ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

It Really Is That Complicated
Charles Rawlings
AuthorHouse
978-1-4772-8525-1
Three Stars (out of Five)

Charles Rawlings wants everyone to know exactly what he thinks about modern relationships. *It Really Is That Complicated* is his chance to enlighten the world with hard-earned wisdom borne of decades of frustrating romantic entanglements. In this frank, irreverent rant, Rawlings unleashes his strong opinions about dating, sex, marriage, and, most of all, women.

"All women want what they cannot have," Rawlings writes. This is one of the milder pronouncements he makes in this confrontational book. He's not above calling women ugly and useless. His tirades against women who dare to gain weight or wrinkles as they age will have readers quoting paragraphs aloud in outrage. Who does this man think he is?

It turns out that Rawlings knows a lot. A successful neurosurgeon, attorney, and photographer, Rawlings is quite accomplished. It seems safe to say that someone with two advanced degrees has given some consideration to his words before committing them to the page. From that, the reader may deduce that his unique voice—blunt, rude, and sometimes sexist—is deliberately provocative. There will be no passive reading of chapters titled "The Hooker" or "All Women are Prostitutes." As outrageous as the content is, readers cannot help but become engaged, whether they agree wholeheartedly or argue vehemently with his conclusions.

Rawlings uses Freudian analysis and evolutionary theory to explain his theories about the actions of women in relationships with men. Women have an agenda, he believes, and whether it comes from unresolved trauma or a biological imperative, this agenda causes them to manipulate men. To prove his case, he offers examples from his own life. These clearly written—often sexually explicit—accounts of romantic encounters, however, often fail to adequately support Rawlings' argument. When he falls in love with a paid escort and is astonished to learn that she won't marry him, for instance, readers may question his ability to accurately assess his own role in the debacle.

If Rawlings intends to provide solid advice for the lovelorn, his book falls short of his

goal. If it is meant to be a conversation starter, it succeeds magnificently. With that thought in mind, *It Really Is That Complicated* could be a catalyst for discussion and debate in college courses on gender issues. Everyone who reads it will have something to say.

Sheila M. Trask