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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ EROTICA

The Man Who Made Love to More Women Than Casanova: And the Apocalyptic Aphrodisiac

Lorenzo Baccala
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If judged by the length of its title, *The Man Who Made Love to More Women Than Casanova: And the Apocalyptic Aphrodisiac* by Italian-American physician and social philosopher Lorenzo Baccala, should be a very long book indeed. But, in fact, it is a rather modest 190 pages of bare bones observations, anecdotes, and advice regarding sex and sexual practices.

Baccala has written his account of an interview with G, a retired businessman who claims to have had sexual encounters with three hundred women. The weight given to the advice on sex contained in this book should be measured by the depth of other truths offered, much like the accuracy of the clock being measured by its thirteenth strike. Thus, the observation, “Biscotti are usually bland,” must be seriously considered. In other words, the guidance offered by the alleged interviewee, G, is suspect—his self-described grandiose experience notwithstanding—but not lightly disregarded.

Each chapter addresses a different sexual practice or category, and the book need not be read from front to back. Readers can jump in at whatever point they might find titillating, whether it is “G, Muff-diving and the GMD” or “G and Asian Women” or “G and the Brazilian Hose.” Chapters are short and could easily be read aloud by one partner to the other as a form of foreplay, which tremendously increases the utility of the volume.

Baccala writes well and the story flows easily. It is the little tidbits that excite more discussion, such as the riff on the Pascal Effect: “something small can lead to something big.” Or, “Though I have had opportunities, unlike Casanova, I never approached or made love to a married woman or girlfriend of a man whom I know.” And, finally, noting he never used condoms, G is quoted as saying, “I despise condoms, but you’re right. In theory, I was crazy not to use them.”

The book’s cover art is eye-catching but not particularly artistically pleasing. Interspersed throughout are black-and-white photos and drawings that are not on par with the writing.

In spite of the fact that the narrative occasionally reads like the Penthouse advice letters, Baccala has valiantly tried to offer mature observations of, and commentary on, the contemporary sexual social culture in America. It might have been better received had it not been couched in the story of a man who apparently notched his belt with each sexual conquest. Apparently, the size of the number of sex partners does count. Baccala should know, like Italian salted cod, there is something fishy about that.

JOHN SENGER (November 13, 2013)

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