



# **G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire**

*Katherine Frank*

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## G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire Katherine Frank

Based on her experiences as a stripper in a city she calls Laurelton—a southeastern city renowned for its strip clubs—anthropologist Katherine Frank provides a fascinating insider's account of the personal and cultural fantasies motivating male heterosexual strip club "regulars." Given that all of the clubs where she worked prohibited physical contact between the exotic dancers and their customers, in *G-Strings and Sympathy* Frank asks what—if not sex or even touching—the repeat customers were purchasing from the clubs and from the dancers. She finds that the clubs provide an intermediate space—not work, not home—where men can enjoyably experience their bodies and selves through conversation, fantasy, and ritualized voyeurism. At the same time, she shows how the dynamics of male pleasure and privilege in strip clubs are intertwined with ideas about what it means to be a man in contemporary America. Frank's ethnography draws on her work as an exotic dancer in five clubs, as well as on her interviews with over thirty regular customers—middle-class men in their late-twenties to mid-fifties. Reflecting on the customers' dual desires for intimacy and visibility, she explores their paradoxical longings for "authentic" interactions with the dancers, the ways these aspirations are expressed within the highly controlled and regulated strip clubs, and how they relate to beliefs and fantasies about social class and gender. She considers how regular visits to strip clubs are not necessarily antithetical to marriage or long-term heterosexual relationships, but are based on particular beliefs about marriage and monogamy that make these clubs desirable venues. Looking at the relative "classiness" of the clubs where she worked—ranging from the city's most prestigious clubs to some of its dive bars—she reveals how the clubs are differentiated by reputations, dress codes, cover charges, locations, and clientele, and describes how these distinctions become meaningful and erotic for the customers. Interspersed throughout the book are three fictional interludes that provide an intimate look at Frank's experiences as a stripper—from the outfits to the gestures, conversations, management, coworkers, and, of course, the customers.

Focusing on the experiences of the male clients, rather than those of the female sex workers, *G-Strings and Sympathy* provides a nuanced, lively, and tantalizing account of the stigmatized world of strip clubs.

## G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire Details

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# **From Reader Review G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire for online ebook**

## **Lara says**

Strip club as sociology project = no fun at all.

'Bare' by Elisabeth Eaves was so much better...and not so obviously a thesis. No one should be forced to read theses except college professors.

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## **Larissa says**

For anyone who ever pondered about the power struggles in a strip club, this one is for you. Being a feminist myself I found this very interesting. The book is written by a graduate student who is, as cliché as it sounds, working in the strip club for her college project uncover. She gives a detailed accounts and insight into the lives of strippers, regulars and the relationship aspect of the strip club. You'll never look at strip clubs the same.

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## **The Sapphic Nerd says**

This book investigates why some men regularly go to no-contact strip clubs. What are they really paying for if they aren't getting sexual release? How do these men see themselves, and how do they justify their being there when many are married/in committed monogamous relationships? It's fascinating, especially because the ethnographer did her fieldwork as a stripper, which gives us both perspectives. I really liked reading the anecdotes as well.

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## **Rachael says**

This book is fascinating. Frank has decided to stop asking the question, "WHY do women strip?" and start asking the question, "WHY do men go to strip clubs?"

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## **Lola Montgomery says**

Right before the recent explosion of scholarship on burlesque was this. Highly recommended as a great example of a PhD thesis and for the thinking club stripper.

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