

The Training of Lucy

Sensei

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A tale of bondage and obedience is often classified under the encompassing catchword “erotic” simply because no critic has found a better category in which to place a story like *The Training of Lucy*. Sadomasochism holds an esoteric attraction for those who push the boundaries of pain, pleasure, and fear to a precarious bed-of-nails mind frame. The compulsion to seek what hurts as much as what pleases is apparent in this stereotypical BDSM title by Sensei.

The distinction between agreed-upon submission and forcible rape is based on consensual actions versus coerced assault. Although Lucy is supposedly a willing participant in this indulgent, quick jaunt through a sex-filled weekend, Sensei's project lacks a plotline and focuses solely on the slave instruction and collar training of a woman for a man's enjoyment. Capitalizing on the popularity of Fifty Shades of Grey series, this work attempts to reach a comparable standard, but fails in the implementation because mutual permission does not seem apparent at times.

In this scene, straight from a horror flick, Lucy waits for her so-called lover: “She had no idea how long she had been hogtied and blindfolded on Sean's bed. At last, she heard footsteps return.” Sean presents himself as a threatening assailant in this escapade into the sensual woods, and the overall effect is like getting lost in a forest at night with a predator addressed as “sir” in pursuit. This may have been what the author intended, similar to a lurking menace in the style of Edgar Allan Poe.

An old-fashioned paddling, followed by a caning, makes an appearance later in the story; a jarring awakening for a reader expecting a contemporary approach to sex play. “Lucy opened her eyes and could see he was back at the bed picking a new implement. He chose a cane and swished it through the air in front of Lucy. It sounded evil to Lucy and she shuddered again.”

The childlike phrasing of this paragraph portrays a young woman in jeopardy. Although the desired villainous threat may be playacting—a frightening twist on sexual role-playing—the scenario comes on too strong and terrifyingly serious for the average erotica reader of either gender to tolerate.

Sensei is a debut author with a command of language, manifesting an unusual ability to grab attention similar to that of a horror writer. *The Training of Lucy* misses the targeted erotica market, leaving it in a less popular niche of adult, sex-based entertainment that may scare the majority of readers off. The old adage “if in doubt, leave it out” needs to be taken into consideration by any writer launching into this controversial genre.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (October 25, 2012)

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