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From the author of “Cat Person”—“the short story that launched a thousand theories” (*The Guardian*)—comes Kristen Roupenian’s highly anticipated debut, a compulsively readable collection of short stories that explore the complex—and often darkly funny—connections between gender, sex, and power across genres.

You Know You Want This brilliantly explores the ways in which women are horrifying as much as it captures the horrors that are done to them. Among its pages are a couple who becomes obsessed with their friend *hearing* them have sex, then *seeing* them have sex...until they can’t have sex without him; a ten-year-old whose birthday party takes a sinister turn when she wishes for “something mean”; a woman who finds a book of spells half hidden at the library and summons her heart’s desire: a nameless, naked man; and a self-proclaimed “biter” who dreams of sneaking up behind and sinking her teeth into a green-eyed, long-haired, pink-cheeked coworker.

Spanning a range of genres and topics—from the mundane to the murderous and supernatural—these are stories about sex and punishment, guilt and anger, the pleasure and terror of inflicting and experiencing pain. These stories fascinate and repel, revolt and arouse, scare and delight in equal measure. And, as a collection, they point a finger at you, daring you to feel uncomfortable—or worse, understood—as if to say, “You want this, right? You know you want this.”

You Know You Want This Details

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From Reader Review You Know You Want This for online ebook

Evi * says

Sono 12 racconti, di cui quattro veramente notevoli:

Cat person

Mordere

La prova nel portafiammiferi

Voglia di morire

Gli altri dove l'autrice introduce in maniera audace elementi grotteschi e visionari che si distaccano un po' troppo dal realismo mi hanno tenuta più distante e perplessa.

Per chi ha letto la scrittrice americana Shirley Jackson, cospicuamente pubblicata da Adelphi e a cui l'autrice rende debito, si possono scorgere alcune affinità.

Cat person, il racconto che dà il titolo alla raccolta, è il più famoso e gioca molto sulla possibilità di identificazione da parte del lettore perché chiunque potrebbe essersi trovato una o più volte nella propria vita nel frangente narrato.

Inizialmente pubblicato free su il New Yorker è diventato fenomeno virale con un record di condivisioni sui social, oggetto di twitter, di feedback, commenti e discussioni in rete con relative attribuzioni di like o dislike, così è partito il tam tam di lettura.

Nel racconto c'è una ragazza che per via occasionale conosce un uomo un po' più anziano di lei, lei è mediamente coinvolta, anche se non c'è nulla in lui che la attragga particolarmente e tra i due non ci sono importanti punti in comune; cominciano a frequentarsi ma presto si crea quella situazione strana quando le cose sono andate un po' troppo in là e non si vorrebbe proseguire ma nemmeno si trova il coraggio, l'energia o la *pietàs umana* per tornare indietro o troncare in maniera risoluta.

Si sedette sul letto mentre lui si sfilava la camicia e sbottonava i pantaloni, abbassandoli alle caviglie per poi rendersi conto di avere ancora le scarpe ai piedi e quindi piegarsi a slacciarle. Guardandolo così, goffamente piegato, la pancia grassa e molle e coperta di peli, Margot pensò: oh, no. Ma il pensiero di quello che ci sarebbe voluto per interrompere quello che aveva avviato era insostenibile; avrebbe dovuto metterci un tatto e una delicatezza di cui sentiva di non disporre. Non era per paura che lui cercasse di costringerla a fare qualcosa contro la sua volontà, ma che insistendo per fermarsi, adesso, dopo tutto quello che aveva fatto per arrivare fin qui, sarebbe sembrata viziata e capricciosa, come una che ordina qualcosa al ristorante e poi, quando arriva il piatto, cambia idea e lo manda indietro.

Il finale si preannuncia prima in un modo e invece repentinamente vira all'opposto, e lascia scossi come un'unghia che gratta sulla lavagna.

Invece nel racconto intitolato *Mordere* c'è una donna affetta da una tendenza sadica che la spinge fin da quando era bambina a desiderare di mordere le persone.

Cerca di lavorare su se stessa per mantenere un certo controllo oscillando tra il desiderio di realizzare qualcosa che potrebbe appagarla non solo sessualmente e la consapevolezza che è un bisogno sbagliato e del tutto contro natura, anche qui finale è al contrario di ciò che si è immaginato.

