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“With a cool sense of humor and an obsessive desire to inform, [Kerner] encourages men through an act that many find mystifying.”

—*New York Times*

SHE COMES FIRST

the thinking man's guide
to pleasuring a woman




IAN KERNER, Ph.D.

SHE COMES FIRST

Ian Kerner, Ph. D.

The Thinking Man's Guide to Pleasuring a Woman

 HarperCollins e-books

Dedication

For my wife, Lisa

*“You should be kissed, and often, and by
someone who knows how.”*

—Clark Gable,

Gone with the Wind

“My chief occupation, despite appearances, has always been love.”

—Albert Camus

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Introduction: Confessions of a Premature Ejaculator

THE PREMISE of this book is simple: when it comes to pleasuring women and conversing in the language of love, cunnilingus should be every man's native tongue. As bestselling sex author Lou Paget has written, "Ask most women, and if they're being honest, they will admit that what makes them hottest and come hardest is when a man can use his tongue well."

But as with any language, in order to express yourself fluently, in order to make your subject sing and soar, you must be thoroughly acquainted with the rules of grammar and style. One of my favorite books on the subject is the indispensable classic *Elements of Style*. I don't think I would have made it through freshman comp, or survived college as an English major, without that slim, dog-eared paperback tucked away in my back pocket. In the able hands of authors Strunk and White, grammar was not simply made understandable and meaningful—it was made beautiful.

Elements of Style exhorted readers to "write boldly and make definite assertions." And in the spirit of that timeless classic, *She Comes First* will condense a wealth of experience and expertise into a simple, essential rule book; it will elaborate on the principles and philosophy that underlie those rules and, in doing so, offer nothing less than the definitive guide to the grammar of oral sex. If you want to learn how to give a woman mind-blowing, body-rippling orgasms with your tongue *every* time, this is the book for you.

Although I have a Ph.D. in clinical sexology, this book is principally written from a practitioner's perspective; by someone who knows and loves cunnilingus, appreciates its role in stimulating female sexual response, and has developed a methodology for consistently leading women to orgasm: one that stems from the conviction that cunnilingus is much more than just

a sexual activity, but rather the centerpiece of a philosophy of sexual contentment. Call it the “way of the tongue.”

But don’t get me wrong: I’m not some Casanova or Don Juan, vainly putting words down on paper in order to boast and strut—far from it. Through much of my life I’ve suffered terribly from sexual dysfunction, and I know all too well the humiliation, anxiety, and despair of not being able to satisfy a woman. If anything, this book was written in the sincere hope that other men might develop effective “sexual habits”—ones that will enable them, along with their partners, to suffer less than I have, or perhaps not at all. As Tennessee Williams wrote of the marriage bed in his play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, “When a marriage goes on the rocks, the rocks are *there*, right *there!*” Well, here’s to getting rid of the rocks and smoothing out the sheets.

My initial forays into oral sex were a crutch, a way of compensating for my sexual inadequacies, and they were approached with the assumption that cunnilingus was a poor man’s second to the joys and splendors of “real sex”—like many, I took it for granted that intercourse was the “right way” for couples to experience orgasms. But, to my surprise, I discovered that the “way of the tongue” was by no means inferior to intercourse; if anything, it was superior, in many cases the only way in which women were able to receive the persistent, rhythmic stimulation, outside of masturbation, necessary to achieve an orgasm. I quickly learned that oral sex *is* real sex, and later in life, when I happened to come across a copy of the seminal *Hite Report on Female Sexuality*, I was reassured to find that women consider oral sex to be “one of their most favorite and exciting activities; women mentioned over and over how much they loved it.” When it comes to pleasure, there is no right or wrong way to have an orgasm—the only thing that’s wrong is to assume that women need or value them any less than men do.

In her article “Just Be a Man: Six Simple Suggestions,” sex columnist Amy Sohn’s very first piece of advice is, “A man goes down. No excuses. No hesitation.”

But once down there, what’s a man to do? The vast majority of women complain about guys who don’t like to do it, don’t know how to do it, or simply don’t do it nearly enough. Flannery O’Connor was right: a good man is hard to find, especially one who’s good at taking a leisurely stroll

downtown. But once found, a skilled cunnilinguist rarely goes unappreciated. In her essay “Lip Service: On Being a Cunning Linguist,” author and sex columnist Anka Radakovich sings the praises of a boyfriend who specialized in oral sex: “I became tongue-whipped (the female equivalent of pussy-whipped) and even offered to do his laundry if he would come over and satisfy me. After two months, I put a framed photo of his tongue on my desk.”

It’s time to “think outside her box.” When it comes to the oral caress, every man should make a mantra of Rhett Butler’s infamous line to Scarlett O’Hara in *Gone with the Wind*: “You should be kissed, and often, and by someone who knows how.”

Those who know me know I’m a private person. I wouldn’t dream of confiding my battles with sexual dysfunction to the world if I didn’t wholeheartedly believe that there was a compelling need for this book. I know this based on what I’ve read, what I’ve been told, and, most important, what I’ve experienced firsthand as a clinical sexologist: not only do women crave and enjoy cunnilingus; they require it. Any sex therapist will tell you that the number one complaint they hear over and over from women is of an inability to experience orgasm during penis-vagina intercourse. The solution is not simply “more foreplay,” as magazines often chide us, but rather the skillful extension of those activities we associate with foreplay, namely oral stimulation, into *complete*, fully realized acts of lovemaking—the transformation of foreplay into nothing less than *coreplay*.

This book is not anti-intercourse, but rather pro-“outercourse”—a conception of sex that goes beyond penetration, embraces *mutual* pleasure, and is better suited to stimulating the female sexual anatomy to orgasm. This model doesn’t exclude intercourse, but instead promotes the postponement of male gratification until after a woman has achieved her *first* (but hopefully not last) orgasm during a session of sexual activity—a deferment that has the double benefit of vouchsafing female satisfaction while also significantly enhancing the quality of the male climax. This book espouses the postponement of gratification, *not* the postponement of enjoyment.

She Comes First offers men and women a surefire “bird in the hand” approach to good sex, as opposed to the high-stakes “all or nothing” proposition of intercourse. It’s time to close the sex gap and create a level

playing field in the exchange of pleasure, and cunnilingus is far more than just a means for achieving this noble end; it's the cornerstone of a new sexual paradigm, one that exuberantly extols a *shared* experience of pleasure, intimacy, respect and contentment. It's also one of the greatest gifts of love a man can bestow upon a woman.

How to Read this Book

In Part I, The Elements of Sexual Style, you will be introduced to a powerful philosophy that will inform, if not dramatically alter, the way you approach sex and relationships. You will learn to:

- Dispense with “disinformation” and cultivate a true understanding of female sexuality
- Think *clitorally*, rather than *vaginally*; to focus on *stimulation* as opposed to *penetration*
- Postpone gratification without sacrificing pleasure
- Turn foreplay into coreplay
- Skillfully navigate the process of female sexual response and appreciate the role of the clitoris as the powerhouse of pleasure
- Develop a sense of awareness that will render the often elusive female orgasm knowable and tangible beyond the shadow of a doubt

We will also discuss important, often misunderstood, topics such as the “real” anatomy of the female genitalia, hygiene, safe sex, as well as the social and cultural context that informs the way we think and act regarding cunnilingus.

If Part I is the “why” of cunnilingus, then Part II, Rules of Usage, is the “how.” Here you will be introduced to proven oral techniques that will enable you to successfully take a woman through the entire process of sexual response, or what I’ve dubbed the “play process”—foreplay, coreplay, and moreplay.

Whereas many sex books are content to merely tell the reader “what” to do, it's this author's conviction that the “when” is just as important. It's all in the timing, and to that end, Part III, Putting it Together, delineates clear

routines for seamlessly integrating the techniques into a unified experience that will enable you and your partner to reach new erotic heights.

