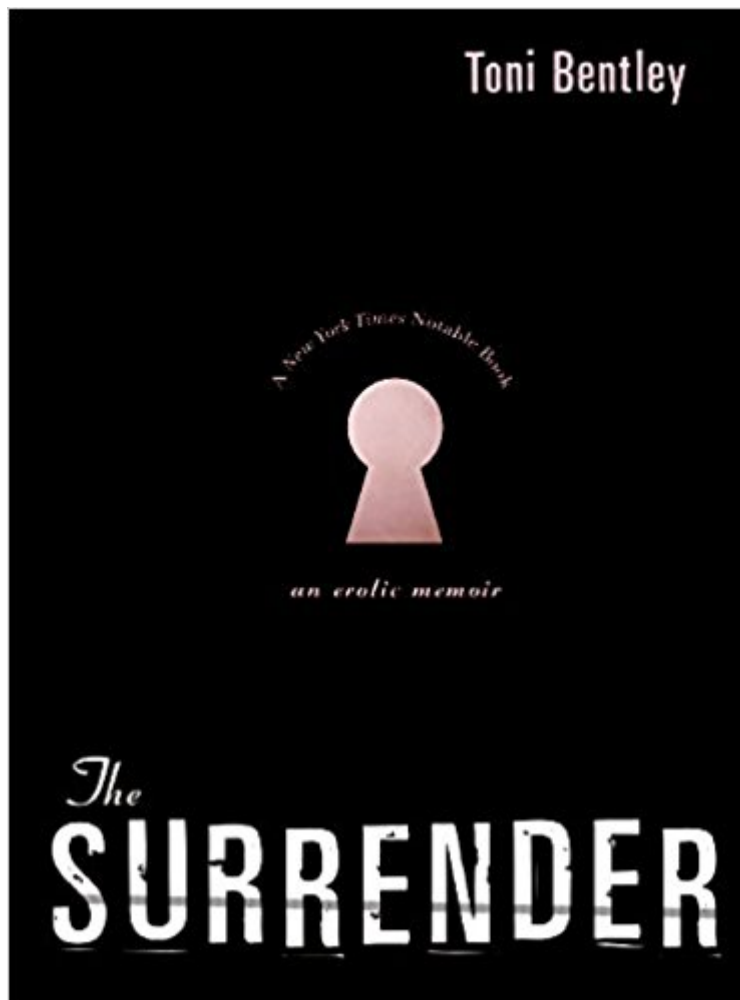


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The Surrender: An Erotic Memoir



Synopsis

Few women do it and even fewer will admit to it. But in Toni Bentley's daring and intimate memoir, *The Surrender*, she pulls the sheets back on an erotic experience that's been forbidden since the Bible and celebrates "the joy that lies on the other side of convention, where risk is real and rapture resides." From *Story of O* to *The Kiss* to *The Sexual Life of Catherine M.*, readers have been enthralled with sexually subversive memoirs by women. But even those erotic classics didn't navigate the psychosexual terrain that Bentley does when she meets a lover who introduces her to a radical and unexpected pleasure, to the "holy" act that she came to see as her awakening. *The Surrender* is a witty, intelligent, and eloquent exploration of one woman's obsession that will be sure to leave readers questioning their own desires.

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Customer Reviews

"I am sitting on the threshold. Perhaps this is the final paradox of God's paradoxical machinations: my ass is my very own back door to heaven. The Pearly Gates are closer than you think." Bentley is writing of her rhapsodic experience with sodomy. So some will call this memoir blasphemous, others spiritual; some pornographic, others erotic. What it is, is wonderfully smart and sexy and witty and moving, a tale of unbounded passion that leads to transcendence. The tale is paradoxical in more ways than one: aside from Bentley's ass leading to heaven, she finds that submission leads to freedom—a freedom she had never known as a dancer with the New York City Ballet (about which she wrote her first book, *Winter Season*), nor in her failed marriage, nor in any of her other polymorphously perverse sexual experiences. While deeply serious, Bentley is also hilarious as she

describes the delights of crotchless panties ("they come in many different styles – each with its own je ne sais quoi") and touching in an imagined obituary for her lover, A-Man ("He was the only one who took time to be friends with my cat.... He was the one with whom I couldn't tell whose pleasure gave me more pleasure"). Bentley's honesty about the most intimate of subjects is daring and delightful for those willing to follow her to, so to speak, the end. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Brave." (New York Times Book Review) "Plucky." (The New York Observer) "Wonderfully smart and sexy and witty and moving." (Publishers Weekly starred review) "A small masterpiece of erotic writing." (Leon Wieseltier) "Revealing and witty." (Time Out New York) "Stylish and amusing." (Entertainment Weekly)

Hooooorah, I was hesitant to try 'it' with my boyfriend, but darn this lady made it so appetizing! When we finally consummated the months' worth of reading and research I did with 'it,' 'it' was exactly as Toni described. An incredible, spiritual surrendering of my very life force, and I look forward to a day when I am brave enough to do 'it' again.-1 star because this book makes 'it' sound totally awesome and kinda easy and stuff, and actually that orgasmic spiritual feeling (for me, at least) was brought on in part by the level of pain I was allowing to affect my body. But hey, no actual damage!

