



Nude Men

Amanda Filipacchi

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Rarely has a first novel generated so much excitement, here and abroad, as Amanda Filipacchi's utterly beguiling *Nude Men*. The story is told by Jeremy Acidophilus, "a man without many pleasures in life, a man whose few pleasures are small, but a man whose small pleasures are very important to him." Jeremy is twenty-nine, and his life is going nowhere. Until he meets a beautiful woman in a coffee shop. Lady Henrietta (she takes her name from Oscar Wilde's *Lord Henry*) paints nude men, some for art's sake, some for the pages of *Playgirl*. She wants Jeremy to pose for her and, naturally, he thinks he is falling in love with her. But it is Henrietta's precocious, voluptuous eleven-year-old daughter who seduces Jeremy - in a scene of startling imagination and uncanny charm. In this mesmerizing, uniquely witty novel, Filipacchi explores sexual mores with uninhibited freshness and originality, shaking our allegiance to conventional moral codes. Half French, half American, she has created a story that seems both guileless and sophisticated, and the pleasure one takes in it is accompanied by a touch of guilt. Despite that, or because of it, the pleasure is glorious.

Nude Men Details

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Author : Amanda Filipacchi

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Kerri says

Hmmm. Well its been a while since I've read a book in one day. I've never felt so guilty for laughing out loud for a book that deals with a 29 year old man being seduced by an 11 year old. This book was hysterical, up until this turn around point where it just gets depressing and even creepier. The main character has an amazing voice and view of the world. This is the story about Jeremy, who hates his job, his girlfriend, his messy apartment, and talks to his cat. One day at his new favorite coffee shop in the city he meets Lady Henrietta who asks Jeremy if she can paint him nude. He agrees to it, trying to build up confidence and reassure himself that he is NOT FAT. He falls in love with Lady Henrietta, but she tries to set him up with her friend Laura so that she can get with Laura's brother. Yea, very complicated. Jeremy meets Lady Henrietta's beautiful 11 year old daughter, who becomes infatuated with him and seduces him in Disney World. I laughed out loud for the majority of this book, but as usual the nude men (or lack there of) in our lives, can be disappointing.

Dominique says

I despised this book. It represented everything I hate: humor over statutory rape (sexy sex scenes between an 11 year-old-girl and a 29 year-old-man?!), humor based on the coarseness of low self-esteem (people calling themselves maggots constantly), brain tumors, car accidents, knives, beating up parrots, killing fish... and all of this is supposed to be funny, witty, and avant-garde. Please. May the world be a place where we don't need to seek humor in the smells of rotting flesh and scenes of an 11-year-old straddling a grown-up with a Mickey Mouse mask on while spending a week at Disney World. I kept on reading because I hoped the end would take the bitter taste out of my mouth. Instead it made the entire exercise feel even more pointless than before. A slow read because the whole time you are questioning why the hell you are reading it. To be fair, there were one or two funny scenes about bad magicians. But, honestly, not worth reading the book for.

Venus Maneater says

I got to pick out a book at the local free library, and I went in totally blind, thinking that the title referred to the contents. Well....it did, but in no way as I expected!

Jeremy is truly a dispicable human being, a sad slug of a man with issues the size of elephants. I loved Minou, though! She is one sassy cat. Sarah I liked as well. I knew girls like her. Short-lived, intense.

The way Filipacchi describes the sexual relationship between Jeremy (29) and Sarah (11) is so incredibly unsexy that found myself able to finish this book without any troubles, unlike when I read Lolita.

Somehow it reminded me of American Psycho? Don't know why, yet. Gives me stuff to think about.

Ludmilla says

absürt olayla dolu bir kitap. güzel ressama ç?plak poz vermeye raz? olan kahraman?m?z kendini karma??k durumlar içinde buluyor: ressam?n erken geli?mi? k?z?n?n ona a??k olmas?, ne dans ne sihirbazl?k içeren dansl? sihirbazl?k gösterisiyle üne kavu?an a????, o?lunun yanl??lar?n? yüzüne vurmak için adam kiralay?p senaryolar yazan annesi vs vs. bir solukta okunacak, çokça güldürecek bir kitap. tabii 11 ya??ndaki k?z ile ili?kisinin komik gösterilmeye çal??lsa da rahats?z edici oldu?unu gizlemeyece?im. notum 3.5

Shirma says

hmmmm.. Feel as though I've wasted my time. Yet, there is something very creative, imaginative about this book. It was like reading the ramblings of a mad man. It made me laugh. It made me angry. But mostly I felt frustrated, I wanted to be over with it. An eleven year old having sex with a twenty-nine year old, brain tumor and low self-esteem are all part of this bizarre story. Maybe I just haven't yet acquired a taste for this writer's work.