Peppered throughout the book you will also find illustrations, tips, exercises, interesting facts, frequently asked questions, as well as candid responses from some of the many men and women I interviewed regarding sex, relationships, cunnilingus, as well as their own personal do's and don'ts.

Finally, at the end of the book you will find a series of appendices that address many relevant topics and specific situations.

Taken as a whole, *She Comes First* represents the most thorough treatment of the art of cunnilingus currently available, and will not only teach you everything you need to know in order to master the grammar of oral sex, but will also answer any questions you might have along the way.

By the time you finish this book, you'll not only be thinking about sex from a new perspective, but there will also be *nothing* you won't know about how to lead a woman to orgasm with your tongue time and time again.

Pop Quiz

Feel free to read *She Comes First* in whatever manner you find comfortable, but if you're inclined to skip Part I and go straight to the techniques in Part II, then I would ask you first to consider a few simple questions:

- Did you know that the clitoris has *eighteen* parts, all of which play a role in the production of pleasure? Can you identify them?
- Did you know that the vast majority of nerve endings that contribute to the female orgasm are concentrated on the surface of the vulva and do not require any penetration whatsoever in order to be stimulated to orgasm?
- How many different types of orgasms is a woman capable of experiencing?
- Can you say with complete confidence that you know how to locate the G-spot? Can you name any other hidden zones of pleasure?

- Do you know why cunnilingus is the best means of stimulating a woman to multiple orgasms?
- Do you know why a man is partially responsible for his partner's genital scent?
- Are you entirely sure that your partner has never faked an orgasm, and can you unequivocally recognize the difference between the real thing and a screaming phony?

If you answered no to any of these important questions, then I would encourage you to read the book from start to finish. But no matter how you choose to peruse *She Comes First*; I hope that, like *Elements of Style*, it proves to be a book you can come back to time and time again, regardless of your level of expertise.

A Taste of What's to Come

In the spirit of *Elements of Style*, here are a few basic rules to get you started:

1. Learn to Appreciate Irony: because when it comes to human sexuality, life abounds with it. Just for starters, take the fact that men and women's genitals are formed from the same embryonic tissue, yet our respective processes of arousal couldn't be more different. As the founding editors of *Men's Health* magazine, Stefan Bechtel and Laurence Roy Stains, so succinctly put it in their book *Sex: A Man's Guide*, "Studies show that three fourths of men are finished with sex within a few minutes of starting. But women often need 15 minutes or more to become sufficiently aroused for orgasm. And therein lies a world of rage, grief, and airborne pots and pans."

To put it in grammatical terms, most women are left frustrated with "incomplete sentences" in the face of their partners' prematurely "dangling participles." Hence this book's emphasis on the postponement of male gratification and the first part of its title: *She Comes First*. As journalist Paula Kamen documents in *Her Way, a Survey of Contemporary Young Women*, "Women's orgasms are no longer considered a lucky bonus or an

afterthought, which marks a shift away from sexual guilt and toward women's pursuing their own desires, as men always have."

When it comes to pleasuring women, keep in mind the ancient words of Taoist master Wu Hsien, "The man must keep the situation in control and benefit from the communion without undue haste."

2. Don't Mistake Her Subject for an Object: namely, the clitoris. With its eight thousand nerve endings (twice as many as the penis), enviable ability to produce multiple orgasms during a single session of sex, and no known purpose other than pleasure, is it any wonder that Masters and Johnson proclaimed the clitoris "a unique organ in the total of humanity"? The clitoris has over *eighteen* parts, both visible and hidden, that participate in the production of pleasure. (Keep reading, and you'll learn how to master each and every one of them.) Contrary to conventional wisdom—at least the kind that's as common as Ben-Gay and mildew in the men's locker room—the clitoris is much more than just a "love button," it's a sophisticated network of arousal that has more hot spots than a latent volcano.

3. The Tongue Is Mightier than the Sword: especially when it comes to clitoral stimulation. Even porn star Ron Jeremy, in possession of the famous ten-inch member, observed, "More women have gotten off with my tongue than with my penis." Shere Hite, author of the *Hite Report on Sexuality*, went so far as to suggest, "Intercourse was never meant to stimulate women to orgasm." One of the reasons for this is that the clitoris is about 2 to 3 cm closer to the front of the woman's body than the vaginal opening. During intercourse, the penis often misses the clitoris altogether.

In *Sex: A Man's Guide*, the authors cite a study in which ninety-eight wives in happy, stable marriages kept a sex diary that noted the frequency of sexual activity and the level of satisfaction. Of all the activities they mentioned, *cunnilingus ranked as the most satisfying*. Eighty-two percent said having their husbands pleasure them orally was very satisfying; the next highest activity, intercourse, was rated very satisfying by only 68 percent. The women reported that during intercourse they reached orgasm about 25 percent of the time. *But they reached orgasm 81 percent of the*

time during oral sex. As Dr. Alex Comfort wrote of cunnilingus in *The New Joy of Sex*, “One can give the woman dozens of orgasms in this way and she may still want to go on from there.”

4. Learn from Your Mistakes: Unlike the adolescent boys of the Cook Island of Mangaia, who, according to author Shane Mooney, are trained in the finer points of breast stimulation, cunnilingus, and delayed ejaculation in order to guarantee the pleasure of their future partners, our Western education is, alas, an incomplete one. When surveyed by Shere Hite regarding their partners’ oral techniques, the vast majority of women complained that guys were too rough, too impatient; too fast, too slow; off target, or they changed rhythm at the wrong time. One woman even exclaimed, “It seems like he is trying to erase my clitoris.”

Yikes!

But what many women don’t know is that men yearn for feedback and guidance. They crave instruction, but communicating about sex is far from easy, and words often fail us in the heat of the moment. As author Sally Tisdale put it in her book *Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex*, “We can’t really explain how arousal feels, what an orgasm is, and the closer we get to one, the less value words have, the less we can use language at all.”

So we turn to sex books and magazines or, worse, cheesy porno flicks, and locker-room banter. Most books take an encyclopedic approach to sexuality—a little of everything, not a whole lot of anything. They emphasize breadth rather than depth and, *at best*, cunnilingus is given equal attention with other subjects. When it comes to detailing technique, most offer a few scanty pages at most, and almost all write about cunnilingus as an aspect of foreplay rather than as a complete process in its own right. They’re like big fat cookbooks that are limited to a few recipes in each category. But cunnilingus is a repast in and of itself, and there are hundreds, if not thousands, of unique ways to partake.

Attention Men

While *She Comes First* will benefit anyone—straight or gay, male or female—who has an interest in learning about female orgasms and producing them consistently through inspired oral techniques, the book was written primarily for those guys of the world who crave the knowledge to become better, more sensitive lovers, and for the women in their lives who are eager to benefit from their education.

The truth is that men and women differ markedly in how they learn about sex. *The Kinsey Report*, a well-known survey of human sexuality, observed in 1953, “It is obvious that neither younger girls nor older women discuss their sexual experiences in the open in the ways that males do.” A lot has changed since then. In an updated 1990 *Kinsey Report on Sexual Literacy*, the authors note that women aged eighteen to twenty-nine fared better than their male peers in terms of their knowledge of sexuality and attributed the differences to women’s “growing belief that they have a right to sex information and accessible publications about women’s health.” So it would appear that both the women’s movement and the safe-sex movement, with their emphases on clarity and candor, have done much to educate women about their bodies and sexuality in the last half century.

But what about guys?

In both my research and interviews I observed that the women were, in general, more knowledgeable about sex and tended to be much more willing to discuss sexual issues freely and candidly. In describing sexual activities, principally cunnilingus, women were significantly more aware of the qualitative aspects, as well as the technical details, related to their sexual response. While emphasizing the importance of personal experience in acquiring knowledge, women also confirmed that much of their information on sexuality came from friends and parents, as well as books, magazines, and the Internet.

