Autobiography & Memoir

Can You Listen to a Woman: A Man's Journey to the Heart
David Forsee
timeless books
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“Can you listen to a woman?” This seemingly harmless question rolls off the tongue of a renowned female guru toward her male disciple —punctuating Forsee’s personal account of a departure and a homecoming upon the spiritual path of yoga. Drawing from the personal diaries of his experiences, Forsee gently leads the reader as his words retrace his own evolution from a life of convention to one of intuition.

His memoirs follow a man, enmeshed in a traditional North American life, whose wife and daughter have traveled to an ashram in British Columbia in pursuit of a spiritual introduction to yoga. The reader identifies with a man harboring a growing fear of alienation from his orthodox life as the six-week retreat manifests itself as a potential threat to their family bond. As the book progresses, Forsee relents his initial resistance to the theology; he agrees to attend a workshop hosted by a member of the ashram. Following this initial exposure to the teachings of yoga, is an intimate journey into the author’s integration of this spiritual ideology into daily life.

This informal, autobiographical story which focuses on reaching a higher plateau of consciousness via the yogic path is a worthy introduction for readers tentatively exploring spirituality, and the self in relation to it. Candid and inviting, Forsee's style is accessible and without pretentious airs which the writings of any spiritual or philosophical devotee risks falling prey to. In addition to allowing vicarious living through a wide-eyed disciple, Can You Listen to a Woman affords the reader an intimate profile of a woman guru, Swami Sivananda Radha, commonly held as one of the most notable yogis of this century. The slim, softcover book with its sophisticated soft-focus gaze of a young woman, in radiant sepia tone, is instantly visually engaging. Though drawn from memoirs and chronicling the graceful and often blind steps of a trusting disciple, this book successfully manages to retain a sense of perpetual wonder—as if the author himself is humbled still by his journey.

Karen Wyckoff