La prova dei portafiammiferi

È il più angosciante, ha a che fare con un problema di salute di carattere dermatologico consapevoli che la dermatologia è la scienza meno esatta e che facilmente si contamina con problemi di carattere psicosomatico.

E poi c'è *Voglia di morire* probabilmente quello che mi piaciuto di più.

Un uomo e una ragazza si conoscono su Tinder, sito di incontri online più o meno equivalente a Meetic.

Così ci scambiamo qualche messaggio e le racconto un po' di me, di come sono messo, niente di profondo. Sembra abbastanza interessata, così le chiedo se vogliamo vederci per bere una cosa. Dice che non beve e io: va bene, possiamo prendere un dolce o qualcos'altro, nessun problema. E lei: veramente, se non ti dispiace, potrei venire da te e basta?

A volte su Tinder capitava che fossero così dirette. Non spesso, ma capitava. Ero sempre d'accordo, ma dentro di me dicevo: caspita, coraggiosa. Perché io lo so che non voglio violentarti né ammazzarti, ma tu che ne sai? Ovviamente non potevo chiederglielo davvero. Però ero curioso

Lui è un po' allo sbando e sta passando un brutto momento, di lei non si sa quasi nulla se non che, al primo incontro nella camera del motel dove lui vive e superati preamboli e convenevoli non necessari, lei manifesta un desiderio sessuale veramente anomalo, forse un filo non del tutto credibile.

Sono racconti interessanti, ben scritti che mettono in luce alcuni istinti censurabili ma che invece albergano in ognuno di noi ma ben dissimulati e che cerchiamo di tenere a bada, fino a quando non ci fanno sbarellare prendendo il sopravvento sulla nostra buona coscienza; racconti sulla difficoltà delle relazioni umane nell'era di una tecnologia che rende i rapporti più veloci, li fa sbocciare ma anche naufragare con notevole disimpegno e facilità.

Racconti globalmente validi e ben scritti che hanno vinto sulla mia diffidenza iniziale e che in alcuni passaggi mi hanno inchiodato alla pagina.

Katie Long says

The adjectives that kept coming to mind while I was reading this one are fresh and fun. Of course, Roupenian doesn't hit them all out of the park, but her voice and style are vibrant even in the couple of stories that don't quite land. My favorite is the delightfully eerie "Sardines," but there were several other standouts too. I'm here for whatever she does next.

Skyler Autumn says

5 Star

ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT! I am in love with Kristen Roupenian, I will read whatever this woman writes. You Know You Want This, is a collection of short stories that examines relationships, sex and gender dynamics. From the mind that created 'Cat Person' (a short story that still haunts my dreams) you get 12 unique tales ranging from an exploration of what makes someone the nice guy, to a perverse menage a trois that has deadly consequences to a woman who uses her kink of biting to her advantage in the work force.

Kristen Roupenian has done what many writers struggle with, which is make her collection of unique short stories consistently engaging. Yes I had favourites, but NO at no point did I despise a story or look at a story as if it was the worst of the group. They were all pretty fantastic and significant. I am so happy I stumbled across this lady's writing and I am excited to read more of her work (sooner rather than later please!)

Grazia says

Istinti oscuri

Non sono una lettrice di racconti e di solito non mi faccio catturare dal tam tam mediatico intorno ad un libro. In questo caso, la lettura è venuta proprio per mera curiosità e marketing efficace.

Cat Person, il racconto più letto e più condiviso del momento, ha suscitato la mia curiosità. Non riuscendolo a trovare in rete (è disponibile ma solo in lingua originale), ho cominciato con lo scaricarmi l'anteprima della raccolta, nella speranza di trovarlo già lì e farmi quindi una idea di cosa avesse di così virale.

Ovviamente nell'estratto, non era presente il fenomeno mediatico del momento, ma già i primi due racconti sono stati sufficienti a spiazzarmi tanto da procedere repentinamente con l'acquisto.