Men, on the other hand, were not as knowledgeable about sexuality, and tended to describe activities such as cunnilingus in more graphic, objectifying detail. Men also acknowledged that they relied more heavily on pornography and firsthand experience when seeking information regarding female sexuality and felt substantially less comfortable seeking “touchy-feely” advice from parents and friends.

So where is a guy to go when seeking specific, accurate information regarding how to stimulate the process of female sexual response? The

media bombards us with sex, 24/7, but there is very little mainstream discussion about human sexuality, and even less that is targeted specifically at men. Ironically, some of the guys I spoke with said that the television show *Sex and the City*—with its candid discussions of oral sex, orgasms, and other issues—was a principal source of information about women’s sexual attitudes and desires. Still others confided that reading magazines like *Cosmo* and *Jane* in private was illuminating, and that there was a quality of information that couldn’t be found in men’s magazines.

One guy summed it up: “*Cosmo* and *Glamour* are much more specific about sex and relationships than men’s magazines like *Playboy* and *Maxim*, which constantly talk about sex, but not sexuality. They’re more ‘conquest-oriented’ than advice-oriented, and they also focus a lot on gadgets, weight lifting, and getting ahead in your job. *Men’s Health* definitely raises the bar, but that’s just one magazine, and even it tends to focus more on achieving perfect abs than on detailed sex advice.”

Unfortunately, both men *and* women end up suffering from this dearth of accurate information—with men flicking their tongues like porno stars, employing sexual positions that have little to do with clitoral stimulation, and generally being clueless about the female anatomy and the process of sexual response.

When it comes to mastering the grammar of oral sex, we need more than just a handful of random tips gleaned from the latest copy of *Maxim* or *Cosmo*. We need that veritable “little rule book,” as *Elements of Style* has been so fondly dubbed: focused, concise, with techniques that make sense, explanations that illuminate, and routines that really work—a book that inspires us to develop our own unique voice and sense of style. *She Comes First* is that book.

So whether you’re just starting down the path of a *cliterary* life, or are already a bona fide member of the *cliterati*, get ready to learn the rules of grammar and to deploy them with style.

Why I Wrote this Book

My own education as a “cunnilinguist” began with sexual dysfunction—a long-drawn-out battle with premature ejaculation (PE). I was hopeless,

pathetic. Just the sight of a woman's naked body could make me lose control, and foreplay quickly led to end of play. In the language of love, I couldn't get past the first syllable. I was sure that on my gravestone, my epitaph would read, "He came. He saw. And then he came again."

Later in life, I learned from my study of the pioneering sex researcher Alfred Kinsey that the typical male sustains penetrative thrusting, on average, for about two and a half minutes. That provided some small comfort, but at the time I felt terribly alone. I often wondered why I was "biologically cursed" to reach orgasm so quickly. Was it a vestigial remnant of the evolutionary battles of natural selection, when a man had to spread his seed quickly in order to ensure the propagation of his genetic material? Would Charles Darwin have told me that what I considered a grievous weakness was, in fact, a competitive advantage in the struggle for the survival of the fittest? Perhaps, but to me it felt more like the "barely hanging on of the unluckiest."

Today, I am convinced that one of the main sources of PE is poor masturbation habits—how boys are taught, or rather *not* taught, to do it quickly, furtively, and shrouded in taboo and secrecy. It doesn't take long for a young man to program himself to seek his pleasure quickly, and as we all know, bad habits are difficult to break. Perhaps if someone had told me early on to masturbate with a woman's orgasm in mind, rather than my own, I would have been spared years of turmoil.

I was a sexual cripple, and oral sex became my crutch. If I couldn't satisfy a woman with my penis, then I'd sure as hell satisfy her with my mouth! I can still remember all the fears, preconceptions, and blunders of my early experiences in college. My first forays into cunnilingus were not unlike many men's—hesitant, tentative; going down here and there for a few licks. I learned through trial and error, but eventually came to realize that cunnilingus was much more than just an arbitrary, or optional, aspect of foreplay; it was *coreplay*. It was an essential process—with a beginning, middle, and end—for leading a woman through the many stages of arousal that eventually culminate in climax. Cunnilingus not only enabled me to pleasure a woman utterly and completely, it allowed me to stop worrying about sex and start enjoying it. In doing so, I was able to drop the anxiety, develop greater self-control, and become a better lover overall. Cunnilingus certainly saved my sex life, and when I think about all the depression and

heartache I suffered as a result of my battles with PE, it's not so far off to say that it saved my *entire* life.

I'll never forget the first time I ushered a woman into orgasm with my tongue. It was a watershed moment. I felt as E. B. White did when, recalling his years as a young struggling writer in New York, he described how it felt to sit down for dinner at Child's restaurant on Fourteenth Street and, going through his mail, discover his first check for a magazine piece he had written: "I can still remember the feeling that this was it, I was a pro at last. It was a good feeling and I enjoyed the meal."

I couldn't agree more.

Today, I'm happily married and able to make love successfully, but I still believe wholeheartedly in the "way of the tongue." It's simply the tool best suited for the job. More than that, I believe that cunnilingus is the most intimate, respectful, and rewarding sexual act a man can engage in. As Sally Tisdale wrote, "To submit to another's belly, or another's mouth. Oral sex may be the most potent of sexual acts. It is an act of power derived from the most vulnerable kind of intimacy."

Some people refer to oral sex as mouth-music, and as a musician I guess you can say I'm well down the path of accomplishment. But it wasn't until I met my wife that I found my Stradivarius—unique, beautiful, and priceless. If she is my violin, then I am her bow. I encourage you to find your Stradivarius. And when you do, protect, cherish, and remain constant to it, for then you will be able to play as a master.

As much as I will discuss general techniques for success, every woman is different, and cunnilingus is ultimately about individual acts of knowing and giving. That's not to say you can't have a lot of fun casually, but such exploits are ultimately the pursuit of technique without a greater sense of purpose—pyrotechnics rather than real fireworks. Giving great head requires trusting the rhythm of what happens and relaxing into a deeper, more instinctive zone of the self. It involves a mutual process of letting go and connecting to each other on every level. There's no faking it. You need to be more than just a technician. You need to imbue technique with all of your senses and imagination. You need to be present, you need to be real; you need to be there in body, mind, and spirit.

As E. B. White wrote, "Style results more from what a person is than from what he knows. But there are a few hints that can be thrown out to

advantage.”

With that in mind, let’s get going.

Part One

The Elements of Sexual Style

“Following then the order of nature let us begin with the principles which come first.”

—Aristotle, *Poetics*

1

She Comes First: The Courtesy That Counts

LADIES FIRST, gentlemen. When it comes to satisfying a woman, a little old-fashioned chivalry goes a long way.

Lest you think the importance of such courtesy is overexaggerated, direct your attention to Lorena Bobbitt, who, when questioned by police as to why she cut off her husband's penis, responded, "He always has an orgasm and doesn't wait for me. It's unfair."

Need one say more?

Men are designed for efficiency. It doesn't take much to get us aroused, it's a rather uncomplicated process, and we tend to come only once before requiring a "refractory period" (also known as the part where we turn over and start snoring). And depending upon our age, this period could last anywhere from a couple of minutes to a couple of days.

The simple fact is that male orgasms come easy. Masters and Johnson dubbed it "ejaculatory inevitability" and the late Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, famous for interviewing thousands about their sex lives, declared that 75 percent of men ejaculate within two minutes.

But when it comes to the female orgasm, nothing's inevitable. As Sally Tisdale wrote:

Male sexuality seems different from mine fundamentally because nothing need be involved but the head and shaft of the penis, no other part of the body need be troubled, touched, undressed, or soiled...the

male orgasm has always seemed to me to burst almost from nowhere, to be infinitely more ready and willing than my own.