Manon Mertens says

Het leest als een trein en de personages zijn intrigerend. Het verhaal lijkt ergens op aan te sturen dat je ontrafelt wil zien, je vraagt je af naar waar de personages zullen evolueren. De laatste hoofdstukken worden de personages echter onherkenbaar, raken doorgedraaid en gestoord. In de laatste pagina's ontbreken ook alle details... wat gebeurt daar nou net? Geen idee...

Lolly K Dandeneau says

3 1/2 stars... Initially read this years ago but decided to re-visit it. It is an uncomfortable subject (11 yr old seductress) on one hand, but on the other it carries us with it's strangeness. Filipacchi certainly plays with the reader, and is never predictable. Handling the untouchable subject using humor is what makes the novel clever. When Jeremy is approached to pose nude in the name of art by the beautiful Lady Henrietta, this 'unremarkable' man is seduced by her 11 year old daughter. To prevent her son from crossing the line, his mother interfere's by using hired strangers to make him feel shame about 'molestation' through seemingly random encounters. What a fun idea! The death scene is loaded, with 'male nudity' at it's core. It is a smart novel to be sure, there were just times I felt uninterested. I adore her writing, it just isn't my favorite Filipacchi novel, though I certainly 'got it'. It raises questions about sexuality most people don't want to visit. For most readers, particularly females, it's just too hard to overlook the fact Sara is a child, magnetic or not. As readers, we can dissect what the author was doing here, poking at morals, challenging reactions- but it's more than just a novel in the vein of Lolita (in some ways I hate mentioning Lolita at all). There are other things being said about people as a whole through other eccentric characters. It certainly begs to be read. I liked it.

Cherise says

I am not quite sure what to say about this book, except I absolutely loved it.

Jeremy leads a pretty mundane life as a fact checker/filer at a local celebrity magazine. He has a messy apartment, a cat he converses with and a girlfriend he barely tolerates. His life takes an exciting turn when he is approached by a beautiful woman, Lady Henrietta, who asks if he would pose for her nude. He accepts.

He's completely infatuated with the stunning artist and long after the painting is done, he continues to come around hoping to gain a more intimate relationship. But life has other plans for him and he finds himself charmed by and attracted to her 11 year old daughter, Sara.

I admit when I read the descriptions of the story and other reviews and found out about the sexual relationship between a grown man and an 11 year old girl I was completely turned off. The word "ew" came to mind, repeatedly. But this tale is so much more than a perverted older man having sex with an 11 year old; it's actually a very small part of the story. I was shocked to find out I didn't find it to be as perverse as I thought it was going to be.

What helps to erase the "ew" factor is that Sara is no ordinary 11 year old. She has been raised by a free thinking and perhaps too open Mother who encourages her daughter to say, and do whatever she thinks and feels. Sara is a combination of old lady and little girl trapped in a woman's body. She is a bundle of contradictions that both attract and repel. SHE comes on to Jeremy, repeatedly, determinedly, and he puts up a good fight for as long as he can.

The relationships between Jeremy, the women in his life (including his cat) and his subconscious are brilliantly written. This tale is crazy, hilarious, daring, politically incorrect, tragic, ironic, but most of all tremendous. Every character in this story has a remarkable way of cutting through the BS and just being real and true to themselves. A more colorful cast of characters you will never find. Its brutal honesty isn't always pleasant, but I think that's what makes it so great. I laughed, I cried, I didn't want to set it down and I didn't want it to end.

Cherise Everhard, March 2009

Therese Wiese says

Interesting...a "magic" dancer, a painter of nude men, and her 11 year old daughter who is ready to get laid. Oh, and the man who sleeps.with them all.

Daniel Thackeray says

Just wanted to say it's quite amusing to see people's reaction to this book. Calling it vile, disgusting... It's bloody fantastic! What do you want, predictable drivel? Like nothing you've read before.

Linda Smolenski says

The worst book I have had the misfortune of reading. I felt sick after reading it. I am forever haunted by it. I wish I never touched this vile creation.

Natasha says

i picked up this book because I found it on a table in the co-op and wanted to procrastinate. I also love books with titles that make you embarrassed to read them in public like "i love dick" and "what do gay men want."

But this book was bad in pretty much every way. It was so angering that I finished it only out of spite. Enough affected quiriness for at least 6 zoey deschenel movies: everything in this book happens solely bc it seems like a fun thing to have happen in a book, in the same shitty Miranda July/Sheila Heti rip-off tone. I can't tell if the prose is bad because the characters are uninteresting, or if the characters are uninteresting because the prose is bad. In any case, when the main character is aroused he says "i'm aroused;" when he's in love he says "I'm in love." Do they not teach "show; don't tell" at the Columbia mfa program? Even the "interesting" people are interesting in boring ways: eating jello! parrots!! painting their lovers on eggs!!