Ho letto la raccolta domenica scorsa, quasi senza interruzioni. Non riesco a smettere di leggere, affascinata dalla rappresentazione priva di pudore ma assai realistica del lato oscuro dell'uomo. E devo dire, che Cat Person non è quello che mi ha maggiormente impressionato, pur essendo scritto benissimo e pure essendo rappresentativo di una situazione che probabilmente almeno una volta nella vita tutti noi abbiamo vissuto. Un Chesil Beach sintetico, brutale e spaventosamente attuale.

Ecco, forse la cosa che maggiormente colpisce è la capacità dell'autrice di rappresentare la cattiveria, l'istinto malefico, dell'uomo medio, dell'uomo comune, non del perverso o del malato (vedi racconto Sardine).

Inaspettatamente ho molto apprezzato.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I went into these stories braced not to like them. I quite enjoyed Cat Person and the surrounding controversy, but heard these stories were full of unlikeable characters and disturbing situations. And they are, but Kristen Roupenian has an uncanny sense of the inner lives of people - their messy, uncomfortable, inner lives. There is one story in here that feels like it doesn't fit unless you think of the characters as cat people. And really, it does fit in the way that the male character is a white person upset about how the people in the country he moves to are treating him, as per usual.

I had an eARC from the publisher. This came out January 15, and I finished it in the airport on my way to Seattle.

Roxane says

Well. The stories are well written. They are. But I didn't like this book. It's so bleak. There is no joy, no air in these stories. There is nothing wrong with that but it didn't make for a great reading experience. So many of the stories were flat. Garish without heart or soul. Violent and grotesque without purpose. There isn't a

character or story I will remember with fondness. The characters were often flat, caricatures. I can't say I will remember much of this book at all. I really tried to like this one. It might be for you so if you like dark short stories check it out.

Jessica Sullivan says

If you were alive and online in 2018, you probably read and talked about Kristen Roupenian's short story, "Cat Person." Well, get ready for her debut collection, because it's here and ready to punch you in the gut—or, perhaps more aptly, bite your face off.

Drawing comparisons to Carmen Maria Machado and Ottessa Moshfegh, this dark, perverse, macabre collection explores relationships with a distinct focus on power dynamics. The subjects are mostly women, and they are at times the victims and the villains.

In one story, a young woman uses black magic to summon her dream man—and then slowly drains him of his blood to use in other spells. An office worker with a compulsion for biting waits for the perfect opportunity to rip into her coworker's face. A little girl blows out her birthday candles and wishes for "something mean." And in a story that feels like a counterpart to "Cat Person," Roupenian deconstructs the common trope of the Nice Guy™.

This collection is visceral, depraved and deeply uncomfortable—but if you're anything like me, it's hard to resist the allure of fiction that probes the hidden depths of humanity, those taboo thoughts and feelings we don't dare allow to the surface.

♥ says

I think it's safe to say that the majority of people reading this book have done so simply because we read 'Cat Person' last year and were curious what else the author of it might come up with. I know that's why I picked it up.

Cat Person was an interesting story in many ways. For one, it was all too familiar to a lot of women, myself included. It wasn't particularly well-written (in that the writing style was nothing extra special; it just described what it needed to and got the job done), and the premise was super simple. But, like I said, the story hit a *lot* of nerves with people. For women, who found familiarity in the experiences of the main female character, it hit a certain nerve. For the men who didn't "understand" it or didn't want to consider the possibility that they could share any similarity to the male character, it also hit a certain nerve. It blew up, probably a lot more unexpectedly than imagined, but it blew up nonetheless. And now, with an entire book of Kristen Roupenian's short fiction, those who either loved or hated or hated to love or loved to hate Cat Person have the chance to see what else is up her sleeve.

Unfortunately, my opinion of You Know You Want This is rather lukewarm. I was expecting to love this collection, to get that oddly satisfying feeling of reading something so ugly or cringy or grotesque it makes you want to gag but at the same time keep flipping those pages faster to keep reading more and more. That's a feeling I've often got when reading Shirley Jackson's short stories - they're often pleasantly eerie or creepily absurd, and judging by the blurb on the sleeve of *this* book I felt like I was lead to believe that I could expect similar feelings while reading it. Again, unfortunately, while I often cringed at a lot of what goes on in this collection, it wasn't in that fun way I described Shirley Jackson's work. Instead, I mostly just felt empty and

gross, and worst of all there was no hidden meaning to or deeper reason for it. It was just unseemly, I think, for the sake of being unseemly. Or to try to top those icky awkward feelings that Cat Person initially conjured.

