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Fyodor Bukowski

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An inner-city high-school teacher and trailer-park resident named Frank struggles to feed the homeless cats which surround him, despite constant threats of eviction. When he spies Annie, a stunning nineteen-year-old beauty in a catalog of Ukrainian and Russian women, he decides to write to her. As Frank attempts to survive the school year, he and his friend Eddie embark on a series of strip-club adventures. Frank becomes increasingly disillusioned and disgusted with his own life as well as the state of romance in modern America, until he meets a charming and seemingly innocent dancer named Emma. Will Frank and Emma find lasting romance in a society that makes romantic love nearly impossible, or will Frank chase his dream all the way to the Ukraine? In the meantime, a bubbly ninth-grader named Jazz and an aging hawk-like Math teacher but heads and compete for Frank's affection as the trailer-park manager vows to catch and evict whoever has been feeding the park cats. Will Frank make it across the land-mine of ludicrous and dangerous situations known as his life to achieve a life of passion and compassion?

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From Reader Review Mail-Order Annie (A Story of Passion and Compassion) for online ebook

Angra Mainyu says

“Annie” is a love story, of course, but certainly not a conventional one. It is also a mystery, a meditation on human nature, a kick to the gut, a call to compassionate action, a prick to the groggy finger of the collective consciousness, a shiny red drop of blood. Like every good novel, “Annie” is a living thing.

Frank, the quirky anti-everyman protagonist of the novel, finds himself at the mercy of a world filled with arbitrary and often cruel ordinances and regulations manufactured by a privileged handful of men for purely self-serving reasons; a world in which the majority is “kept in their place” - either blithely unaware or lulled into a state of indifference to the universality of suffering; a world in which compassion is eschewed in favor of the mass adulation of low-grade morons, rapists, and murderers of animals; a world held enthralled to ancient texts of lies that command the worship of imaginary space magicians (going by various names around the world, but “God” will do as a catch-all) even in modern times. A world in which the women may love you – but only for the right price, and only for a little while even then – long enough for a “wiggle” or two.

Oh, and it’s about cats, too – a beautiful love song to one of man’s oldest companions - who are as much the star of the story as anyone. In fact, some of the very best sections of the book concern Frank, and his indoor cats: Batteries, Elf, and Katie. And outside, despite being forbidden by the trailer park, Frank provides for several large glarings of stray felines, at the peril of eviction and penury.

As the momentous meeting with his far-off love, Annie, the eponymous “... supernatural flash of lightning in the daytime” mystery woman who opens the novel, draws ever nearer, Frank meanwhile finds himself involved in floods, secret burials, tawdry (and not-so-tawdry) encounters with titty dancers, conflicts with functionally-retarded sports fans (this book gave me hope that I am not alone in the universe after all), broken hearts, rednecks, out of body experiences, betrayals, fights, sex, and one seriously rapacious and repulsive “birdman” (don’t ask: read the damned book).

“Annie: a Tale of Passion (and Compassion)” is a fascinating novel which is refreshingly candid - at times unabashedly sordid and downright dirty - bitingly funny, sad, often poetic, unfailingly human, and always thought-provoking - without ever sliding into pretension. You should read it.

One last thought; only a few books are worth more than the sum of their parts. “Annie” is one of these; it lingers on long after the last page is done.
