

BOOKING INTO SUMMER

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Mystery Women

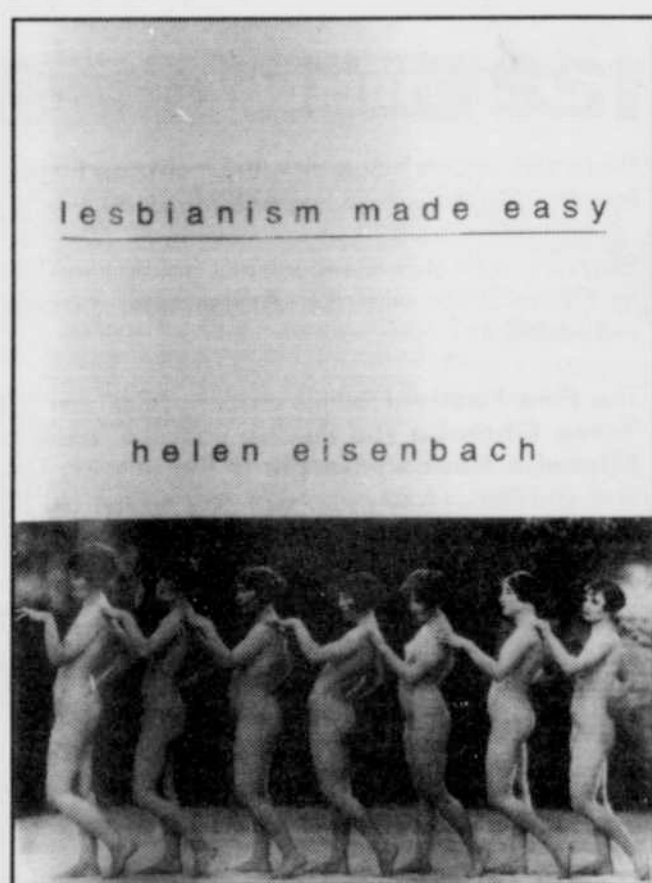
Liberty Square by Katherine V. Forrest. Berkley Prime Crime, 1997; \$5.99 paper. The former Naiad Press author has brought out her latest Kate Delafield mystery. This time Kate must deal with both her past as a Vietnam veteran and her relationship with Aimee Grant. Delightful brain candy for the mystery fan.

Deadline for Murder by Val McDermid. Spinsters Ink, 1997; \$10.95 paper. McDermid takes up where her earlier book, *Common Murder*, left off. Now protagonist Lindsay Gordon must clear the name of a fellow journalist accused of murder. A mystery and more set in modern Scotland.

Last Rites by Tracey Richardson. Naiad Press, 1997; \$11.95 paper. Canadian mystery by the author of *Northern Blue* about the auto-erotic asphyxiation of a Roman Catholic priest.

Humor Women

Lesbianism Made Easy by Helen Eisenbach. Crown Publishing Inc., 1996; \$20 cloth. A deceptively light and simple title disguises a wordy and highbrow satire of both self-help books and a population known to use them. Us. This is familiar territory in humor writing these days, as in Ellen Orleans' *Who Cares If It's a Choice?*. It's all here: the quizzes, the mock scenarios, the repetition of age-old stereotypes that we can find funny because they are both ghastly and true. Eisenbach does not pull her convoluted punches. Her heavy-handed condemnation of political lesbians as not "real" lesbians will probably either attract or seriously offend readers. If you like your humor vitriolic and complex, you'll like this book.



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Roberts' Rules of Lesbian Break-ups by Shelly Roberts. Spinsters Ink, 1997; \$5.95 paper. Short, cynical, to the point and often true words of wisdom on the breakup and all it entails. Worth the dip.