The female orgasm is a more complicated affair and often takes much longer to achieve during a session of sexual activity. In particular, her first orgasm is the most difficult to accomplish, requiring persistent stimulation, concentration, and relaxation. Is it any surprise, then, that researchers from the University of Chicago declared in the 1994 *Sex in America Survey* that men reach orgasm during intercourse far more consistently than do women, and that three fourths of men, but less than a third of women, always have orgasms. Less than a third! That means more than two out of three women on average are consistently denied their climax—good reason to start hiding the cutlery.

“The male belongs to Yang

Yang’s peculiarity is that he is easily aroused.

But also he easily retreats.

The female belongs to Yin.

Yin’s peculiarity is that she is slow to be aroused

But also slow to be satiated.”

(Taoist master Wu Hsien)

Irony, bitter and cruel, seems to be embedded into our respective processes of arousal: that a woman, so unique in her sexuality, possessing both a clitoris—an organ designed solely for the production of pleasure—as well as the ability to experience multiple orgasms during a single session of sexual activity, should so often find this vast potential for blazing ecstasy smoldered—a magnificent conflagration left unlit—all for lack of a match that can hold its flame.

It's not a problem with the match, say many men, but rather that a woman's fuse is too long. Perhaps, but then this raises the question how long is too long? Studies, like those by Kinsey and Masters and Johnson, have concluded that among women whose partners spent twenty-one minutes or longer on foreplay, only 7.7 percent failed to reach orgasm consistently. That's a shift of tectonic proportions—from two out of three women *not* being able to reach climax to nine out of ten achieving satisfaction—all because of a matter of minutes.

Few, if any, of the world's problems can be solved with a mere twenty minutes of attention, and yet here, in the complex sociopolitical landscape of the bedroom, we have an opportunity to create bilateral satisfaction. When put that way, in the context of sexual peace and equality, is twenty minutes of focused attention, *applied appropriately*, really too much to ask, especially if it can save your sex life?

Take the path of the true gentleman: postpone your pleasure. As Sir Thomas Wyatt, father of the English sonnet wrote, "Patience shall be my song."

Ushering a woman into orgasm is both exhilarating and liberating. When she comes first, anxiety and pressure are dispensed with; you are emboldened, empowered to pursue with gusto the gratification that awaits you—a climax that will be heightened all the more for having been postponed.

I love to make my girlfriend come, I love to experience the whole thing—the buildup and release of waves of pleasure, the surrender to ecstasy, the spasm of satisfaction, the momentary loss of self. It turns me on even more to know I made it happen." (David, 27)

What greater reward could a man ask for?

2

Her Clitoris: The Little Engine That Could

ILLUSION: The clitoris is “a tiny love button,” “a little pink pearl,” “small as a pea,” “a bud,” “a nub,” “a nib,” “a knob,” “a teeny-weeny cock.”

ALLUSION: There’s more to the clitoris than meets the eye. Much more. Don’t mistake the hooded crown (the “glans” or “head”) for the entire clitoris. As we will discuss, the head is just the tip of the iceberg, a tantalizing allusion to unseen wells of pleasure.*

Like a Greek column, the clitoris has three components—a head, a shaft, and a base—that extend throughout the pelvic area, with visible structures encompassing the entire area of the vulva, from the top of the pubic bone down to the anus, as well as unseen parts inside the vaginal area. In their landmark work, *A New View of a Woman’s Body: A Fully Illustrated Guide*, the Federation of Feminist Women’s Health Centers identified eighteen structures in the clitoral network, some visible, some hidden.

With more than eight thousand nerve fibers, the clitoris has more of these than any other part of the human body and interacts with the fifteen thousand nerve fibers that service the entire pelvic area. This vast erogenous landscape literally throbs with potential pleasure. As science writer Natalie Angier writes of the clitoral network, “Nerves are like wolves or birds: if one starts crying, there goes the neighborhood.” So stop thinking of the clitoris as a little bump, and start thinking of it as a complex network, a pleasure dome, the Xanadu at the heart of female sexuality.

Because it’s all that and more. When engorged with blood during sexual arousal, the clitoris increases in size, just like a penis. In fact, the

clitoris was created from the same embryonic tissue as the penis, and can be compared point by point with the male genitalia. And unlike the penis—burdened with the responsibilities of reproduction and the removal of waste—the clitoris is devoted solely to pleasure and confers upon the female “an infinitely greater capacity for sexual response than a man ever dreamed of.” (Masters and Johnson) According to Greek mythology, when Zeus and Hera went to the hermaphrodite Tiresias in order to determine who experiences more pleasure from sex, men or women, Tiresias responded, “If the sum of love’s pleasure adds up to ten—nine parts go to women, only one to men.”

Like Christopher Columbus sallying forth into the unknown, your exploration of the clitoral network will lead to the discovery of a whole new world. But knowing a little geography goes a long way. The earth isn’t flat; nor is the clitoris a love button. Know your maps, and know that every voyage is unique.

* It’s worth noting that within the medical and scientific communities the actual anatomy of the female clitoris is still a matter of some debate. While there exists a contingent of traditionalists who maintain that the clitoris is composed of nothing more than the glans (the head), there is also a more progressive and widely accepted view that builds on the research of pioneers like Masters and Johnson, Mary Jane Sherfey, and the Feminist Women’s Health Centers among others. This view (espoused within these pages as well) maintains that the clitoris is a complex organ system that is homologous to the male penis.

3

Think Outside Her Box

WHEN DESCRIBING SEX in the proverbial locker room, men tend to employ the language of penetration—adjectives like “hard” and “deep.” We go in, we extricate: “I fucked the——out of her”—as though pleasure was something buried deep inside her womb, a nugget to be rammed, jostled, and liberated with the powerful male tool.

Rare is the man who says, “I made love to her as subtly and lightly as a feather”; “I grazed her vulva as with the delicate wings of a butterfly”; “I barely touched her she came so hard!” And yet such language would be more appropriate, as the inner two thirds of the vagina are substantially less sensitive than the outer third. In a series of experiments, Dr. Kinsey asked five gynecologists to examine the genitals of almost nine hundred women in order to find out which areas were the most sensitive. “The deep interior walls of the vagina really have few nerve endings and are quite insensitive when stroked or lightly pressed.” But when gently touched on their clitorises, 98 percent of women were aware of it.

The superiority of the clitoris to the vagina in stimulating the process of female sexual response is enough to throw many a guy into a tailspin and make him question the very meaning of life, or at least the meaning of his penis. But as difficult as it may be, it’s important to separate the concept of procreation from pleasure: the penis, by dint of its convenient fit into the vagina, may play an instrumental role in the former, but that doesn’t mean it’s ideally suited to the latter.

This sort of talk is none too popular, mainly because it challenges the very foundation upon which our society’s conception of sex has been forged, and throws into doubt the value of intercourse as the principal

paradigm for constructing a model of mutual pleasure. From losing one's virginity to the consummation of a relationship to the cherished simultaneous orgasm, our culture has enshrined the role of genital penetration as the be-all, end-all of heterosexual relationships. Where would the "third date" be without it?

The idea that genital penetration might be seriously overhyped is a bitter pill to swallow, especially for those men of the world who base much of their sexual self-esteem on the value of their penis in stimulating female pleasure. As we will soon see, there is a long history of "clitoral denial" in our culture that stems back to Freud—a way of thinking so deeply embedded into our collective consciousness that even a woman is more likely to question, or repress, the natural instincts, responses, and sensations of her own body—or just fake her way through it—than to challenge the conventional wisdom or risk bruising the male ego. Is it any wonder, then, that according to author Lou Paget the number one question sent in by female readers to the editors of *Cosmopolitan* magazine is: What can I do to have an orgasm during intercourse? Here's a simple answer: Don't have intercourse. Or at least make it part of a larger event and not the event itself.

The pill doesn't have to be bitter, and once swallowed, it can be incredibly liberating. When we know how to recognize and navigate the process of female sexual response, when we understand the role of the clitoris in stimulating that process, then sex becomes easier, simpler, and more rewarding, and we're impelled to create pleasure not just with our penises, but with our hands and mouths, bodies and minds. In letting go of intercourse, we open ourselves up to new creative ways of experiencing pleasure, ways that may not strike us as inherently masculine, but ultimately allow us to be more of a man. Sex is no longer penis-dependent, and we can let go of the usual anxieties about size, stamina, and performance. We are free to love with more of ourselves, with our entire self.