For anyone curious, here are each of the stories in this book, and a brief idea of what they are about and what I thought of them...

Bad Boy: A couple let their friend whose just broken up with his girlfriend sleep on their couch. The longer he stays, the more fucked up their relationship with him gets.

This story actually kind of repulsed me. The behaviour of the characters is repulsive in itself, but so was the fact that by the end I felt like the story was all so pointless. In fact, much of the stories here felt very, very pointless to me.

Look At Your Game, Girl: Based around the murder of Polly Klaas. A Young girl meets an older guy in a park, he introduces her to a Charles Manson song, and then her friend goes missing at a sleepover.

I was particularly lured in by the title of this one, because I recognized it as the title of a Charles Manson song, and was interested to see how, if at all, the actual song played into the story. It does factor into the story, though it's minor, but overall I did like this story. I feel like in some ways it's relatable to women in regards to how it is and how it feels to be a little girl in a society of people who are so eager to hurt us. The fact that it was inspired by a true story helped give it some aim that I feel was missing in a lot of the other stories.

Sardines: An awkward little girl makes a wish on her birthday cake candles for "something mean" and then weird shit happens.

I initially loved this one. I loved the story, the awkward little girl, and I thought it was going somewhere great. But it ended up going in a direction that really fizzled out for me. It had every impression of being dark - both in the sense of comedy and as well as in the sinister sense - but what it developed into was just flat out weird and disappointing.

The Night Runner: A white guy goes to Kenya as a volunteer teacher at an all girls school, and, well, weird shit happens.

This is one of two stories in this collection that are very horror-esque. I quite liked this one and the descriptions of the bad girls of Class six (though I wish they appeared more deliberately in the story), and the horror elements were done really well. It's also one of few stories here that had a satisfying ending that felt purposeful.

The Mirror, The Bucket, And The Old Thigh Bone: A princess has to find a husband but cannot choose any of her suitors, until she glances in a mirror and falls in love with her reflection. Things get weird and grotesque.

I didn't realize until a while after having read this story just how much I enjoyed it. I think it's probably my favourite. It's the other horror-esque story in the collection, in the form of a fairytale. What I loved so much about it was how it started off feeling like a simple fairytale - it even seemed as though it might take on a comedic tone - and then ever so slowly became darker and darker until it was flat out grotesque. It makes me think of something out of Alvin Schwartz's Scary Stories To Tell In The Dark... but for adults. It really, really worked for me.

Cat Person: Do I even need to say anything about this one?

The Good Guy: After trying to break up with his not-girlfriend and thus getting hit in the head by her with a glass of wine (was it wine? or water? I can't remember), a self-described 'nice guy' reflects on his history with women throughout the years.

This was the longest story in the book, at fifty pages. It was interesting, but ultimately fruitless, and I felt like the ending of it was really unmatched for what the rest of the story was. It was meant to be humorous, I think, but was corny instead, and missed a great opportunity to have a similar impact as that of Cat Person, just in a different way. It was way too long of a short story to be that average.

The Boy In The Pool: The childhood friend of a bride-to-be tries to do something extra special for her bachelorette party by inviting the washed up actor they had a crush on during their childhood to surprise her. Another ultimately pointless story, though I did enjoy the beginning of it. I literally can't think of anything else to say about it.

Scarred: A woman finds a book of spells in the library and uses it to conjure up her heart's desire in the form of a naked dude with a Scottish accent (he pronounces 'scared' as 'scarred' and that's about as much character as he's given). The woman gets greedy with the other spells in the book as she realizes they work, and... the end.

Interesting premise here, but mostly unmemorable and cliché.

The Matchbox Sign: A woman who just moved in with her boyfriend starts developing itchy bleeding blotches all over her body and they can't figure out why.

