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# The Sexual Life of Catherine M

*By Millet Catherine*



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## The Sexual Life of Catherine M By Millet Catherine

224pages. in8. Broché. A publishing sensation upon its original publication in France, Catherine Millet's The Sexual Life of Catherine M is one of the most sexually explicit books ever written by a woman. Ostensibly a semi-autobiographical account of the sexual life of the author, the editor of an influential Parisian art magazine, the book is a frank and detailed account of Millet's development from an awkward, guilt-ridden Catholic teenager to sophisticated Parisian intellectual and enthusiastic member of the singles bars, orgies and public sex spaces of Paris. The book has no sequential narrative. Instead, it offers a frank and extremely graphic celebration of the pursuit and gratification of sex. Millet praises the virtues of anonymous sex, admitting that "I can account for forty-nine men whose sexual organs have penetrated mine and to whom I can attribute a name or, at least, in a few cases, an identity. But I cannot put a number on those that blur into anonymity". Nevertheless, she proceeds to offer page after page of exhausting descriptions of sexual couplings in groups in houses, car parks, offices, toilets, museums-the list and the permutations are endless, as are Millet's descriptions of her own sexual organs and her ability to perform oral sex. Millet wants to celebrate the personal freedom and physical pleasure that casual, anonymous sex offers a woman, but this is never fully explored beyond her assertion that "the certainty that I could have sexual relations in any situation with any willing party" was "the lungfuls of fresh air you inhale as you walk to the end of the pier". Much of the book's language is equally prosaic. Ultimately, this is a book about sexual fantasy, but as Millet herself admits, "sexual fantasies are far too personal for them ever really to be shared". Millet is too busy describing the literal nuts and bolts, the grunts and bumps of (resolutely heterosexual) sex to produce eroticism on a par with her obvious models.



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