



Eleven Minutes: A Novel (P.S.)

By Paulo Coelho

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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.

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Eleven Minutes: A Novel (P.S.) By Paulo Coelho Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"Once upon a time, there was a prostitute called Maria"-thus begins Coelho's latest novel, a book that cannot decide whether it wants to be fairy tale or saga of sexual discovery, so ends up satisfying the demands of neither. In his dedication, bestselling Brazilian novelist Coelho (*The Alchemist*) tells readers that his book will deal with issues that are "harsh, difficult, shocking," but neither his tame forays into S&M nor his rather technical observations about female anatomy and the sad but hardly new fact that many women are dissatisfied with their sex lives will do much to shock American readers. In *Maria*, however, the author has created a strong, sensual young woman who grabs our sympathy from the first, as she suffers unrequited love as a child, learns a bit about sex as a teenager and, at 19, makes the ill-advised decision to leave Rio on a Swedish stranger's promise of fame and fortune. Maria's trials and triumphs-she goes from restaurant dancer to high-class prostitute-would make for an entertaining if rather prosaic novel, but Coelho, unfortunately, does not leave it there. Instead, he embarks on a philosophical exploration of sexual love, using Maria's increasingly ponderous and pseudo-philosophical diary entries as a means for expounding on the nature of sexual desire, passion and love. At the end, the story boils down to a rather predictable romance tarted up with a few sexy trappings.

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From [Booklist](#)

Coelho, author of the best-selling *The Alchemist* (1993), opens this compelling tale with the classic phrase, "Once upon a time," then halts and ironically addresses the reader regarding the appropriateness of using these words in connection with a prostitute. But the narrator proceeds nonetheless, alternating between third-person narration about the heroine and first-person excerpts from her diaries. Maria has been refused many things while growing up in a Brazilian village, so she readily agrees to travel to Geneva, where promised stardom as a South American dancer awaits. Once there, however, she is duped into a year's work to repay her passage. She manages to wrangle free, and chooses prostitution as a "temporary" solution, all the while equating love with suffering, and using the local library for self-education and her journal for self-expression. As she records her thoughts, she ponders the meaning of 11 minutes: the time it takes to have sex. Coelho tells us sex is civilization's core problem, and that it's far more serious and worrisome than waning rain forests or the hole in the ozone layer. A gripping exploration of the potentially sacred nature of sex within the context of love, this may well become Coelho's next international best-seller. *Whitney Scott*
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Review

"A rare combination of craftsmanship, imagination and inspiration." (Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jack Crawford:

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John Bledsoe:

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