



Swoon: Great Seducers and Why Women Love Them

By Betsy Prioleau

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Swoon is a glittering pageant of charismatic ladies' men from Casanova to Lord Byron to Camus to Ashton Kutcher. It challenges every preconceived idea about great lovers and answers one of history's most vexing questions: what do women want?

Contrary to popular myth and dogma, the men who consistently beguile women belie the familiar stereotypes: satanic rake, alpha stud, slick player, Mr. Nice, or big-money mogul. As Betsy Prioleau, author of *Seductress*, points out in this surprising, insightful study, legendary ladies' men are a different, complex species altogether, often without looks or money. They fit no known template and possess a cache of powerful erotic secrets.

With wit and erudition, Prioleau cuts through the cultural lore and reveals who these master lovers really are and the arts they practice to enswoon women. What she discovers is revolutionary. Using evidence from science, popular culture, fiction, anthropology, and history, and from interviews with colorful real-world ladykillers, Prioleau finds that great seducers share a constellation of unusual traits.

While these men run the gamut, they radiate joie de vivre, intensity, and sex appeal; above all, they adore women. They listen, praise, amuse, and delight, and they know their way around the bedroom. And they've finessed the hardest part: locking in and revving desire. Women never tire of these fascinators and often, like Casanova's conquests, remain besotted for life.

Finally, Prioleau takes stock of the contemporary culture and asks: where are the Casanovas of today? After a critique of the twenty-first-century sexual malaise?the gulf between the sexes and women's record discontent?she compellingly argues that society needs ladies' men more than ever. Groundbreaking and provocative, *Swoon* is underpinned with sharp analysis, brilliant research, and served up with seductive verve.

12 illustrations

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Editorial Review

Review

“I read *Swoon* in the hope that some of its subjects would even slightly resemble me. I loved the book anyway.” (Andy Borowitz, comedian and New York Times best-selling author)

“Betsy Prioleau’s witty and compelling book is a fresh take on the question of what women want. I wholly agree with her thesis that the true seducer is not the swaggering Don Juan of myth and melodrama, but the ordinary-looking man who likes, loves, and listens to women.” (Molly Haskell, author of *Frankly, My Dear: Gone with the Wind Revisited*)

“A fun, frothy complement to cultural historian Prioleau’s *Seductress: Women Who Ravished the World* (2003)... A merrily readable literary history/dating manual.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“Betsy Prioleau’s vivacious prose grabs the reader, as does her marvelous wit, her insight into sexual desire, and her extraordinary research. It’s a fascinating, very sexy read, especially her interviews with great lovers of today who detail why they’re so successful in their seduction of women.” (Barbara Taylor Bradford, author of *Letter from a Stranger*)

“*Swoon* is a revelatory?and revolutionary?work that radically expands our understanding of human desire and unveils the mysteries surrounding passionate love. Prioleau answers Freud’s vexed question: “What do women want?” It is also a profound cultural history of eros with evocative case studies of great seducers. The reader of this remarkable book will be happily seduced and enlightened.” (Peter J. Buckley, MD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, Albert Einstein College of Medicine)

About the Author

Betsy Prioleau is the author of *Seductress* and *Circle of Eros* and was a scholar in residence at New York University where she taught cultural history. She lives in New York City.

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Patricia Gross:

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Bruce Mull:

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