

A Woman's Pleasure

J. F. Kelly

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Fifty Shades of Grey too exploitive? These erotic vignettes, featuring incredibly attentive men and mutual respect, hit the sweet spot.

Somewhere between the romance novel and the self-help book for relationships comes J. F. Kelly's uniquely erotic *A Woman's Pleasure*. The volume is perfect for individuals and couples wanting a fun, sexy read that also emphasizes the values underlying a fulfilling, exciting, and pleasurable sex life.

Told entirely from the perspectives of the twenty-five male interviewees, the book is both escapist and grounded. Each man is asked to describe himself, and Kelly does not hold back in her detailed depictions of each man's Adonis-like physique, interesting lifestyle, and sexual prowess. These interviews delve into scenes of the most intense and passionate sexual experiences of each man's life, as well as his fantasies. The men are all incredibly attentive to their partners, and the partners, when they are occasionally described, are assertive, confident, and experienced women.

In the wake of erotic novels like *Fifty Shades of Grey* that, according to some, depict unconventional sex as exploitative—with one partner dominating over the other without a discussion of limits, respect, or safe words—*A Woman's Pleasure* refreshingly focuses on the aspects of kinky sex that books like *Fifty Shades* ignore. Though *A Woman's Pleasure* does not overtly discuss BDSM by name, the values offered within its pages are the same as those vocalized by members of the BDSM community: namely, that mutuality, respect, and communication between partners in their sexual expression will result in pleasure and satisfaction in the relationship. As the men in the interviews often state, these values are also key for healthy relationships in general, which makes this volume ideal for individuals and couples alike.

While the themes and values of the book are commendable and are an important alternative to more formulaic erotic novels, the unconventional narrative-through-interviews results in stunted characters. Many of the men are indistinguishable from one another, and while the women are assertive, they are rarely fleshed out characters. Rather, the male narrators use third-person pronouns to describe their partners when setting the scene, but quickly shift to using "you," allowing readers to more easily imagine themselves in the various situations described. For example: "She wasted no time asking me over to see if I could fix her leaking kitchen sink... You did not take me to the kitchen; you took me straight to your bedroom." The sexual encounters themselves, like the characters, don't vary much, but are steamy enough to keep readers interested.

A Woman's Pleasure is perfect for readers who are tired of the typical romance novel, or those who want to read something exciting with their partner.

PAIGE VAN DE WINKLE (September 3, 2014)

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