4

The Female Orgasm: Keep it Simple

IN THE LORE of female sexuality, a lot of fuss is made over the differences between clitoral, G-spot, and blended and vaginal orgasms. The clitoral orgasm is often criticized as being quick and lighthearted, while the others are somehow deemed more serious and substantial. But a quick study of anatomy reveals that *all* orgasms are clitoral. The clitoris is the sexual epicenter, an orgasmic powerhouse in which no sensation goes unnoticed. As Natalie Angier writes of the infamous G-spot, the area of soft tissue just inside the vaginal area, “The roots of the clitoris run deep, after all, and very likely can be tickled through posterior agitation. In other words, the G-spot may be nothing more than the back end of the clitoris.”

As for vaginal orgasms and the moans of pleasure that often accompany penetration, sorry to burst your bubble, gentlemen: while we’d like to believe that these sensations of excruciating ecstasy are being delivered from the depths of her vagina by the sheer power and reach of our formidable thrusts, they are actually “caused by pressure on the parts of the clitoris that surround the vaginal opening,” what author Rebecca Chalker refers to as the “clitoral cuff.” When this highly sensitized area is aroused and engorged with blood, a horseshoelike arch forms at the vaginal opening and applies friction and pressure against the male penis, playing a pivotal role in the stimulation of the male orgasm. So, in one sense, both the female *and* the male orgasm depend on the clitoris for stimulation.

For those doubting Thomases who still can’t let go of their vaginal attachment, consider that an estimated one in five thousand women suffers

from an unusual congenital disorder called vaginal agenesis, in which they are literally born *without* a vagina, despite normal development of external genitals, including major and minor labia. While these women are often unable to become pregnant without surgery or intense medical therapy, they are, in fact, *able to experience sexual pleasure and orgasm*—because even though they may lack a vagina, they still have a fully functional clitoris. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of women who have been subjected to the brutalities of a clitoridectomy. This painful mutilation, often referred to as female circumcision, is still practiced today in some cultures and almost always leaves the woman permanently disfigured, traumatized, and deprived of a clitoris and any chance of sexual enjoyment.

What these two examples demonstrate is that even if one adamantly subscribes to the idea of vaginal and G-spot orgasms as being discrete orgasmic experiences unto themselves, the clitoris is clearly the “starter” or catalyst for sexual response. While it’s possible to experience a clitoral orgasm without the presence of a vagina, it’s virtually impossible to experience a vaginal or G-spot orgasm without the presence of a clitoris.

So when considering all of the various terms and types of female orgasm that are often bandied about, we can simplify matters by adopting “Occam’s razor,” the principle coined by the medieval philosopher William of Occam that lies at the root of all scientific modeling and theory building: *Entia non sunt multiplicanda necessitate*. Translation: “One should not make more assumptions than are absolutely necessary.”

When we speculate about the nature of a given phenomenon (like the female orgasm), this principle beseeches us to eliminate those concepts, variables, or constructs that are not needed to explain the phenomenon. In doing so, we reduce inconsistencies, ambiguities, and redundancies, as well as the likelihood of error.

So there’s no need to quibble over semantics when it comes to identifying orgasms. The clitoris encompasses them all. The tongue is far better used to produce orgasms than to waste time naming them.

5

The Tongue Is Mightier Than the Sword

NUMEROUS STUDIES have demonstrated that women whose lovers give them direct clitoral stimulation during sexual activity are more likely to climax consistently. But because of its location, most sexual positions (especially missionary-style) do not properly stimulate the clitoris. As Shere Hite concluded, “Sex provides efficiently for male orgasm, and inefficiently for female orgasm.”

If you were going to paint a landscape in fine, subtle watercolors, would you use a soft, flexible brush, or a cumbersome, unwieldy roller? A woman’s orgasm is complex and often elusive, and many men are unable to control their penises with enough precision to properly guide a woman through the stages of arousal. Making love with one’s penis is like trying to write calligraphy with a thick Magic Marker.

The tongue, on the other hand, is under our direct control, has no time constraints, and can be manipulated with expert precision. Unlike the penis, it’s effective when hard or soft, and never gets overheated. When using his tongue, a man doesn’t have to worry about growing fatigued, nor does he need fret over premature ejaculation or impotence. He can relax and enjoy the act of giving.

In *Sex: A Man’s Guide* the authors conclude, “One of the biggest revelations of the *Men’s Health* magazine survey was the number of men who said that oral sex is the best way to ring her chimes. Over

and over again, we heard such things as ‘oral sex is the only method that consistently enables my wife to reach orgasm’ or ‘if a man knows how to give outstanding oral sex, then a woman will reach orgasm every time.’ ”

The tongue, an array of muscles and nerves held together by a membrane covered with thousands of taste buds, is the most versatile sex organ we possess. It’s the only muscle in the body that’s not attached at both ends. We can touch, taste, and lick with it. The tongue is the instrument that lets us speak many languages, foremost among them the language of love.

But having the right tool is just a start; you need to know how to use it. Many women complain woefully about men’s oral techniques: the lack of consistent, rhythmic pressure; their roughness; the mad stampede for the clitoris. As Strunk and White wrote in *Elements of Style*, “Do not overstate...a single overstatement, wherever or however it occurs, diminishes the whole.”

Sadly, many women also complain about men’s attitudes toward cunnilingus: squeamish and hesitant; overeager, impatient, even angry. And many men fail to finish what they started. In *The Hite Report on Male Sexuality*, the author observes that although most men enjoy cunnilingus, only a small minority of men continued to perform it until the woman reached orgasm.

Most men consider cunnilingus an aspect of foreplay, an appetizer to be served before the main meal of genital intercourse. But according to author Paula Kamen, “In a study of sexually knowledgeable and experienced women who use a vibrator, the most common type of stimulation that usually or always triggers an orgasm is oral sex.”

So perhaps we need to find a word other than “foreplay” in order to properly classify and appreciate the importance of cunnilingus. We need a category that is more encompassing and inclusive. Kamen cites a 1996 *Mademoiselle* article in which author Valerie Frankel uses the term “outercourse” to describe those important nongenital activities that frequently fall under the rubric of foreplay: “Women of the 90s are not squeamish little virgins. We’ve had intercourse—lots of it—and think that Outercourse kicks its ass.”

Regardless of how we categorize it, we need to understand that cunnilingus is a complete process that takes a woman through the gamut of sexual response. Later, in Part II, cunnilingus will be referred to as *coreplay*—the centerpiece of the “play process”—with foreplay encompassing those activities prior to the first “genital kiss.”

Giving expert cunnilingus requires learning appropriate techniques (through reading a book such as this and also through individual experimentation) and then applying them consistently over time in a focused, patient, and loving manner; most important, it requires respecting, sharing, and participating wholly in the erotic intimacy of the moment.

“The penis is very badly placed, anatomically speaking, when it comes to making women come. Better if men simply left their penis alone, stopped attending to those immature nerve fibers, and concentrated instead on learning how to orgasm through their tongues.” (Tisdale)

It sounds funny, but in a certain sense we *can* orgasm through our tongues. It’s not that the tongue is a replacement for the penis; if anything, it’s an addition, an enhancement—an extension. Men often joke of having two heads, the big and the little, and of their frequent battles with each other. However, during cunnilingus, if you trust the moment and let yourself go, you enter a zone where *both* your heads are united in a process of arousal that is synchronized with hers. You become one with yourself and her.

