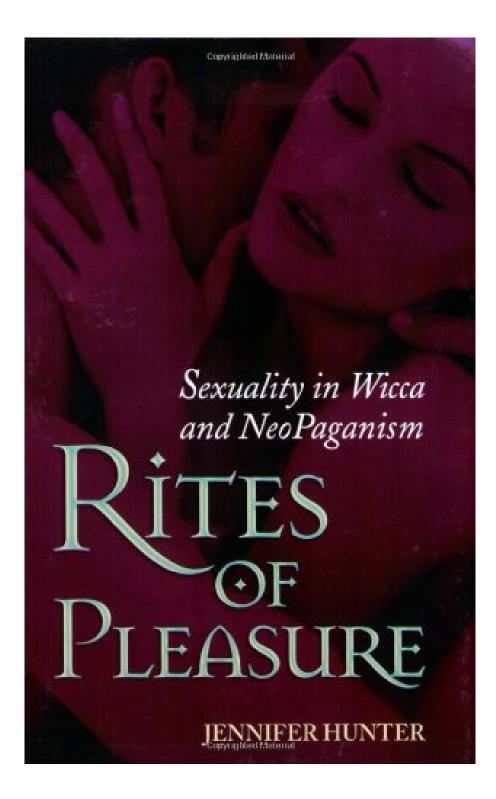


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About the Author

Jennifer Hunter is a trained witch who has appeared on numerous radio shows, including The Howard Stern Show.

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Lust, Love and Magic Among the Polytheists

By Amazon Customer

You won't find technical tips on Tantra or a how-to guide to a hotter Great Rite in this book. Nor will you find fantasy material about witch orgies under the moonlight, nor advice on how to get yourself laid at Starwood. What you will find is a frank and detailed exploration of the role of sexuality for Pagans, both within circle and outside it, and how Pagan philosophy and attitudes affect the rest of our sensual lives. Jennifer Hunter orchestrates a large and diverse personal group of voices collected from interviewees gathered from all over the Pagan community. She takes the time to explore some concepts which are not Pagan per se, but which are core parts of the lives of some Pagans, including homosexuality, non-standard gender identities, polyamory, (...), and BDSM. This book is an optimistic, life-loving kaliedoscope of ideas and personal stories. Recommended as a gift to a Pagan friend or lover for Valentine's Day, Beltaine, or anytime!

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Solid, insightful book with shaky introduction

By Eva Vandetuin

Rites of Pleasure is a popular-press book written by a practitioner of contemporary Paganism. It includes a history of Pagan sexuality, Pagan sex gods and symbols, Pagan relationships, sexuality in the Pagan

community, gender and queer Paganism, BDSM, sex work, and sex magic. Hunter treats all of these topics in a colloquial, sex-positive voice, supplementing her own thoughts with interview clips from other Pagan practitioners, some of them very well-known (including Carol Queen, Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, Raven Kaldera, Judy Harrow, Don Kraig, Annie Sprinkle, and others).

Hunter shows a great deal of sophistication in many of the chapters. Her Pagan relationships chapter includes a balanced, common-sense introduction to polyamory, while also supporting monogamy as a legitimate relationship style. The chapters on BDSM and sex magic are both provocative and down-to-earth. Hunter emphasizes consent and safety while providing a strong theoretical framework for the use of sexuality and BDSM techniques for spellwork, to achieve ecstatic or visionary trance, for initiatory purposes, and to explore new depths of bonding with a partner or partners. _Rites_ is excellent in its treatment of safer sex, looking in depth at negotiation techniques among networks of lovers and exploring condoms and other latex barriers as magical tools. Finally, Hunter provides a theological grounding for the importance of sexuality within Pagan practice, giving clear explanations of the Pagan belief in immanent deity and providing models of how sexuality can be used as a devotional practice in contemporary Paganism.

The book is somewhat marred, however, by weak introductory chapters, which is where Hunter ventures outside her specialty (contemporary Paganism and sexuality) into history. Hunter gets academic points for pointing out that most narratives of prehistoric Goddess worship are speculation, and for her references to Ronald Hutton's excellent work on Pagan history. Her overuse of Riane Eisler (whose scholarship is notoriously flawed and biased), however, leads to a number of overgeneralizations. Hunter is alive to the diversity of contemporary Paganism; it is a shame she is not more aware of the immense diversity of Christianity and other world religions.

With the exception of these opening chapters, however, _Rites_ is a well-researched, intelligent, accessible book that deals with issues of sexuality in contemporary Paganism with insight and subtlety. I would whole-heartedly recommend it for anyone interested in sex-positive spiritual practice.

34 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

Tasteful, guiding and expanding.

By T. Tyne

First off, no matter the subject matter this book is incredibly well written. It "dares" to openly discuss the many nuances of sex practiced in the incredibly varied Pagan community (yes, Ms. Hunter really does cover Paganism and not just Wicca). Material that could be considered sensitive in some context is handled candidly yet without being titillating just for the sake of sales. The author takes a very complete big picture view, not holding back when it came to describing the myopic practice pagans sometimes take against one another no matter what we preach.

The well chosen and diverse selection of contributors are intelligent, well spoken and educating. Not being people that I would normally run into (a loss for me), their comments introduced me to new ways of thinking about my sexuality and my spirituality. And how the two can and should be blended into each other.

As a solitary who doesn't have a lot of contact with other Pagans this book was an enlightening look into the diversity of the larger community and in way that I didn't expect, the spirituality that brings us together.

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