

Big Girls Are Sexy Too

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A review of *Good In Bed* a novel written by Jennifer Weiner

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At the beginning of the book we hear that 28 year old Cannie is a journalist, writes a column about the famous for the Philadelphia Examiner. She had ended her 3 year relationship with writer Bruce Gruberman 3 months earlier by saying that she wanted a break. She is fine with that until she picks up a copy of Moxie, a popular women's magazine. There she reads an article by new columnist Bruce called *Loving A Larger Woman*.

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The first sentence of the article says: "I never forget the day I found out my girlfriend weighed more than I did". He goes on to let the readers know that he never thought of himself as a chubby chaser. Cruel you think until you read further and see that he understands that her hefty "5'10" well covered body makes her feel bad when really to him big is beautiful. He ends the article by saying:

"Loving a larger woman is an act of courage in this world, and maybe it's even an act of futility. Because, in loving C., I knew I was loving someone who didn't believe that she herself was worthy of anyone's love. And now that it's over, I don't know where to direct my anger and sorrow. At a world that made her feel the way she did about her body — no, herself — and whether she was desirable. At C., for not being strong enough to overcome what the world told her. Or at myself, for not loving C. enough to make her believe in herself";

I included those sentences from the book because they struck a chord with me. Some people can live happily with being overweight but for many every extra pound means miserable self-consciousness and guilt trips — straight to the kitchen cupboard usually! The bigger you get the less desirable you feel and you start to believe that is the way that others perceive you. I wondered if any of my partners had thought loving me an act of courage at the times in my life that

I've been overweight.

Cannie is very hurt that Bruce could discuss her size with the huge readership of the magazine. She knows that people who know her will read the article and realise that it's about her. Cannie cries her heart out, gets drunk and cries a lot more. She rings Bruce in anger but then ends up missing him and wishing that she hadn't ended the relationship.

Her mother Ann calls round to Cannie's flat to offer her comfort and advice. Not welcome because she has a problem with her mother. Ann came out of the closet in her mid fifties and is living with Tanya who Cannie resents too much to give her a chance to get to know her properly. Cannie's father a plastic surgeon who was very critical of her, walked out on the family when she was twelve. He disappeared from her life leaving her with much insecurity about herself.

Her only consolation is her little dog Nifkin, named after a naughty part of the male anatomy. Nifkin had never really got on with Bruce — dogs know you know. Before the article Cannie and Nifkin were drifting along quite happily, but suddenly her life was in turmoil and her insecurities came to a fore. She tries to get her life back on track by deciding that she wants to get back with Bruce, pesters him with phone calls which he always ends and becomes increasingly distant. She blames her size on a lot of her misfortunes and decides to join a fat clinic where some humour is introduced.

Good In Bed is described as 'wildly funny and surprisingly tender' on the front cover. I have to disagree with it being wildly funny. I found the book amusing in parts but never found myself laughing out loud. I grinned when I read about Cannie going to a New York hotel to interview film star Maxi. The interview was cancelled by an over zealous agent who was afraid that Cannie would ask awkward questions that would expose the real Maxi to her fans. She got her interview after a touching meeting in the ladies toilets and a drunken girly night out where the over protected film star was allowed to be herself for once and not act like the image built up for her.

Surprisingly tender, yes it is. The story is set over a year and each month a new article appears to hurt Cannie. She reads how Bruce misses her but then gets a blow-by-blow account of how he moves on. I found the book true to life in that I could identify with the emotional turmoil felt at the end of a long-term relationship. You end things for the right reasons and are jogging along quite happily with your life then a few weeks or months down the line something happens or you suddenly miss your ex partner and put yourself through the emotional grinder wondering if you made the right decision. Usually you have but sometimes you have a re-run just to make sure. Will Cannie? I'm not telling.

I enjoyed reading Good In Bed but I found it an interesting read rather than compelling. I was able to put it down easily but always looked forward to reading a bit more the next night. Perfect for me when I am tired and just want to read a little to help me relax before going to sleep. There isn't tons of sex as the title and front cover might suggest, but that would have spoiled the book for me anyway. Instead of finding it wildly funny I found it an amusing, thoughtful read. It was well written enough for me to be able to visualise Cannie's world and understand her feelings and turmoil while she comes to terms with everything that is happening around her.

The ending was unexpected but it wasn't one of those books where you are trying to figure out the outcome from word go. It is a story that takes you through a period of lots of big and unexpected changes in Cannie's life and you learn how she deals with them. Not always well but it's nice to read about somebody who isn't perfect — just like the rest of us.

This is the second book that I've read recently with an overweight heroine and what a refreshing change it is to read about characters who aren't the stereotyped skinny beautiful heroines that you often find in novels. Unfortunately both were classed as humorous — we big girls don't just do humour but it's a good job we can laugh.

Good In Bed was Jennifer Weiner's first novel, published in 2001. Jennifer is a staff writer and columnist at the Philadelphia Inquirer. It is said that it's always best to start writing about something you know and Jennifer gives a real feel of what it's like working as a journalist, adding a great background to a pretty good story. I will certainly look out for her second book 'Get In Her Shoes'.

The author Patricia Jones loves writing and building websites.
You can see more of her work at [The Creative Writer- Make Money From Writing and UK Travel Guide](#)