6

Her Inner Goddess

IMAGINE A WORLD in which a woman's orgasm, along with the male's, is a necessary and *critical* part of the reproductive process: a world in which human beings can't reproduce unless *both* man and woman experience orgasm at the moment of insemination. In this bizarre world, men are selected as mates based not on their proficiency to wield a spear or look good in a tux, but on their ability to consistently lead a woman to climax; only those men who are able to experience their pleasure as part of a woman's find themselves accepted by society. The rest are ostracized, cast out, banished to the margin.

Sounds strange, like the makings of a Margaret Atwood novel or an X-rated episode of *The Twilight Zone*, but in fact, up through the eighteenth century, scientists, doctors, and philosophers believed that the female orgasm was an integral component of reproduction. As Natalie Angier noted, "The ancients also saw no difference between men's and women's capacity for sexual pleasure and the necessity of the female orgasm for conception. Galen proclaimed that a woman could not get pregnant unless she had an orgasm."

This type of "nonscientific" thinking harkens back thousands of years, to a time before patriarchs, to an age of matriarchs and goddess worship, when societies revered a woman's sexuality as a life-giving force, and celebrated it with elaborate sex rituals that took place in temples and included costumes, incense, poetry, music, feasts, and wine.

We tend to take it for granted that our society defines sex as a linear process that includes foreplay, vaginal penetration, and the male orgasm. And because of its role in the act of procreation, the male

orgasm/ejaculation is enshrined in our culture's definition of sex. The male orgasm presages the denouement of the sex act, regardless of where a woman is in the process of sexual response and irrespective of her innate biological capacity to experience multiple orgasms. The male orgasm is the signifying event that defines what comes before, as well as after. The male orgasm is indispensable and highly valued by society, not so the females.

What happened? Even up through the seventeenth century, Western science and society maintained a "one-sex" view of the human anatomy; that the genitals of men and women were similar and functioned in a similar way to produce orgasm. As long as the one-sex view prevailed, the capacity for female pleasure was understood, if not always respected.

In the very first paragraph of his essay, "The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs," the well-known Victorian doctor William Acton stated, "I should say that the majority of women (happily for society) are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind. What men are habitually, women are only exceptionally."

According to Rebecca Chalker, author of the insightful book *The Clitoral Truth*, as Western civilization (and women's discontents) progressed through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "Women's sexuality was seen as very different from men's—increasingly weak and chaste and passionless."

Chalker continues, "Anatomists began to ascribe parts of the clitoris to the reproductive or urinary system. Medical illustrations became increasingly more simplistic, leaving parts of the clitoris unlabelled. By Victorian times, the orgasm, which was previously accepted as a natural component of women's sexual repertoire, was seen as unnecessary, unseemly, and perhaps even unhealthy for women."

And then, as if the clitoris didn't have enough problems, along came a psychoanalyst with a Big Cigar (and sometimes, regardless of size, a cigar is really just a cigar)...

7

Avoid Freud

SIGMUND FREUD made a name for himself demonizing the clitoris and formulating a truly cockamamie view of women's sexuality. Freud promulgated the idea that the clitoris was an immature source of sexual pleasure, a mere launching pad for the more "mature" vaginal orgasm, which, of course, could only be produced via genital intercourse. What's particularly insidious is that at the time of his postulating Freud had a rather clear understanding of the anatomical role of the clitoris and chose instead to promote his personal ideas about female sexuality over current scientific knowledge. In short, he abused the bully pulpit.

Freud demoted the clitoris and promoted the vagina, characterizing clitoral orgasms as "infantile." According to Freud, adult women needed to get past their need for clitoral orgasms and develop a desire for penetration; after all, isn't that what penises do? Penetrate? Female masturbation was criticized as creating clitoral dependency; oral sex was verboten. In Freud's view, there were no two ways about it: if a woman couldn't be satisfied by penetrative sex, something must be wrong with her. As Dr. Thomas Lowry commented in his essay "The Cultural Psychology of the Clitoris," "The idea sprang into Freud's head in 1910 without a visible shred of experimental evidence and it has probably caused more unnecessary worry than any other single psychological notion."

With the change to femininity the clitoris should wholly, or in part, hand over its sensitivity and at the same time its importance to the vagina.

(Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*)

Since it was well known at the time that sensitive nerve endings contributing to sexual response were on the surface of a woman's genital area, Freud's views were not based on physiology, or an understanding of anatomy, but rather on a conception of human sexuality that reinforced the penetrative, reproductive model. Hence, a woman's sexuality became subsumed by a male's. From there, it was all downhill.

“Freud's summary dismissal of the clitoris as an important focus of sexual sensation for women had an atomic effect on how physicians and psychologists perceived women's sexuality. It was as if, for most of the twentieth century, women's extensive genital anatomy, and even the explosive little glans, was vaporized. Memory of the clitoris gradually faded until it became an anatomical nonentity.” (Chalker)

Alas, if only Freud, who himself said “anatomy is destiny,” had had the “clitoral sense” to see that this powerful organ would eventually rise from the ashes of his much-ballyhooed cigar. In fairness to Freud, it should be acknowledged that as he neared the end of his life he acknowledged his incomplete understanding of female sexuality and said, “If you want to know more about femininity, you must interrogate your own experience, or turn to the poets, or else wait until science can give you more profound and more coherent information.”

Today, our understanding and appreciation of the importance of the clitoris, and the stimulation of it, owes much to the dogged efforts of those impassioned individuals who bucked the conventional wisdom and did battle throughout the sexual revolution of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s: prominent figures such as Dr. Alfred Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, Shere Hite, Betty Dodson, and less prominent, but equally important ones like Dr. Mary Jane Sherfey, who pioneered the idea that the clitoris is a powerful organ system.

But knowledge is only powerful when disseminated and put into practice. Men need to take the time to learn what most women know intuitively about their bodies—how to listen to and feel them—and sex needs to be redefined as an activity that accommodates a wide variety of sensual and erotic activities; including, but by no means limited to, genital intercourse.

In both philosophy and practice, any definition of sex must, first and foremost, include a powerful element of respect. According to journalist Paula Kamen, author of the survey of sexual attitudes *Her Way*, “Women receiving oral sex is an act most directly reflecting women’s growing power in both their sexual relationships and in society. The practice depends on both women’s and men’s recognition and respect of this power.”

In *The Cradle of Erotica* by A. Edwardes and R.E.L. Masters, we are told that during the Tang Dynasty, the Empress Wu Hu ruled China. She knew that sex and power were inexorably linked, and she decreed that government officials and visiting dignitaries must pay homage to her imperial highness by performing cunnilingus upon her. No joke. Old paintings depict the beautiful, powerful empress standing and holding her ornate robe open while a high nobleman or diplomat is shown kneeling before her, applying his lips and tongue to her royal mound.

When my husband gives me head, it’s such a powerful turn-on... he’s completely focused on me, I’m the center of his attention, and I feel like he’s really loving me, every part of me, all at once.” (Kelly, 32)

Well gone are the days of kings and queens and royal decrees, but inside many a modern woman is an Empress Wu Hu, longing to be honored by her nobleman.

8

What's in a Name?

LET'S FACE IT. Most men can more easily identify what's under the hood of a car than what's under the hood of a clitoris. This “genital confusion” arises because parts of the clitoral network are hidden from the naked eye. Even though the genitals of both men and women are formed from the same embryonic material, and develop during gestation in an equivalent manner, the penis grows *out*, while much of the clitoris grows *in*. (Interestingly, Oliver Wendell Holmes remarked that the female genitalia were simply those of the male turned inside out. But on the contrary, modern science teaches us that the male is a modified female, differentiated during the first trimester of pregnancy. So if anything, the male genitalia are a mirror image of the female's rather than vice versa.)

“Vagina or Vulva: That Is the Question”

The visible parts of the female genitalia are encompassed by the vulva, or what's commonly, and mistakenly, referred to as the vagina. “Vagina” tends to be the de facto word we use to describe “everything down there,” but the entrance to the vagina, also known as the “introitus,” is just one part of the vulva's impressive expanse and certainly not the primary part when it comes to stimulation and the process of arousal.

