexual play.

*Emily Asad*