

c h a s i n g

Her



chasing
Her
A MEMOIR OF DESIRE AND
DEVOTION

BALWIN RATRA

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to erotic hunger.

Our avoidance of a loving, honest relationship with sex is
quietly destroying us.

May this book serve as a benevolent inspiration towards ecstatic
nourishment, truthful inquiry, and harmonious relating.



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Author's Note

This book is about desire. The kind that drives you crazy. The kind that had me chasing women for years, thinking the answer to my emptiness was somewhere between her legs if I could just figure out how to get there. And many answers were. But somewhere along the way, I realized the chase was never just about sex.

It was about contact—with aliveness, with my depth, with something I couldn't name. Women were the doorway, not the destination.

I didn't become whole by conquering desire. I became whole by learning how to feel—without fleeing, performing, or numbing. The chase was necessary. The suffering was necessary. And the letting go was necessary. Because without going all the way into desire, I never would have discovered that it wasn't the enemy. It was the compass.

This book is explicit. It's uncomfortable. It's the truth I lived.

Everything in this book happened. The heartbreak, the hunger, the fumbling, the breakthroughs—all of it. I've changed names, including my own (you'll know me as Bruce, which is a name my mom floated for me), and altered some locations and details to protect the people who were part of this journey.

But the truth of it—the raw, cringey, sacred—yup, that shit happened.

Prologue

“Welcome to Mindful Orgasm,” Cassandra announced, planting her heels on the edge of the small stage like she was about to deliver a sermon. She had long auburn hair and arch-defying heels, and she wore a skintight black dress that flattered her slim figure. The rest of us sat there looking like we’d just been called on in class and didn’t know the answer.

I scratched my neck, pulling at my collar to catch a breeze of whatever air there was between my seat and the four rows of chairs squished together at the center of the room. Next to me, a slightly balding, middle-aged man also fidgeted in his suddenly itchy sweater.

“MO is a consciousness practice where a stroker strokes a woman’s clitoris for twenty minutes with no agenda except to feel,” Cassandra continued.

Her words rippled through my body and kicked my internal temperature up a notch. I had been meditating for twelve years and chasing women for longer. Not even in my most unconscious fantasies could I have dreamed a place where both of these parts of me would coincide.

“So—why the clitoris?” Cassandra asked the room.

The tension of everyone’s desire, the thing that brought us to this workshop to begin with, thickened in the silence.

“Uh, hello!” She waved her hand. “This one region of the body has eight thousand nerve endings whose only purpose is to give pleasure. That’s ten times more than a penis, all bundled up in a fraction of the size. It’s literally a button made to make women feel good.”

The room went silent. My breath stalled.

Something old stirred in me: the sense that women carry entire worlds inside them—and that my body woke up every time I got close to one.

All I could feel was the humiliation of my ignorance. I’d spent a decade meditating, studying pickup, improving myself in every way I knew how. I had finally arrived at what felt like the pinnacle—confident, resourceful, someone

who thought he knew something. And yet here I was, clueless about how to actually please a woman. I was thirty years old with more fingers than sexual encounters. A woman’s body was still foreign, holy territory I had no idea how to navigate.

As I scanned the rustic chic loft, I realized, for the first time in my life, that I had found a woman’s world. The program teachers, sales team, and welcome guides who put newcomers at ease were mostly women. All of my life, men had been my primary source when it came to understanding women. I could sense a different care in this space. It was offering something I hadn’t experienced before. The women were in charge, about to throw me into the fire of learning how to touch the most sensitive part of their body.

Something animal in me jolted awake. Heat crawled up my spine, my palms went slick, and my senses sharpened in every direction. Their perfume, their movements, even the sound of their bracelets clinking sent tiny shocks through my body. I wasn’t just nervous; I felt exposed. I had been training my whole life for this moment—for sex and intimacy to finally make sense. I wasn’t just ready to surrender, I was already halfway gone.

But that room wasn’t the beginning. Not even close.

Act One





Chapter 1

By the time I was twenty-one, I was doing as well as any academically ambitious guy who had a porn addiction and had never surpassed five foot eight. Which is to say: not too amazing. I grew up chubby with glasses and walked like a duck because of my flat feet. Without fail, I was always picked last for any kind of sport (girls included). The only kind of winning I did was at math tournaments. I grew up confused and ashamed because I never felt like I fit anywhere, especially as an Indian kid with immigrant parents and one sibling, living in a predominantly white neighborhood in Queens.

