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The Girl Who Couldn't Come Details

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From Reader Review The Girl Who Couldn't Come for online ebook

Jasmine says

you know that joke about how the faces men make during orgasm are god's practical joke, this book is like a longer version of that joke.

Holly says

I had read one or two of these stories online first, so I pretty much knew what I was getting into with this book, which is short stories where the action is sexual. They're not porn, precisely (although they're often pretty descriptive) because I wouldn't say the end effect was the same. They mostly all left me with a general sense of "well those people were just really happy with each other/themselves" which I enjoyed. Also, none of them were scary, and I was really worried that was going to happen like it did in "It's Too Late to Say I'm Sorry." Surprise horror does not sit well with me. I'm still a little worried when I hang out alone with my Grammie.

Anyways, five stars!

mark monday says

"I want something from her, but I don't know what it is. I guess that means sex."

Butthead: We're going to be talking about the penis.*

Beavis: maybe, maybe not. The Girl Who Couldn't Come is a collection of short stories by Canadian author Joey Comeau. the goals of the collection appear to be the exploration of sex in all of its variations; how intimate and fluid spaces are created between lovers to allow the expression of sexuality in all of its potential strangeness; and most importantly, the need for acceptance, understanding, and creativity in the formation of these safe spaces. the collection is resolutely upbeat and sex-positive. it is a striking counterpoint to the author's nihilistic Bible Camp Bloodbath which is concerned with death in all of its permutations. both collections have similar designs, from the stark color scheme of their covers to the inclusion of indexes that list forms of death in one and dirty words in the other. the collection itself feels like a sort of list, with disparate examples of sexuality provided on a story-by-story basis.

Butthead: My list includes any girl with at least one boob.*

Beavis: My list is like your list, but it also includes your MOM.* but seriously, it is impressive how many different forms of sexuality are included in the collection. even more impressive is how these forms of sexuality - gay and straight sex, rough sex, fetishistic sex, 'autistic sex', imaginary sex, sex with objects, even

time traveling wish fulfillment sex - are not necessarily centralized within any of the stories. the sex acts themselves are briefly described but not fetishized. nor - despite the explicit language - are they viewed as "signs" - there is a distinct lack of signified & signifier in the brief and often ambiguous portraits of various forms of sexuality. the different forms of sex are not there to convey information about the characters or to give the characters meaning - they may titillate but they do not inform. they are part of the big picture and not the picture itself. this is less a book of erotica and more a book about coming to terms with your lot in life and the decisions you may or may not make in order to better connect with yourself and/or your partner.

Butthead: Dammit Beavis, you just sent my boner to the ground.*

Beavis: I hope I'm not giving the impression that this is a dry, intellectual book. it's not. it is warm and tender and funky and off-kilter and surprising. it comes at things in a loose and often sideways approach. there is an almost improvisatory feeling to some of the stories, as if Comeau came up with a kernel of an idea and then just put pen to page to see how his idea would pop. the results are at times a bit too sentimental and I suppose 'heartwarming' for my own tastes - but several stories really score, managing to both warm my frigid heart and impress me with the ideas and craftsmanship on display. and at least a couple stories did pack a genuinely erotic punch.

Butthead: If you took an x-ray of your weiner would you see a bone?*

Beavis: Why does everyone want to see my schlong?** anyway, the first few stories did not particularly impress me and it wasn't until "Patricia" that I took a step back and started to appreciate what I was reading. this is a story about all the little head trips we have when we imagine our object of desire, all the things we decide to focus on or overlook, the way we move forward in time to imagine our future relationship, our secret hopes that we may somehow deeply affect and impact and of course impress that desired object, how we deal with the humanity of our object, how we should appreciate that person's own subjectivity. and yet the story itself is about a guy who wants to get down with acclaimed author Patricia Highsmith, before she became 'Patricia Highsmith', back when she was a sullen and withdrawn young lady working at some retail shop, and despite her lesbianism.

Butthead: Look, I'm strokin' my weiner.*

Beavis: You twisted yours when you were choking it!* but back to the topic on hand. another excellent story is "The Meteor Shower", which is about a young man on his birthday as he deals with the insensitive use of the word Faggot at the copy store where he works and who later goes out with his boyfriend to watch a meteor shower and engage in some light rough sex. I really loved this one: the humor, the amusing bits of revenge, the characterization of the irrepressible boyfriend, the way the story unfolds and the reader realizes it is not about homophobia and is instead more of a snapshot, a day in the life, a vehicle to describe how people deal with the petty, insulting, irritating things and how life evens those things out and makes them somehow less important. I liked its nonchalance. at one point, during a blow-job, the boyfriend spits on the narrator's face and calls him a whore - and it doesn't actually mean much, it doesn't amount to anything but a bit of dirty sex in a supportive relationship. barely even worthy of comment. the sex itself and the form it takes is not what's important.

