



Bare: On Women, Dancing, Sex, and Power

Elisabeth Eaves

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It began when she was a teenager with an awareness of her body and the reaction other people had to it. It continued with the realization that women's bodies often gave them a strange power over men. As an adult, it became a fascination with professional sex workers, leading to a plunge into their world. And when Elisabeth Eaves left the world of peep shows and private dancers for the more socially acceptable career of international journalism, she found she could not put that fascination behind her. Her experiences had left her with too many questions and too few answers. So she returned to the world she had left behind. Now, in this candid and insightful book, she recounts her firsthand experience of stripping and gives us a new understanding of women's sexuality and contemporary sexual mores.

Bare follows the author and her fellow dancers through Seattle strip clubs and bachelor parties, exploring in riveting detail Eaves's own motivations and behavior, as well as those of her coworkers, as they make their way through the sometimes exhilarating, often disturbing world of stripping. Grounded in an understanding of the intricate dynamics of exchanging sexual services for money, Eaves's narrative examines the ways in which the work affects the women: how they negotiate the slippery boundaries between their jobs and their "real" lives; how their personal relationships are altered; how they reconcile themselves—or don't—to the stereotypes that surround their profession; whether the work is exploitative or empowering or both.

In its unstinting honesty, **Bare** demands that we take a closer look at the way sexuality is viewed in our culture; what, if anything, constitutes "normal" desire; the ethics of swapping money—or anything else—for sex; and how women and men navigate the perilous contradictions and double standards that make up today's socio-sexual conventions. The stories Eaves tells—outrageous, funny, sad, and deeply affecting—provide an engrossing and unforgettable look at a group of women who have a lot to reveal, not only about one of America's largest and most taboo industries, but about the restrictions, joys, and hypocrisies of the world in which we all live.

From the Hardcover edition.

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