That's all there is to the story. Could there have been a deeper meaning? Maybe. But it's neither easily apparent or cleverly slick. Overall, like much of the characters throughout the collection, the ones in this story were boring with nothing that made them stand out from every other character in the book and I didn't find myself liking them *or* disliking them. They just took up space.

Death Wish: A shit-outta-luck recently divorced man living out of a dumpy motel room spends his time meeting and fucking women from Tinder, then hooks up with a cute little blonde who wants him to punch her out and kick her before having sex. And he spends the entirety of the story contemplating why he should or shouldn't do it (view spoiler).

I felt similar feelings reading this one as I did while reading *Bad Boy*. It was kind of revolting. These aren't unlikable or irredeemable characters that are compelling because of that fact, they're just gross and unlikable, and that's it. It often felt like the author was trying to be as edgy as possible and trying to ick out the reader for shock value and nothing else, as if that's what makes a story a good or noteworthy one.

Biter: A woman who was a chronic biter as a child tries to figure out a way to bite her co-worker(s) without consequence.

This one was pretty funny, and by the end felt complete. It's not amazing, but considering some of the other stories here, it was quite good.

I guess the fact that I've written such a long review of this shows that somehow, some way, this *is* an effective piece of work. That said, just because I had a lot to say about it, doesn't make it especially enjoyable or even longterm memorable for me. My biggest gripe of it is that it felt very obvious to me that a lot of these stories were quickly whipped up in order to capitalize on the success and curiosity of *Cat Person*. Had Kristen Roupenian taken more time to hone her skill (which she very clearly has) and incorporate more intention into what exactly she was trying to portray in each of these stories, I think they could have been great. But as it is, they were all mostly just so-so.

Ilenia Zodiaco says

Racconti spiazzanti, racconti che ti mettono a disagio, che spezzano le convenzioni consolidate sulle relazioni, a cominciare dall'assunto per il quale ci sia una perfetta corrispondenza di sentimenti tra due

amanti, che amare significa prima di tutto comprendere, che il desiderio sia sempre trasparente e innocuo, che il sesso sia un atto d'intimità. L'autrice mette a nudo l'asimmetria presente in ogni dinamica relazionale contemporanea e per far questo mette in scena degli incubi, spesso grotteschi, che non sono altro che le fantasie e i desideri dei protagonisti. Desideri spesso repressi che diventano più mostruosi e inquietanti ogni volta che li ignoriamo.

Non fatevi ingannare dallo stile chiaro, diretto e quasi rude. Questa raccolta è tutt'altro che scontata.

? Sono sempre vissuta nel castello Chiara says

Cat person è il classico caso in cui la fama del libro precede il libro stesso: il racconto più letto nella storia del New Yorker, il più retwittato, la nuova promessa della letteratura americana, un contratto già firmato per un futuro libro e una serie tv.

Insomma, era una lettura inevitabile e questa volta le mie aspettative non sono state deluse. Anzi.

Una raccolta questa che nasce e si declina attorno ad un concetto chiave: quello del desiderio, il principio di ogni rapporto umano, forse il principio stesso di ogni cosa. L'espressione più conosciuta del desiderio è il sesso, che Kristen Roupenian analizza e scompone senza mai banalizzarlo, nel racconto "Cat person" è presente una fortissima ambiguità sulla stessa veloce esperienza interpersonale e sessuale, ambiguità che ha diviso i pareri e che ha reso così "famoso" il racconto; conosciamo poi attraverso una lunga regressione la psicologia che sta dietro ad un uomo frustrato in "Bravo ragazzo"; vediamo le conseguenze di spingersi troppo oltre nel racconto iniziale "Ragazzaccio".

Sesso, desiderio, corpo... il corpo è fortemente presente nella raccolta, è il mezzo con cui entriamo in contatto con l'altro, con cui sentiamo, così come è presente un occhio privilegiato verso la fase in cui queste sensazioni sono amplificate: i primi anni dell'adolescenza, bellissimo il racconto "Look at your game, girl" che riesce a condensare in poche pagine la complessità della scoperta del male negli altri e dell'oscurità in se stessi.