This is a very mean review so I feel bad but this book seemed so contrived that it made me mad about everything

Glen Engel-Cox says

This was one title that was a joy to ask bookstore clerks for: "Do you have **Nude Men**?" I'm reminded of the Monty Python skit where the customer keeps asking for books by Charles Dickens—the one with two "k"s. The looks that the clerks give you at such a question is priceless.

Terrorizing bookstore clerks aside, **Nude Men** is worthy of attention for all that lies within its covers as well. I first heard about this book by following a thread on rec.arts.books about novels of humor. (This is a reoccurring thread on r.a.b that you can bet on to pop up at least once a year.) The classics (P. G. Wodehouse, Jerome K. Jerome, Mark Twain) always get mentioned, but I follow the thread for those one or two books that no one's ever heard of before. In this case, I was especially intrigued by the title and the poster's description of the plot as concerning a fellow who is seduced by an eleven-year-old girl. I thought, "If someone can make this funny, it's got to be good."

Good it is, although funny, it should be noted, is not the main thrust of this book. Yes, there's quite a bit of humor, unexpected and sometimes audacious, as in the seduction scene, but it is the characters—the self-absorbed main character, Jeremy Acidophilus; Lady Henrietta, the painter he thinks he is in love with; her daughter, the precocious nymphet; and his ultra-conservative girlfriend, Charlotte—and their interactions, sometimes funny, sometimes painful, and one whopper of a strange plot that continually surprises, that mark this book as different. It is, of course, a first novel. I say of course because only beginners challenge the status quo of acceptable practice and subjects quite as strongly as this. Even though Vladimir Nabokov wrote a classic on the subject, this is one area that still is taboo, especially treated as anything other than sexual abuse. While I might find it hard to recommend this novel for its humor potential alone, as a work both strange and comical, it is daring and magical.

Scott says

This is one of the best books I've ever read. Terribly funny, disturbing, painful and haunting. The story centers around an incident that our culture find politically incorrect, but who cares!!! Just read this. It is amazing!

Betsy Robinson says

The surrealistic adventures of protagonist Jeremy Acidophilis, a fact checker with a kind of Asperger's way of perceiving the world, feels like a twisted sex dream—the kind of dream where you know you're all the people: a child who is not remotely childlike but behaves and sounds like an oversexed woman; a man with good intentions who, although he is appalled by the child, does the worst thing a man can do; an overbearing, sexually inappropriate, omnipresent punishing mother, etc. This is the kind of dream we never want to recount to anyone because it will reflect badly on us, yet at the same time, it's an iconic dream of doing everything no sane human is supposed to do—every crazy impulse we control, repress, or deny. This is a naked-in-public dream.

(Caveat: If you can't, don't want to, or don't naturally go to this dream place within, you will likely be turned off by this book. However, if you're intrigued by going to dreamland within, read on.)

In order to attempt to explain my own work and find copasetic readers, I've often (including in my Goodreads bio) told the story of radio host Jonathan Schwartz's anecdote about Stephen Sondheim: after Sondheim sold 25,000 copies of a book, someone asked him how he felt about it. "It's always the same 25,000," replied Sondheim despairingly. Schwartz believes that the reason for the radically divergent (negative/positive) responses to Sondheim's work is that he exposes everything we wish most to hide or deny about ourselves. And for many people, this is variously enraging, boring, disgusting, or it just doesn't make any sense to them. Seeing the same work, others feel grateful. Perhaps they are in awe, freed from constraints they didn't even know they had. "That's in me!" we gasp; and whether horrified or amused, we laugh, moan, rock, and have some kind of catharsis because we have been energetically poked, prodded, and maybe even pierced. Filipacchi writes with this kind of energy and effect.

We all have our own wonderful reasons for reading. Sometimes we just want to be entertained. We want a good story, a laugh, a diversion. We have plenty of other places in our lives to do work on ourselves and plenty of options for discomfort. If you're feeling this way, stay away from Filipacchi's work! However if you need and value transformation more than you do comfort and you like having such experiences from reading, for goodness sake, read Filipacchi's books; I would start with the most recent, *The Unfortunate Importance of Beauty* because it is the most artistically mature.

Nude Men is the third of Filipacchi's books that I have read in very quick succession/obsession; it is the first book that she wrote (published in 1993 when she was only twenty-six!). What's mesmerizing to me is that what is often a pretty horrifying dream is conveyed with an almost transcendental delight. She writes with energy that has the power to mess with you, and for me, receiving that kind of energy is a great gift.

