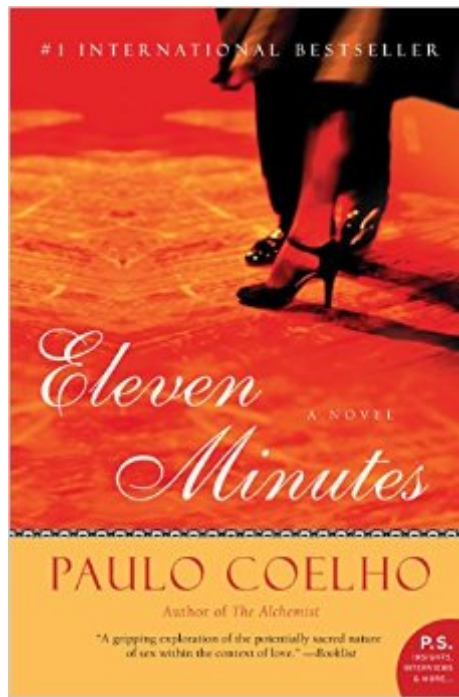


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Eleven Minutes: A Novel (P.S.)



Synopsis

Eleven Minutes is the story of Maria, a young girl from a Brazilian village, whose first innocent brushes with love leave her heartbroken. At a tender age, she becomes convinced that she will never find true love, instead believing that love is a terrible thing that will make you suffer. . . . A chance meeting in Rio takes her to Geneva, where she dreams of finding fame and fortune. Maria's despairing view of love is put to the test when she meets a handsome young painter. In this odyssey of self-discovery, Maria has to choose between pursuing a path of darkness "sexual pleasure for its own sake" or risking everything to find her own inner light and the possibility of sacred sex, sex in the context of love.

Book Information

Series: P.S.

Paperback: 273 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (March 29, 2005)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (285 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #22,826 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Sacred Sexuality #12 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Caribbean & Latin American #873 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Family Saga

Customer Reviews

Paulo Coelho's title refers to what his protagonist Maria discovers about the sexual act: it takes only eleven minutes on average to complete and yet people are obsessed with it. The novel begins in Brazil, where young Maria suffers her first unrequited loves and determines that she will never bare her heart again. When an accidental meeting on a Rio beach offers Maria an Swiss adventure, she leaves her Brazilian life behind. Once in Geneva, she becomes a prostitute by night and a consumer of books and facts by day. What Maria learns as she explores both the darkest and the most mundane recesses of desire seems to confirm what she has believed all along, that eleven minutes of pleasure is hardly worth the effort. However, when she meets two extraordinarily different

gentlemen who take her to unexpected places within herself, the truth of these eleven minutes is challenged. The novel begins like a fairy tale - "Once upon a time, there was a prostitute named Maria" - and this opening sentence unfortunately sets a cold, impersonal tone that takes Coelho several chapters to overcome. Although the language retains this removed simplicity throughout, Maria's predicament gradually engages the reader as Maria takes a more active and personal role in the story. Maria, it is clear, is not an "average" prostitute - if there can be such a person - and her unique perspective forms the soul of ELEVEN MINUTES. Her ambition and curiosity distinguish her from not only her colleagues but from everyone else in Geneva. At times the intellectual discussions of desire and love can get tedious, as Coelho is at his best in the midst of scenes and description, but overall this novel is a lively "fairy tale" with a prostitute as its unlikely heroine.

I admit it - I don't like surprises. When I go to a restaurant, I always order the same thing. After all, if I know one thing is good, why try something else? Surprise parties? I hate them - they scare the crap out of me. Plot twists in movies? I think they're so rarely done well, they only annoy me. So when I saw Paulo Coelho's new book, *Eleven Minutes*, on the bookshelf, I knew I had to get it. After all, I adored the other book I had read by him, *The Alchemist*. I reveled in the idea of curling up on my couch with an old friend - how I equate reading books by authors I like. *Eleven Minutes* is a book about sex. You can cut it other ways, but that's what it comes down to. The title itself refers to the length of time it takes to commit the act. The world we live in revolves around sex, no matter how much people try to disguise or argue that fact. Rather than dispute it or make sex ugly, Coelho presents sex as a beautiful lesson to be mastered as one gains experience. Maria is a prostitute from a small town in Brazil who gets convinced to move to Geneva, Switzerland, to become a stage sensation. Doing Brazilian dances at a sleazy bar does not bring the fame Maria wishes so she gets out of her contract and tries to fend for herself in Geneva. With no money and little knowledge of the language though, she ends up working as a prostitute. While Maria's entrance into prostitution is probably pretty typical, she is not who one imagines when they think of a sex worker. She visits the library religiously and during downtimes at her workplace, she reads and takes notes on matters of psychiatry, love, sex and farm management. She learns to provide for her clients physical and mental needs.

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