



Delicious Little That

Denise Harrington

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In her memoir, *Delicious Little That*, Denise Harrington looks back on the previous eight years of her life. From the ripe old age of thirty-two, she writes of her whirlwind romance with Cowboy. Her instant infatuation with him leads to some risqué sexcapades, but, before long, Harrington wishes for the more staid goals of marriage and kids. Her quest for her version of happily-ever-after frames the book.

Though she has no previous writing credentials, Harrington immediately sparks interest with her chatty authorial voice. Describing her dinner date just before Cowboy's proposal to her, she writes about her dessert: "I dipped dipped dipped my finger in it (very classy date I am) and tasted sweet caramel. And then I ran my finger along the edge of the plate and tasted chocolate and raspberry sauce. Oooohh, I was in heaven." Her cheerful, confidential writing style is the book's greatest strength.

Unfortunately, *Delicious Little That* has little else to recommend it. Though the book portrays itself as a real-life equivalent to chick lit, it fails to deliver. The title, being Casanova's euphemism for a woman's genitalia, suggests erotic delights, but the sex scenes are generic, athletic stereotypes.

Beyond the disappointment of the title, *Delicious Little That* lacks any sort of tension, mystery, or incentive to propel its story. Twists promised on the back cover—a love triangle, Denise's burning desire to get hitched—never materialize as sources of conflict. While Cowboy's ex does appear and while Denise expends enormous amounts of energy hoping for a wedding, these moments of anxiety disappear beneath the mutual admiration that makes up most of Denise and Cowboy's days. The joyful, lust-ridden events in their relationship merge together into a largely dull mass. Furthermore, *Delicious Little That's* constantly ecstatic tone flattens out the characters, reducing Denise and Cowboy to pop song ciphers of romance.

Delicious Little That could be an intriguing memoir if the author delved beneath the stereotypes of love to develop specific, interesting details. One fact alluded to in the book, but never explored, is that of Denise and Cowboy's different ethnic backgrounds. She is a Latina with Spanish-speaking family members, while his family hails from Irish Catholic stock. Do their respective cultural differences create any amusing or challenging circumstances? The reader never learns. Harrington gestures toward complex relationships between characters—for example, Denise's pushy and optimistic mother whisks her to a bridal fair long before Cowboy shows any inclination toward marriage—but does not pursue them. The narrative remains too tightly focused on Denise and Cowboy's immediate experiences, thus denying them the unique personal histories that could make their personalities more accessible.

Harrington may have a compelling memoir, but she would have done well to wait for greater reflective distance between herself and her story before attempting it.

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