



Unrequited: The Thinking Woman's Guide to Romantic Obsession

By Lisa A. Phillips

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Blending memoir, literary exposition, and revealing case studies, *Unrequited* is a powerful, surprising, and empathetic cultural and psychological exploration of one-sided romantic obsession.

The summer Lisa A. Phillips turned thirty, she fell in love with someone who didn't return her feelings. She soon became obsessed. She followed him around, called him compulsively, and talked about him endlessly. One desperate morning, after she snuck into his apartment building, he picked up a baseball bat to protect himself and began to dial 911. Her unrequited love had changed her from a sane, conscientious college teacher and radio reporter into someone she barely recognized—someone who was taking her yearning much too far.

In *Unrequited*, Phillips explores the tremendous force of obsessive love in women's lives. She argues that it needs to be understood, respected, and channeled for personal growth—yet it also has the potential to go terribly awry. Interweaving her own story with frank interviews and in-depth research in science, psychology, cultural history, and literature, Phillips describes how romantic obsession takes root, grows, and strongly influences our thoughts and behaviors.

Going beyond images of creepy, fatally attracted psychos, male fantasies of unbridled female desire, and the platitudes of self-help books, Phillips reveals a powerful, troubling, and surprisingly common phenomenon. As she illuminates this mysterious psychological experience, placing it in a rich and nuanced context, she offers compelling insights to help any woman who has experienced unrequited obsessive love and been mystified and troubled by its grip.

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Editorial Review

Review

“What happens when we can’t stop wanting someone who won’t love us back? In *Unrequited*, Lisa Phillips tackles the pain of desire that is left unreciprocated with empathy and wisdom.” (**Esther Perel, author of *Mating in Captivity***)

“A gorgeously written, often cringe-inducing, but ultimately consoling deconstruction of the confounding power of unreciprocated passion. *Unrequited* made me feel both very much and much less alone.” (**Julie Powell, author of *Cleaving: A Story of Marriage, Meat, and Obsession***)

“Ditch all the dating-advice books—with acute intelligence, warmth, and humor, Phillips has captured a preilous, powerful hidden current of romantic feeling. Lively, fun, and insightful, *Unrequited* should be mandatory reading for anyone interested in understanding romantic desire. I wish I had read this book when I was young!” (**Melanie Thernstrom, author of *The Pain Chronicles***)

“An ingenious hybrid of memoir, case study, scientific inquiry and intellectual history. . . . Required reading not only for every teenage girl in America but for every boy, man and woman, whether partnered or not, because we could all use a dose of its well-researched wisdom.” (***The Washington Post***)

“The author offers an empathetic, below-the-surface examination of what the ‘beloved’ means to the scorned woman. . . . Compelling. . . . Compassionate and, perhaps for some readers, encouraging.” (***Kirkus***)

“Phillips chases down the history of unrequited love, from courtly love to online courtships in which the interested parties may never meet. . . . Unrequited lovers will learn they are not alone, and they will also acquire useful tips on ways of letting go for good.” (***Booklist***)

“This book illuminates one of our most ingrained emotional experiences. . . . A fluid storyteller. . . . Phillips makes a convincing case for the universality of lovesickness.” (***Publishers Weekly***)

“Rare is the woman who hasn’t struggled with unrequited love and wondered why it makes her feel so crazy. Deeply researched and compellingly written, *Unrequited* unravels the complex psychology of this obsession and offers an illuminating path back to balance and peace.” (**Colette Dowling, psychotherapist and author of *The Cinderella Complex***)

From the Back Cover

The summer Lisa A. Phillips turned thirty, she fell in love with someone who didn’t return her feelings. She became obsessed, following him around, calling him compulsively, and talking about him endlessly. One desperate morning, after she snuck into his apartment building, he picked up a baseball bat to protect himself and threatened to dial 911. Her unrequited love had changed her from a sane, conscientious college teacher and radio reporter into someone she barely recognized—someone who had taken her yearning much too far.

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“An ingenious hybrid of memoir, case study, scientific inquiry, and intellectual history not only of unrequited love but of Love, full stop, with a capital L.”—*Washington Post*

“There is no cure for the pain of rejection, although researchers are working on it. Until then, Phillips suggests we ‘honor passion by confining and using it instead of letting it diminish us.’”—*Chicago Tribune*

About the Author

Lisa A. Phillips is a professor of journalism at SUNY New Paltz and the author of *Public Radio: Behind the Voices*. Her articles have appeared in many national publications, including the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*. A former radio journalist, she has contributed stories to NPR and other public radio outlets.

Users Review

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