The story of my name starts with a priest, a holy book, and two parents who, after an arranged marriage, were still learning the art of compromise. In their tradition, a local priest opens the Guru Granth Sahib to a random page, and whatever letter the passage begins with becomes the first letter of your name. My parents got “B.” My mother wanted Bevin—British, soft, assimilable. My father wanted Baljeet—classic, Punjabi, proud. Each thought the other’s choice would get their kid bullied. The stalemate ended when my mother, a comic book fan, floated a third option. And so: Bruce.

Once, when I was twelve and my group of friends were taking turns sharing their hots for different girls, I mustered up the courage to confess my own crush.

“Give it up, Bruce. Girls don’t like nerds,” my friend had said before I could even say her name.

Everyone had their role, and Steve Urkel was mine.

But even Steve Urkel had fantasies. Mine started in first grade with a girl named Emily—pigtails, a sweet smile she’d flash me from across the classroom. She never spoke to me, but I’d imagine she wanted to. At night, after the

bullying, after the “Say *wahoo*, fat boy,” after my body stopped aching from being poked and shoved, I’d turn my mind to Amazonian fantasies, or to girls like Emily—soft and sweet. Women, even imaginary ones, were the only place the pain couldn’t follow.

As I got older, it became obvious that all the guys around me had something going for them: some kind of X factor, some charm they could turn on anywhere, any time. I did my best to copy their mannerisms. In high school, I threw a house party to impress a girl I’d been talking to for months, only to watch another guy woo her within minutes. Watching her giggle as he grabbed her ass, something in me went dark. Not heartbreak, just a brutal taste of unworthy emptiness.

A part of me collapsed that night. It wasn’t just her choosing him—it was the reminder that I was never chosen.

By senior year, I realized that if I wasn’t going to fall in love or get laid before prom, I could at least set myself up for success in college. It was the early 2000s. Movies like *Superbad*, *American Pie*, and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* shaped my idea of what a normal, healthy guy was supposed to be. Sex wasn’t just desire—it was the baseline. All I knew was something in me always lit up any time I was near a woman—a hum in my chest, a sharpening of focus I couldn’t explain—so it made perfect sense to follow the guys who seemed to have figured it out. Other guys got lit up by sports, cars, or their muscles. For me, it was always women. Their presence hit a switch I couldn’t explain, so I watched the guys who got their attention and tried to learn.

I befriended a buff guy named Dino, well known around Braddock Park. He helped me lose the baby fat and taught me how to pack and smoke hookah—an invaluable activity that somehow gave me confidence later when making friends.

With my new look and better social skills, college felt promising. My freshman roommate talked a lot about his sexual experiences with women and was generous in sharing his methods. I followed his lead in the club. I took his advice and didn’t wear underwear when we went out.

“For easy access,” he had explained when bragging about all the hand jobs women gave him on the dance floor.

That evening quickly went from a moment of absolute ecstasy—grinding with a girl for the first time—to a complete nightmare. The friction of her ass against my jeans made my dick burn to the point I could barely walk. Apparently, a small percentage of uncircumcised men are vulnerable to paraphimosis, which is when the foreskin is pulled back so far to the point it gets

stuck. I went home and screamed in the dormitory bathroom for help until the EMT came. My parents met me at the hospital. I was eighteen and signed off on the doctor’s advice for an emergency circumcision.

No one talked about the incident, and I was way too humiliated to bring it up. Even to this day, my family has never dared to mention that experience. Only my older cousin, about once every other year when we are alone, drunk, and stoned, will randomly burst out, “Fuck, B, out of all the crazy shit that happened, your story takes the cake. If I didn’t know you, I just would never believe it.”

—

I moved off campus and avoided women altogether. Given my timidity and insecurity as a kid, this was pretty easy to achieve. Here’s the thing: Women, as far as I knew, were the most mysterious, intimidating, and alluring creatures on the planet. Each woman I saw radiated like a goddess. I loved the *idea* of women so much, I was terrified of making a fool of myself in front of one.

It was easier, and my natural instinct, for me to look elsewhere. I focused on school, made friends through hosting study groups, volunteered at a crisis hotline center, and in my off hours watched enough porn to consider it part of my routine.

That loop—school, volunteer, jerk off, repeat—held my whole life in place. I didn’t even realize how small my world had become. Until Amanda blew the door open.