Etymologically, “vagina” originates from a Latin word meaning “a sheath or scabbard for a sword,” reinforcing its relationship to the penis and dependency upon penetration or insertion for broader meaning—which may

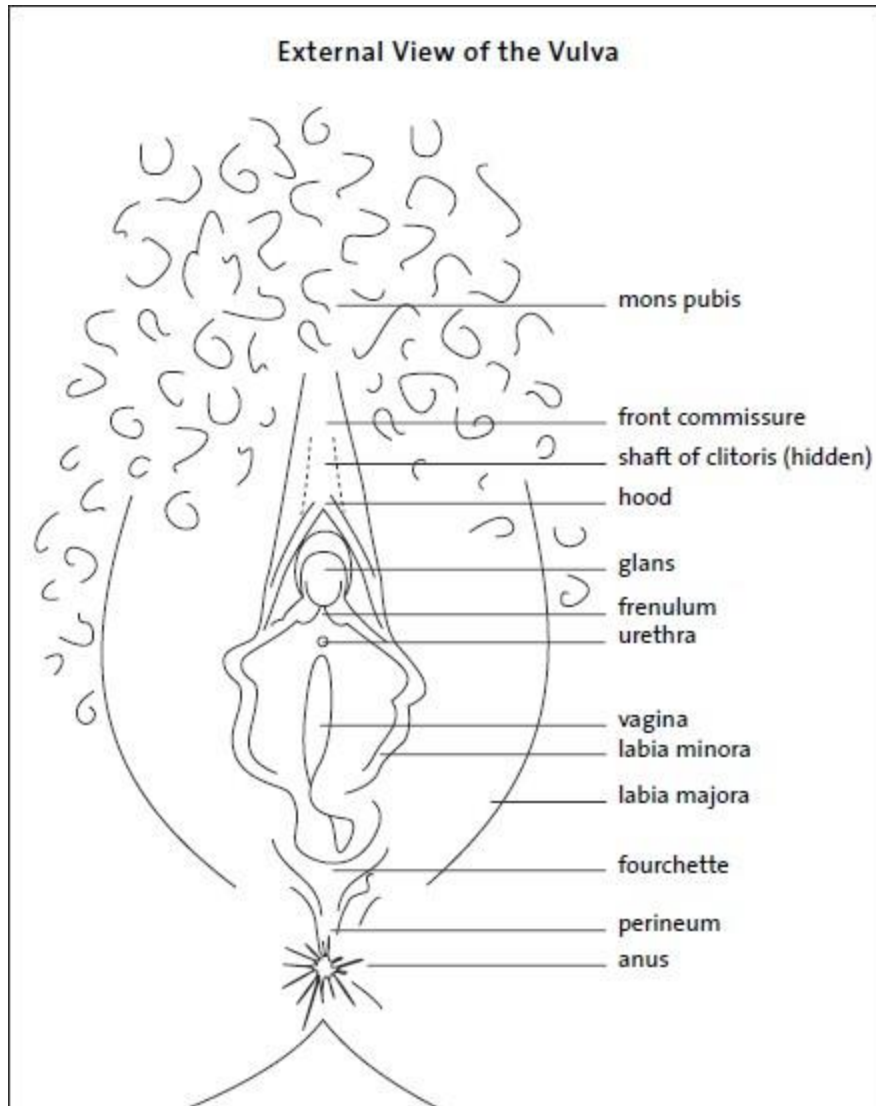
be indicative of the reproductive process, but certainly not the pleasure process.

What's in a name? According to Shakespeare, "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." But the language of science is by no means the language of love; "cunnilingus," "vulva," and "vaginal introitus"—those may not be the first words that come to mind in the heat of the moment. But they're the *right* words, in that they're scientifically accurate and properly descriptive. And knowing the right words is a powerful starting point for clearly understanding the process of sexual response and, ultimately, developing an erotic lexicon that is unique and true to the spirit of your individual relationship.

In speaking of *The Vagina Monologues*, author and activist Eve Ensler described her thought process in committing to the word "vagina" in both the title and throughout the work:

I say it because we haven't come up with a word that is more inclusive, that really describes the entire area and all its parts. "Pussy" is probably a better word, but it has so much baggage connected with it. And besides I don't think most of us have a clear idea of what we're talking about when we say "pussy." "Vulva" is a good word; it speaks more specifically, but I don't think most of us are clear what the vulva includes.

External View of the Vulva



Ms. Ensler is right: the term “vulva” is much more specific and inclusive, especially when describing the visible parts of the clitoris. Although the vagina plays an extremely active role in the reproductive process, it takes a backseat to the clitoris in the production of pleasure; employing “vagina” as a catchall phrase for describing a woman’s genitalia actually promotes an inaccurate understanding of female anatomy, perhaps even more so than the more generic “down there.”

So, “vulva” it is—in the interest of accuracy, as well as in the hope of promoting greater familiarity with the term. The words you choose to use in your bedroom are your own business; supplying you with accurate knowledge is this book’s business.

Now You See It: Female Sexual Anatomy Part 1

The Vulva and External Parts of the Clitoris*

STARTING WITH the visible parts of the clitoral network, let's take a closer look at what's really "down there."

The Mons Pubis. We begin our journey, north, at the mons pubis, also known as the "mons veneris" (mountain of Venus), named after the Roman goddess of love. The mons pubis is a thick pad of fatty tissue, covered in pubic hair, which is sometimes called the love mound because it forms a soft mound over the pubic bone.

Interestingly, the principal function of pubic hair is to attract and retain odors that stem from the release of glands in the pubic area and serve as a source of arousal. As Napoleon noted in a love letter to Josephine: "A thousand kisses to your neck, your breasts, and lower down, much lower down, that little black forest I love so well."

The Labia Majora. Heading south from the mons pubis, we next encounter the starting point of the labia majora (major lips). The outer sides of the labia majora, also known as the outer lips, are rich with pubic hair, whereas their inner sides are smooth, lined with oil and sweat glands. Beneath the skin of the outer lips is a network of erectile tissue that engorges with blood during arousal. The outer lips are analogous to the male scrotum, and both were formed from the same embryonic tissue. Although sensitive to touch, the outer lips are not nearly as sensitive as the labia minora (small lips) or other parts of the clitoral network such as the head and shaft.

The Front Commissure. The outer lips mark an area where the visible parts of the clitoris begin. This highly sensitive area, just above the clitoral head, is called the front commissure, and it's from this point that the clitoral shaft—an unseen, but instrumental part of the clitoris—protrudes.

The Labia Minora. Enfolded within the labia majora are the labia minora (little lips), although many insist that it's more apt to refer to both sets of lips respectively as *outer* and *inner*, rather than big and little, since the inner lips sometimes protrude out and beyond the outer lips. Interestingly, the inner lips are also archaically known as “nymphae,” named after the nymphs of ancient Greece who were famous for their irrepressible libidos and are the source of the term “nymphomania.”

Some anthropologists speculate that a woman's use of lipstick stems from her desire to have the visible upper lips resemble the inner hidden lips below—a signal to the opposite sex that she is sexually ready.

The inner lips enfold and surround the clitoral glans (the head), the urethral opening, and the introitus (entrance) to the vagina. Like the inner side of the labia majora, these smaller, inner lips have no hair, but are layered with oil glands that look and feel like tiny bumps. Dense with nerves, the inner lips are extremely sensitive and play an important role in the process of arousal.

The inner lips are remarkably diverse in size and appearance. From woman to woman, and often on the *same* woman, no two lips are the same. Some lips are narrow; others wide; some curl inward, others flare outward. Sometimes the texture is glossy and smooth, sometimes wrinkled and bumpy. During the process of arousal, the inner lips change color, from light pink to darker hues, and swell and puff in size as they engorge with blood.

