

Champagne for One

Rebekah Iliff

Holley Maher, Illustrator

The Collective Book Studio (Feb 8, 2022)

Hardcover \$16.95 (112pp)

978-1-951412-40-1

Rebekah Iliff's *Champagne for One* turns myths about solitude on their head. A lighthearted miscellany of stories, poems, and satire, it paints aloneness as something to be prized, rather than pitied.

Iliff sets out to banish the notion that a romantic partner is necessary for happiness. These days, she and her husband keep separate bathrooms. After all, she notes, solitude is a fond wish, even for those who are married with children.

The title comes from a time when, soon after her best friend's death, Iliff went to a Nashville spa to celebrate her thirty-ninth birthday. Finding herself sharing the place with a drunken bachelorette party, she ignored their commiserating glances and ordered herself champagne anyway.

Sparkling wine carries throughout the slim book—as a metaphor for a sassy mindset in addition to a literal treat. Illustrator Holly Maher's Francophile cartoons, black and white with subtle color accents, depict women enjoying solitary bistro meals. A champagne flute graphic even closes each piece. The motifs suit the frothy tone.

The format changes with each spread. For example, the book includes rhyming couplets, a list of shutdowns for awkward conversation, a Simon Says exercise, a spoof of the Lord's Prayer, and a playlist featuring the likes of "I Am a Rock" by Simon and Garfunkel. There's even a "Recipe for Stag Stew" that blends "4 ounces confidence" with "1 cup good humor" and so on.

The cheerful *Champagne for One* fetes the benefits of being on one's own.

REBECCA FOSTER (January / February 2022)

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