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Women: A Novel



Synopsis

How-life writer and unrepentant alcoholic Henry Chinaski was born to survive. After decades of slacking off at low-paying dead-end jobs, blowing his cash on booze and women, and scrimping by in flea-bitten apartments, Chinaski sees his poetic star rising at last. Now, at fifty, he is reveling in his sudden rock-star life, running three hundred hangovers a year, and maintaining a sex life that would cripple Casanova. With all of Bukowski's trademark humor and gritty, dark honesty, this 1978 follow-up to *Post Office* and *Factotum* is an uncompromising account of life on the edge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Charles Bukowski is one of America's best-known contemporary writers of poetry and prose and, many would claim, its most influential and imitated poet. He was born in 1920 in Andernach, Germany, to an American soldier father and a German mother, and brought to the United States at the age of two. He was raised in Los Angeles and lived there for over fifty years. He died in San Pedro, California, on March 9, 1994, at the age of seventy-three, shortly after completing his last novel, *Pulp*.

I read *Women* immediately following *Post Office*, and it is also a part of my *Esquire 75 Books Every Man Needs To Read* reading challenge. *Women* is the 20th book on the list (not including books I will be rereading). After the death of his postal career along with the love of his life, Bukowski's Chinaski begins to scour trashy America for experience, art, booze, and sex. His career is beginning to take off and he can do more than merely survive in his existence,

and he begins to explore himself and his relationships in this semi-autobiographical novel about much the same things as his other novels, but with a marked difference in literary style and execution as well as notoriety and accomplishment as an artist. The focus of this piece is easily the paper-thin relationships that Chianski surrounds himself with. Every escapade leads to some revelation about his manhood, his fame, and his constant brush with the women that seem to constantly contrast with his one vice – a penchant for finding the most emotionally unstable women to have weekend relationships with, and being both unsatisfied with the sex and relationship, and surprised when the women cling to him with fervent desire. In *Women*, Bukowski has improved and expanded his literary dance with being both anti-pedantic in diction and syntax while at the same time being misleading in his ability to screw intensive literary symbolism and devices into this somewhat simple work. The result is scrupulous, tireless literary and linguistic acrobatics that lead across the wasteland of white-trash slums and heighten Chianski's vices and sexual escapades to that of religious reverence. Definitely deserves its place on Esquire's list.

Let's start off by saying...Wow. This book was a rollercoaster! I first heard of this book when I watched a behind the scenes documentary on one of my favorite shows, *Californication*. It was mentioned that Henry Chilaski, main character in the book, was the model for the show's Hank Moody. After I read the book, I could not agree more. Well, coffin, done. The book has a no holds barred atmosphere. Not a few pages in and Henry Chilaski is in a whirlwind of violation drinking, drugs and constant sexual encounters. I found myself sympathizing with the Chilaski character as the story goes on. In moments of the book it reminded me of parts of my life. It has a way of pulling you in and then slamming your fingers in the door. Bukowski's renegade and raw approach to writing is known world wide and this book does not hold any punches. It's fast and full of life. I read it in a two night sitting and it left me yearning for more. This book is definitely worth the pick up. It's funny, charming, entertaining, dismissive, angry and rude all rolled into one. I hope you have as much fun with it, as I did.

A classic. Lost my previous copy during a move and picked this up on a whim. Love the cover's style and the size of the paperback - funny thing to mention, but it's nice that I could throw this into a back-pack or work folder and read on the go. The cover really stands out on a bookshelf and just overall gives you that cool Bukowski vibe imo. The actual story and author himself need no introduction, and this isn't a review of the actual novel's story or authorship. Both, of course, would

be off the charts as far as ratings go...and if you've never been initiated into this world I highly recommend it. That said, 5 stars to the actual physical copy itself, quick shipping, and the selling vendor.

When people ask me about Bukowski, I usually say, just try reading some. There is no one quite like him. The first time I read him, as a college student in the sixties, I was astonished that anyone so depraved could be so literate. As down-and-out as Jim Thompson, but with more booze and explicit, matter-of-fact sex. But for Bukowski, it's not so much about the sex as about the relationships (mostly unsatisfactory), and about the hard vicissitudes in the life of a marginally celebrated author and poet. Above all, Bukowski is funny. "Women" is classic Bukowski, a book I have picked up many times over the years, either to read straight through or just to browse. Try some. If you find him addicting, there is lots more.

Bukowski's style is easily digestible and surprisingly nourishing. Worth a spin.

It can be very crude at times but it's an easy & entertaining read. It helps if you've read his previous books such as "Ham on Rye" & "Post Office" so you know about his back-ground.

After having read several samples of other books to no avail, I spontaneously decided to try out Bukowski. WOW! His simple elegance and eloquence and utter bluntness is so refreshing; I feel like he really "tells it like it is." And I like the brevity of his writing. Many authors get carried away with long, overwrought, pretentious descriptions, but Bukowski's are short and sweet. I'm a slow reader and can handle complex, heavy material, but this was a nice respite from those kinds of books (not to say Bukowski doesn't share some of his own truths in life in an accessible and attractive manner). Will definitely be reading more of this guy - next on the list is Ham on Rye. Don't miss this one - it's real delight!

I have read other Bukowski's books and have really enjoyed them. For some reason I put off reading this book for a long time because I thought it would just be more of the same. But I was really pleasantly surprised by the content. Bukowski's unique, coarse, and candid voice is as strong as ever, but he writes about his growing fame. You come to see a man who is challenged by his own success and also surprised. Overall, I really enjoyed this book and recommend it. But obviously the sexual content may be off-putting to many people.

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