The Hood. The outer edges of the inner lips meet just above the sensitive clitoral head to form the well-known protective hood (which is analogous to the foreskin of the penis), also known as the prepuce. The friction created when the clitoral hood rubs against the head is a powerful source of stimulation and pleasure. The hood also protects the head from overstimulation; just prior to the release of orgasm, it's into the folds of the hood that the head seeks refuge.

The Frenulum. Below the head, the inner edges of the labia minora meet to form the frenulum, a small expanse of soft, sensitive skin, also known as the bridle. Like the inner lips, this area is rich in nerve fibers and is extremely sensitive to the touch.

The Fourchette. The bottom edges of the lips meet beneath the vaginal entrance in an area known as the fourchette, or little fork. Just as the front commissure marks the top part of the visible clitoris, the fourchette marks the bottom.

The Clitoral Glans (the head). Protected by the hood of the inner lips, the head is the crown jewel that rests atop the unseen shaft and crura (the legs). With approximately eight thousand nerve endings, twice as many as the head of the penis and more than any other part of the human body, the head is the visible part of a woman's clitoris that often gets referred to as the "love button." It's not a bad term; just remember that it applies to only *one* part of the clitoris—the head.

One of the biggest mistakes a lover can make is to underestimate the sensitivity of the clitoral head. In fact, at the peak of sexual arousal, the head becomes so sensitive that, with a little help from the suspensory ligament (an unseen part of the of the clitoris), it retracts beneath its hood and is often hidden at the moment of climax.

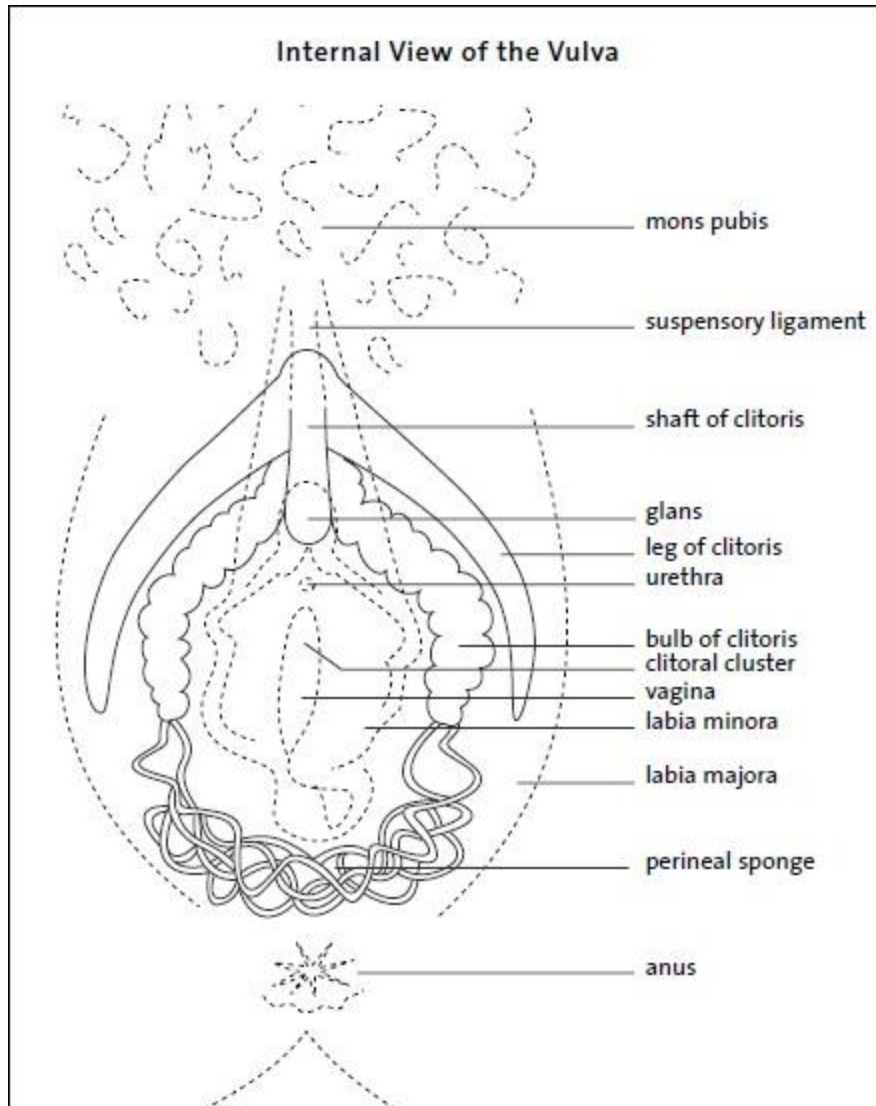
Some heads are large; others are small. Size varies greatly, just as it does with the male penis. But regardless of size and shape, all contain the same

number of nerve endings, so clitoral dimensions have no impact on a woman's sensitivity.

There's quite a bit of contention over the etymology of the word "clitoris." Some believe it stems from the Greek, *kleitoris*, meaning "little hill or slope"; others say it comes from the Greek verb *kleitoriazein*, meaning "to touch or titillate lasciviously, to be inclined to pleasure"; and still others claim that the Greek word *kleitoris* originally meant "divine and goddesslike." In some sense, all these meanings are true.

Perineum. The perineum is the small expanse of skin just above the anus and just beneath the vaginal entrance (sometimes referred to casually as the "taint," because "it t'aint one or the other"). Beneath the skin of the perineum is a network of blood vessels and tissue, which fill with blood during arousal and become intensely sensitive. Dr. Kinsey observed during his research that the perineum is "highly sensitive to touch, and tactile stimulation of the area may provide considerable erotic arousal." When making your travel plans of the clitoral network, make sure to include this southern hot spot.

Internal View of the Vulva



* While there is no shortage of documentation on the female sexual anatomy, as well as on the process of female sexual response, our review of these areas is based on the groundbreaking work of the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers and their highly informative book *A New View of a Woman's Body*. Based on years of research and self-examination, FFWHC has redefined much of what had been previously held to be true about the nature of female sexuality.

Now You Don't: Female Sexual Anatomy Part 2

The Internal Parts of the Clitoris

WHEN IT COMES to the female genitalia and the hidden parts of the clitoris, seeing is only the first part of believing. You need to rely on all of your senses, especially touch. In their book *A New View of a Woman's Body*, the Feminist Center for Health identified eighteen parts in the clitoral network, many of which are unseen but are nonetheless felt or contribute to the experience of feeling. Let's review the internal parts of the clitoris:

The Clitoral Body. Attached to the head, and running just beneath the surface of the skin, the clitoral shaft can easily be felt, especially when aroused and filled with blood. A soft little pipe, the shaft is composed of spongy erectile tissue that is extremely receptive to sensation. The shaft extends north from the head toward the mons pubis for about three quarters of an inch before forking and dividing like a wishbone into two thin crura (or legs) that flare downward along the path of the inner lips and surround twin bulbs of erectile tissue, known as the clitoral bulbs.

If you've ever noticed that the clitoral head seems to retract and disappear under its protective hood during peak arousal, that's because the suspensory ligament—attached to the head at one end and the ovaries at the other—is being stretched, causing the head to retract.

Additionally, the clitoris has layers of muscle, usually referred to as vaginal muscles or pelvic floor muscles. There is the oval-shaped bulbocavernosus muscle that rests between the inner lips and the bulbs of the clitoris. This muscle is interwoven with muscle that encircles the anus, and is part of the reason that anal stimulation is often a turn-on and hence part of the clitoral network.

Underneath it all is a broad, flat layer of muscle called the pubococcygeus (pew-bo-cok-SIH-gee-us) or PC muscle. The PC muscle is also known as the “Kegel” muscle, named after Dr. Arnold Kegel who observed that the PC muscle contracts during orgasm. Kegel subsequently developed a series of exercises designed to strengthen the pelvic muscles and heighten pleasure for both partners, hence the birth of “Kegels.” In both men and women, the PC muscle is easily identified as the one that allows us to stop the flow of urine.

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