Butthead: Beavis, you're gonna keep talking about loogies, and I'm gonna be too busy swinging around my gigantic schlong.*

Beavis: my favorite story is "Edith". it is an epistolary tale: a series of letters written by a lonely lesbian student who pines after a 90-year old woman who has submitted an erotic story to the journal her roommate

edits. again, the sex itself is not the story. it's not about intergenerational canoodling and it's not about hot lesbian action with grannies. I think it is about how we make our fantasies our realities, how we can live in them, the sadness and loneliness and happiness and excitement about those fantasies. it is about a writer playing games with his reader. it is about the thrill and appeal of difference and of being an outsider - even if only in the mind. it is about a private life that has more meaning than the so-called reality that surrounds that life. it is an adorable and touching and wounding story. and, at times, it is also super hot! for real!

Butthead: Calm down Beavis. You're gonna soil your drawers.*

Beavis: Huh huh huh huh.*

* actual Beavis & Butthead quotes, just for you Anthony!

Aussiescribbler Aussiescribbler says

This collection of short stories deals with various kinds of sexual awkwardness. Although some of the stories are briefly explicit, it isn't particularly erotic. Most are written in the first person, with the narrators being sometimes male and sometimes female, which, at least once, caused me to have to re-orient my imagination as a character put their hand down their pants and found something different from what I was expecting.

The stories range from sweet (*the girl who couldn't come, edith*) to disturbing (*ghosts, christmas tree pornography*). There are some strange fetishes, along with more conventional heterosexual and homosexual couplings. There are transitions from realism to dream logic. And there is a male time-travelling stalker hoping to persuade Patricia Highsmith to have sex with him even though she was a lesbian.

You have to give Joey Comeau credit for imagination. This short collection of stories may leave you feeling disorientated, but it won't bore you.

elise says

This is currently my favourite erotica book. The characters are crazy and insecure and unapologetically desirous of one another. The sex is often rough and desperate, but laced with tenderness. My favourite stories were “Edith” and “The Meteor Shower”.

“Everybody should be able to kill a man with just their thumb. We could be ready for anything. There are whole martial arts devoted to just disarming someone. Just disabling them and getting away, Clay tells me. He knows just what I want to hear. My lips are raw and they taste a bit like blood and dirt and this is the perfect birthday.” - The Meteor Shower

(If anybody has any recommendations for books like this one, please let me know!)

Kelly says

What the hell?
(That's a good reaction.)

Most of this collection of short stories I spent totally blushing then counting the pages because I didn't really want them to end because seriously, where could they POSSIBLY go that that they didn't already go? heh.

The description of the book is also the summary, much like it is for "Biblecamp Blood Bath." This one's is simply "This is a book of dirty stories. They are weird and fun and often bewildering, like sex itself." There is a lot going on in the stories. Lots of math, actually. Which is funny because I, too, equate math with weird, fun, and bewildering. It works.

My favorite story is "edith." It's pretty powerful.

Kit Goode says

Unfortunatly I chose to smoke a cigerette while I read The Girl Who Couldn't Come, which meant reading it on the street. This ignited panic in the local constabulary who came to investigate what a person could possibly be doing on the streets, smoking and reading like that, and when I was forced to tell them what I was reading, I was given an informal caution despite a somewhat half-hearted attempt to make out that the title referred to a missed dental appointment rather then anything, you know, *sexy*.

But I mean, apart from the fact that the book caused that chain of events to happen: It was excellent. The stories were beautiful, frightening and, yeah, fuck it, *sexy*. Everything I've come to need from Joey Comeau. It's a short collection, but I couldn't have wanted more. If anything, it is worth throwing money at to read what's possibly one of the most perfect, succinct descriptions I've ever read. 'The creature goes straight for her, and there is the sound like crisp lettuce being broken.' Real Ray Bradbury stuff.

karen says

this is one of those books that is on the lower end of my three-star rating system. and it pains me to declare that, since i do loves me some joey comeau. but this is a collection of his *sexxy* stories, by which i of course mean his *sexxy-gross* stories, because this is joey comeau after all. and i'm just not into reading *sexxy-gross* stories, unless i am committed to laughing at them, like my forays into monsterporn. and i didn't want to laugh at these, because they weren't poorly written or stupid, they just weren't for me. not even the one about the girl masturbating with the calculator.

but i didn't hate it, because there were moment that were lovely, like this line from the story about the (view spoiler) relationship between a twenty-year-old woman and an eighty-year-old woman:

Our skinny waiter bowed and fawned over you, as though you were someone's grandmother. He checked on

us too often, asking, "Is everything alright, here? Is there anything I can do?" as though you were about to keel over. I wanted to tell him that you could snap him like a twig.

Instead, I put my hand on yours and I gave him the look, the lesbian look, the animal-crouched-over-her-family look, mixed with sex. This is mine. I will tear you apart.

He stepped back, still smiling politely.

i love that. i can *see* that. unfortunately, i can also see all the other sexy bits in this, most of which are violent or masochistic, or blisteringly sad. and they just don't do much for me as a reader, but that's just me and my personal reaction to sexy lit, and a whole collection of sexy lit, even by my comeau...well, i couldn't come, either.

Penguins says

This book is about sex and relationships.

It's not sexy or romantic.