Molto racconti sono espressamente realistici, ma la ricchezza della raccolta consiste nello spingersi oltre e nel mostrare come la fantasia e l'irrazionalità riescano a spiegare allo stesso modo e forse persino meglio la psicologia dell'essere umano. Prendono così forma le fantasie, i sogni, i desideri nascosti (come nel geniale "Non avere paura"), ma non solo: si manifestano gli incubi, ed è l'orrore che fa da filo conduttore a diversi racconti: fa capolino in "La prova dei fiammiferi" sotto forma di un parassita del corpo, "Sardine" vede manifestarsi un raccapricciante desiderio di compleanno, o "Lo specchio, il secchio, e il vecchio femore" che è forse il più angosciante dell'intera raccolta.

Ogni racconto gronda intensità, genialità, l'autrice non ha paura di osare, di spingersi sempre più a fondo, sempre più in là. Elementi cardine quindi i rapporti tra uomo e donna, il sesso, il corpo, la crescita, le fantasie, la paura e il desiderio, in ogni sua forma.

Veramente un'autrice con una fortissima impronta personale sia nelle tematiche che nello stile, asciutto, concreto, senza una parola fuori posto. Una sorprendente sorpresa Cat person in ogni senso.

Larry H says

Wow, what a crazy collection of short stories this was!!

Kristen Roupenian's debut collection, *You Know You Want This*, is at turns frank, brutal, disturbing, kinky, poignant, emotional, and eye-opening. Her stories are about relationships of all kinds—parental, romantic, sexual, those between friends and lovers, and even those between relative strangers. The relationships are rarely equal, in that most often, someone has the upper hand, although it might not always last for long.

This collection reminded me a little of Carmen Maria Machado's fantastic collection *Her Body and Other Parties*, in that they explore imbalances of power between the genders, and a number of the stories have some sort of erotic charge. A few of the 12 stories in this book are a little weirder than most, with violence, fear, and even the supernatural at their core, while some take a more traditional route.

Among my favorites in this collection were: "Bad Boy," in which a couple starts out wanting to help their friend get over a dysfunctional relationship, only to create an even more dysfunctional relationship with him; "The Boy in the Pool," about childhood best friends who had grown apart, and a teenage crush on an actor from that same period; "The Matchbox Sign," which tells of a couple struggling with problems real and imagined; "Scarred," about a woman who conjures her heart's desire, a naked man, after finding a book of spells in the library; and "Cat Person," in which a young woman finds herself in a relationship with a man for whom she's not sure how she feels.

Roupenian has a vivid imagination, a talent for evocative imagery, and she creates characters which, for the most part, seemed like everyday people trapped in some unusual situations. (Obviously that doesn't apply to every story.) While a few of the stories were a little too bizarre for my tastes (and she's unflinchingly graphic with her descriptions of violence, blood, gore, and a little bit of the macabre), overall, I found this a fascinating collection, one that will definitely stick in my mind for a long while.

This is the first short story collection I've read in 2018, and I hope it signifies that this will be a year of fresh stories from writers new and seasoned, full of memorable characters and situations that make me feel, make me think, and at times, make me a little uncomfortable.

See all of my reviews at itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com.

Check out my list of the best books I read in 2018 at <https://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com/2019/01/the-best-books-i-read-in-2018.html>.

You can follow me on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/yrralh/>.

Meike says

I went into this equally curious and suspicious: I applaud a writer who gets the internet talking about a short story (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/20...>), but the hype around Roupenian's debut collection has gained proportions that invite some kind of backlash. Looking at the actual material, the book as a whole is a little uneven and in parts feels underdeveloped, but hell, this is an exciting writer who has the potential to go places. Roupenian ventures into the darker recesses of the human mind, where all things weird, disgusting, and irrational reside, and her gift is to describe them in a way that the underlying tendencies of the characters suddenly seem alarmingly familiar or even relatable.

Another special quality of these stories, which center around more or less dysfunctional human relationships, is that they painfully depict ambiguity (which is the core of the whole "Cat Person" controversy, IMHO). I appreciate this kind of storytelling which negotiates the dynamics of the rational and the emotional, of the strong suits and the flaws inside and between human beings. Roupenian takes the perspective of men and women often possessed by their subconscious - or even conscious - urges: The bachelorette party where a former teen idol gets invited and objectified, the young woman who is or is not eaten up by a parasite (or by her unhappy relationship), the kids' birthday party that becomes a standoff with the stepmother, the "nice guy" who exploits female weaknesses (or are the women in fact exploiting him?), and - I particularly liked that one - a horror tale about a princess who falls in love with a smelly contraption.

