



★ A Quick & Easy Guide to Consent

Isabella Rotman

Limerence Press (Oct 28, 2020)

Softcover \$7.99 (80pp)

978-1-62010-794-2

Sergeant Yes Means Yes from the Consent Cavalry— you can call them “Sarge”—is here to answer thorny questions about consent in Isabella Rotman’s approachable graphic novel *A Quick & Easy Guide to Consent*.

Accessible and inclusive to all genders, sexualities, and levels of comfort with sexual activity, the guide addresses affirmative consent, how to recognize it, and how to convey to a partner that your mind has changed. It is specific when it comes to various types of oral sex and consent within kink, as well as on nuanced topics like sexual coercion and consent while intoxicated. A warning in the opening pages prepares the audience for its more triggering topics.

Though its subject matter is sexual in nature, the guide is not explicit: sex acts are portrayed only via descriptions in dialogue. Its few illustrations of genitalia are simplified and anatomical, and care is taken to portray an affirming variety. Quotes from sexual consent educators, a thorough bibliography and resource list, and a “Yes, No, Maybe So” checklist to use as a self-reflection, or to share with potential partners, further cement the guide’s longevity as an educational resource.

Sarge is a charming narrator, welcoming awkward questions and encouraging confident, clear communication surrounding sex. Moments of humor lighten the text, including an early fourth wall break wherein Sarge, responding to a startled question as to how they got into a woman’s apartment, says, “I’m not breaking and entering ... I’m a magical guide, and all of us are fictional.”

While many questions are answered throughout *A Quick & Easy Guide to Consent*, the book also acknowledges the limits of its own advice in the face of infinitely variable personal experiences. It encourages everyone, when faced with uncertainty, to “take a step back ... and talk to each other.”

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (November / December 2020)

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