It's quirky and weird and real.

This book shows sex for what it is.

It shows how people are different and turned on by different things.

It's not one of my thousand romance novels where sex is the coming together of a great and powerful love.

It's people, doing what they lust.

Lectus says

Via Lectus

This is a book of short sex stories that are... let's say out of the ordinary. I am not into erotica but bought this one by mistake and, well, had to read it :-)

Some of the stories are raunchier than others and they definitely put you in the mood of getting some action going yourself. My favorite story was the second one, about a guy having sex with her girlfriend while obsessively doing some counting.

If you are not a fan of erotica do not read this book because it is all about sex.

You can read a not so favorable review [here](#).

Chez Hilroy says

Say what you will, it's nice to see erotica written by someone you associate with a wildly different medium/subject. It's a surprising breath of fresh air.

Like I said, I only know Comeau from *A Softer World*, and to date these are still the only stories I've read

from him. They're nicely written, not too flashy and very good at illustrating the ideas. And as erotica goes, they're quite sexy, too. Not just "porn-sexy", the kind of popcorn-butter thrills the word porn often conjures up, but reveling in all the different aspects of sex-- the funny bits, the serious bits, and the kinda-gross-outside-of-the-moment bits.

The problem for me are those latter moments. Simply put, there isn't enough variety. There are a number of narrative differences between the stories (perspective, format, genre, etc) but too many of them go for that last feeling, where sex and over the top not-sex clash. There's a kind of violence/sex, heavy metal grime either overt or suggested in most of them. I can't recall the page, but there's a fairly generic description of wanting to physically (although metaphorically) combine with the other person, break against each other and all that, which sums up some of this. It's the kind of idea that's been played-out for a while. I think so, anyway. And it's not that this feeling doesn't have its place, it's just that I wanted more variety out of an anthology like this. There were a few stories, sure, that didn't go this route, but only a few. Instead of exploring the whole sphere of erotic impulses we kind of get stuck on the one, which is a little disappointing by the last page.

It's all well-written, of course. I'll admit I had some fear of it seeming too--for lack of a better word--"independent". Maybe punkish is better? Hipster-esque? Too in-your-face ironic? It was an unfair worry. I thought it would be smug, and it wasn't. There's an honesty in tone I greatly appreciate.

All in all a sterling example of how to put together an erotic anthology. If there's a next time I just hope Comeau introduces more authors for the sake of more perspectives.

Theda Black says

so far, the book is exactly what the description says it is. "This is a book of dirty stories. They are weird and fun and often bewildering, like sex itself."

My favorite so far has to be the one with the guy coming back for his girlfriend, having sex with her while doing some obsessive-compulsive counting. Short and sweet.

back to finish up the review. Sadly, the book didn't live up to my earlier expectations. There's a lot of wtf shittery going on, so much so that I can't grasp the point of it or enjoy it, not even with the excuse that the writer has done this on purpose. My favorite story remains the one mentioned above, with another clever/weird one about sheet-fu*king (or something, I don't know what the hell). Oh, and there's one where this girl is spying on her boyfriend and watching him online, and when she finds out what he likes, she plays into his fantasy with him. I like that because she's not getting all over him for his desires, but she instead caters to it and makes him happy.

I did enjoy the to-the-point language, clean and simple, and the myriad sexual situations, all presented matter-of-factly. Refreshing.

There's a list of dirty words used at the end of the book. There's c*ck but no dick. Somehow I always thought a male writer would use the word dick once or twice:)

Christina Bialik says

At the end, there's a count of dirty word frequency. "Generosity" is on the list, and that makes up for a few too many stories that take place in the dirt. Some of the stories are frightening, often rough, but tempered with tenderness. It's a book about a lot of sex. Once you get past that fact, it's just an interesting and quick read, with unconventional characters. Quirky, bizarre and worth it.

Ryan Bradford says

I've never read erotica, mostly because I have it in my mind that it's all sea-faring hunks and soft-core references to shafts and swords. Even Steve Almond's sex stories, although pretty good, often succumb to shock tactics without subtlety, or they just seem like boasting.

The Girl who Couldn't Come is a book of sex stories that are violent and complicated. Characters often act without motivation. Things get messy. This book is for weirdos--weirdos that cry, get hurt and don't really know why they're weird but turn out to be really good in the sack, because sex is confusing and laced with equal parts horror and ecstasy. Comeau's book is the only book I've read that acknowledges this so explicitly, and that honesty is revelatory.

Some of my favorite stories were the title story, "Checkmate" and "Ghosts" (one of the most inventive pieces I've read lately). I also really liked "And then the Werewolf" because... well, you'll never think of girl-on-girl-on-werewolf threesomes in the same way again.

Arlette says

If you were wondering, no, it's not necessarily weird to loan a book of dirty stories to a coworker. It depends on the coworker.

I am about to order my third copy because I keep loaning this out and not getting it back. I don't mind; it gives me an excuse to type tiny, creepy missives to Comeau in the "Order notes" field. Because I'm a ROMANTIC.

This review isn't very helpful, is it.