The majority of these stories are inventive and memorable, but - similar to Moshfegh's *Homesick for Another World* - there is sometimes a thin line between flashy stories aiming to shock and shocking stories aiming to reveal a deeper message. When I read the first story of this collection, "Bad Boy", which is about dependence, control and violence, I was initially disappointed because it is so effect-driven, at the expense of psychological believability (what's up with the guy they manipulate?) and subtlety. But I will cut this debut author some slack, and I am extremely curious what she will do next.

Thanks to Aufbau/Blumenbar for the review copy, and kudos to the people responsible for the cover design - this edition looks much nicer than the ones you get in English!

Lark Benobi says

The lack of genuine human intimacy, or even the hope of genuine human intimacy, is the most disappointing element in these suffocatingly ugly stories.

This collection reminds me of the stories I used to write with my best friend in 8th grade, when we were both sure we knew everything about sex, even though our knowledge was theoretical, and when we were also under the impression that sex, so adult and so secret, must be perverted, and a little gross.

Great stories do exist that tell their stories through ugly sex and broken relationships. Their greatness as stories, though, lies in the way they leave open the idea that true intimacy is possible. They let you know that something has been tragically lost. Innocence. Love. Trust. Genuineness. The opportunity for sharing something real, however fleeting.

Here are some stories that come to mind that illustrate what I mean:

"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates
<https://www.cusd200.org/cms/lib/IL010...>

"Sarah Cole: A Type of Love Story" by Richard Ford
<https://www.missourireview.com/articl...>

"Helping" by Robert Stone
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/19...>

"So Much Water So Close to Home" by Raymond Carver
<http://www.nyx.net/~kbanker/chautauqu...>

"The Five-Forty-Eight" by John Cheever
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/19...>

All of these stories, however ugly scene-by-scene, let in air and light and hope for something better.

That's what I thought was missing here. The stories in *You Know You Want This* are flat-ugly, without the hint of what is lost when people dehumanize one another. They are a waste of words. A story that is simply ugly is a pointless story.

John Decker says

There are three stories in this that are terribly clunky and out of place. I cannot bring myself to give it five stars. But the remainder of these are fantastically disgusting. This collection takes the absurd and wince-worthy all the way — sometimes for ambiguous, sometimes sociopolitical reasons — and I am here for it.

Elyse Walters says

It's true.... I knew I wanted
"You Know You Want This", the instant I learned about it.

I love the feel of the physical book... I find the book cover and color delicious... simply wanting to touch it. I don't own it, (accepting gifts)... :),
but I spent a bit of time reading the stories while in the bookstore... shhhh,

I knew I wanted to 'listen' to the large talented cast of readers by both men and women.
I almost bought this with my Audible monthly credit.that's how much I wanted to read it, 'now', but my library carried the audibook copy for free....so I saved my money and patiently waited my turn.

Finally ... I had this book!

From the first story to the last, I was completely hook.

I love the truthful quality to these stories - many about women who seemed to crave and thrive off kinky sex-evil dark - and ugly sex - punishment - to themselves - and to others.
One thing you can say about these women... They weren't passive. They weren't particularly kind, nice, likable, or sweet women either... but definitely not passive.

A few stories were strong stand outs.. with none of them being bad.....
no I take that back, they were bad, but they weren't bad-to-read about.

A couple of the stories involved children which I thought were creepy and brilliant. "Sardines", being my favorite. It was about a snotty young girl having a birthday party.

Clearly this is a self select type of book.

If you thought the sex scenes in the Fifty Shades trilogy were unfathomable - or disgusting....
perhaps you'd like this book even less.

But where the Fifty Shades Trilogy manage to be one of the most popular books sold - lacking any pretense of decent writing skills..

the collections of these 'anti-sweet-syrupy', stories ARE written well!!!

I enjoy stories delving into the dark side of human personality....

These stories fix the bill for me.

