



In Search of Pure Lust

Lise Weil

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“My whole life, I have loved women,” writes author Lise Weil. *In Search of Pure Lust* is a breathtaking, deeply felt memoir of queer sexuality. From experiencing her first romantic feelings towards women to her meaningful relationships later in life, *Pure Lust* describes an evolution of lesbian love and identity.

In Search of Pure Lust has a long, satisfying arc that begins in the early 1960s. The book, without necessarily being a personal history of the gay rights movement, includes some excellent moments that express how LGBTQ people were closeted or erased socially to such a degree that even they themselves weren't aware of their own identities.

Weil describes fumbling through her analysis appointments: “Woman loving, I knew, was the real reason I was showing up to his office three times a week.” The historic context raises the stakes for Weil: in a culture like this, who can be gay and happy about it?

As Weil enlarges her world view, she meets women who excite, challenge, and frustrate her. She begins to appreciate her place in a movement that seems, at times, to exclude her. Weil's narrative describes a person who is fluid and difficult to label. She's neither butch nor femme; she's from a mixed-Jewish family—she's hard to pin down, and an irresistible narrator as a result.

Weil's writing is smooth, polished, and lovely. *Pure Lust* explores a wide range of emotions and experiences, from laugh-out-loud moments to love scenes that take your breath away. Weil develops into a self-aware, sophisticated woman. Her humor is counterbalanced with deep, moving insights about her family and her changing role as a daughter, partner, and teacher.

In Search of Pure Lust is more than a meditation on queer identity. It's an incredible coming-of-age memoir that claims a woman's right to be herself, wherever and *whenever* she may be.

CLAIRE FOSTER (LGBTQ+ 2018)

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