The Surrender may be an "erotic memoir" with some steamy sex, but it is much, much deeper than that. Toni Bentley, the author, intentionally titillates, but gradually leads us to very profound discoveries. This book is at times spiritual, moving, and discusses all of life, through the prism of a taboo sexual act. For readers with open hearts, possessing a "beginners mind" when it comes to the connection between sexuality and the rest of life, this book will be transcendent. It is hard to imagine for most the levels of emotional and spiritual awakening this type of sexual intimacy can trigger. On another level, this book is the best "how-to" book I've ever read for men to understand how to live for greatness, to truly move a woman. For example she writes: "Most men will lick and suck and drink a p---y - and I'm not complaining. But it is the rare man who does so with his whole consciousness poised on his tongue. It is this awareness that will move a woman; when her consciousness - on her clit- encounters his, orgasm marks their meeting. Ultimately, it is here- or

rather, down there - that am man will learn how to be a winner or a loser, with women as in life."This is also something most men probably don't begin to comprehend:"If a man can possess a woman sexually - really possess - he won't need to control her ideas, her opinions, her clothes, her friends, even her other lovers. He f--ks my a-- for hours with a d--k an inch too big for the job: that is possession. After a round like that he doesn't need to infiltrate my life, my psyche, my time, or my wardrobe, because he has infiltrated the core of my being - the rest is just peripheral decoration. Domination - total and complete domination of my being - that is where I find freedom."There is more and more here for men to take note of:"I had admired that - he was not going to compromise himself for p---y, like so many men do. And I didn't want to compromise a man with my p---y, I wanted a man to be true to himself... while desperately wanting my p---y."She explores and explains so elegantly how submission can actually be empowering:"As I learned how to stay in the bliss, I found something else. I have become a pure vehicle for (him), no resistance. I can relinquish all power. I never knew how much power I had until I gave it all to him through my a--. My final one coincides with my ability to commit to complete submission, to remain completely open without reserve, without limit. No choice but surrender is surrender. I am his entirely, body, soul, and a--hole. I relish my freedom."After all the erotically charged chapters, and all the life lessons, she ends on an upbeat note, with her own take on what sexuality is really all about:"I believe the equation goes like this: sex can only be truly deep, truly life changing, truly transcendent if you are being f----d by God; if you love your man like he was God. I have been to the precipice. I looked over, and fell off the ledge. If you don't f--k with death chasing you, you are mistaken. So long as love, crazy, crazy love, can be survived, there is no excuse. No excuse at all. Slowly, resentfully, I have moved out of slavery, though I cannot forget its freedom."

I read this book because it was this month's selection for my erotica book group. I almost didn't read it because it's not available in ebook format but I finally caved and bought the dead-tree version and I'm glad I did. First of all, let me say I felt a particular affinity with the author, having a background in dance, daddy issues, and a pre-existing love of anal sex and all things explicit. So, take this review in that light--I am okay with the base material. If anal sex and explicit prose is a turn off for you, run screaming the other way. Let me also say that I disagree this book is about anal sex...the anal sex doesn't come until halfway through the book. This book is about self-exploration and obsession, and I think the book's ultimate conclusion is that we never really know the mysteries of ourselves and our sexualities. We do all these things to steer, control, manage our sexuality but in the end it's a force too powerful for us. I thought that was the deeper message of the book and the reason I liked

it so much. I've been involved in obsessive love affairs. I found her depiction of her obsession with A-man painfully familiar and depressing at times, but also healing in a way that I realized I was not alone and that other people (at least one, lol, but I suspect many more) have had these types of experiences. There were times I didn't like what she had to say. For instance, when she delved too deeply into the connection between her childhood and her current sexuality I was kind of icked/bored/unconvinced. Sometimes her self-analyzation got a little overbearing. Yes, she is a bit of a narcissist but her story still had a lot to offer regarding sexuality and obsession, and the feelings that dredges up. Her descriptions of her sexual experiences and her encounters with A-man were extremely well written. I also liked the way she analyzed her sadism vs. her masochism, her dominant and submissive sides. I felt turned off by the way she ordered around her "pussy hound" friends but as a member of the BDSM community this all sounded familiar to me, this need to be dominant or submissive in various encounters, and I'm sure the pussy hounds were getting exactly what they wanted too. I guess I just felt like this is one of the few books that tells it like it is, by someone not sugarcoating anything or trying to be liked. It was fascinating how she just laid it all on the line. In the end we're left wondering if she is a lucky or unlucky person, a happy or sad person, a sadist or a masochist, a person wiser than us all or a person who totally doesn't have a clue. That's the magic of the book in my opinion. She's writing this, trying to figure herself out, and we're reading it, trying to figure HER out, but also applying her insights to ourselves too. (at least I was) I think in society, with marriage, monogamy, and "traditional" sexuality, we try to control and shape ourselves to fit society's boxes, but deep down we all have these wild urges and sexuality, lust and need for many types of love, and this impulse cannot be controlled, only hidden or given in to. She finds some semblance of peace for a while in anal surrender, but as the book ends we also know that she's still searching. If you have ever ruminated about sexuality outside of traditional and monogamous confines, you will probably find something to enjoy or relate to in this book. I gave it five stars for engaging me so much mentally, although there were parts of it I didn't like.

This is a nicely written book by an intelligent woman who has decided to share her personal sexual preference with you in a most civilized narrative. Her exploration of this rather taboo topic is almost charming, and her style is one that utilizes an almost forgotten literary device: aesthetic distance. The subject is dealt with as a coping mechanism for the author to deal with a troubled past and create a real intimacy that, though difficult for many to accept, brings her some happiness and understanding. This isn't porn by any means; you won't want to take a shower after reading Ms. Bentley's book. You will more likely feel that you have read notes from the analysts couch.

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