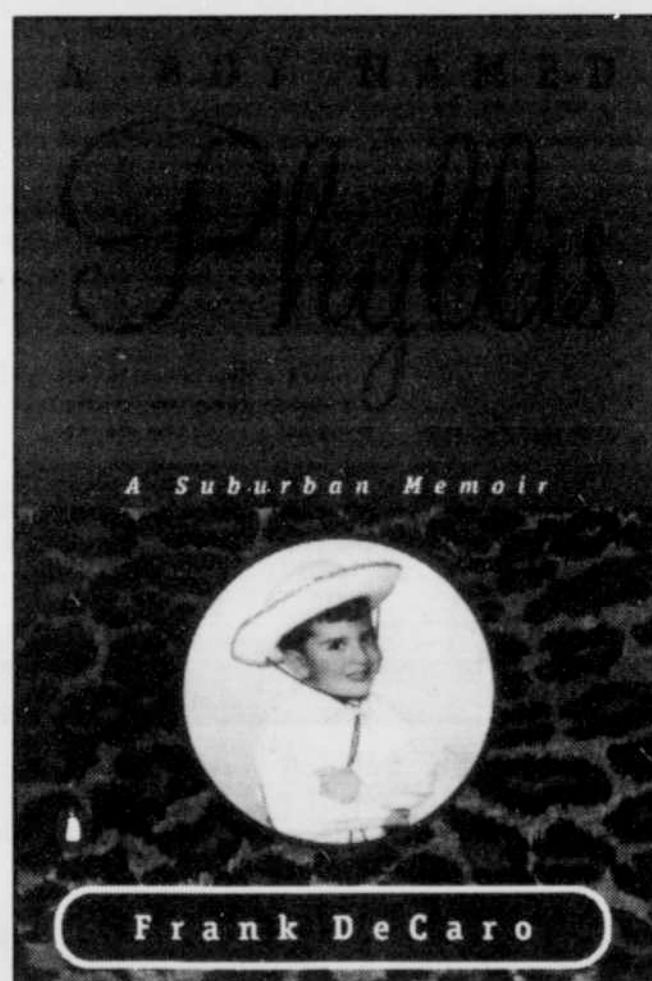
One can't help but wonder what the gay male literary scene would be like without erotica and coming-of-age stories. On the other hand, who's complaining?

Perhaps because sexuality is so central to the gay male identity, sex and sexual awakening are all the more important and worthy of attention. Or maybe it's an unhealthy obsession with just one part of the psyche, with the unfortunate consequence of neglecting other areas. Before choosing sides, check out this year's summer reading list: It offers both brain candy and food for thought, tough questions and some pleasantly distracting answers.

Summertime, the season of vacations, with its extravagant pride parades and shirtless beefy hunks, balmy weather and lazy longer days, is the perfect time for reading (and an unread book is the perfect disguise for peering eyes!).

—CDC

Fiction Men



A Boy Named Phyllis by Frank DeCaro. Penguin, 1996; \$11.95 paper. Before reading DeCaro's humorous commentary on growing up gay in the suburban '70s, the only memoir I'd ever enjoyed was Gore Vidal's *Palimpsest*. The two couldn't be more different: DeCaro's book isn't exactly thoughtless, but it certainly is light reading sure to crack a smile, even when it's a little sad. This is lemonade made from life's proverbial lemons.

Dream Boy by Jim Grimsley. Scribner, 1997; \$11 paper. Not the typical coming-of-age novel, this book is more than just a vehicle for steamy boy-sex. A playwright by trade, Grimsley has crafted an engrossing love story haunted by a sense of inevitable tragedy. His sensual and soporific language lends emotional weight to a tale of star-crossed lovers. Put this at the top of your list.

Some Men Are Lookers by Ethan Mordden. St. Martin's Press, 1997; \$23.95 cloth. If you like to believe life is glamorous—at least someone else's, if not your own—check out the latest by Mordden, author of the Buddies trilogy that captured both the glitzy facade and the true grit of gay Manhattan in the 1980s. Although the two jacket blurbs comparing this book to the work of Jane Austen give it literary pretensions, one should bear in mind that she was the Jackie Collins of her day. If you seek substance, skip this soap opera.

Hey, Joe by Ben Neihart. Simon & Schuster, 1996; \$21 cloth. If you spent your teen years depressed and repressed, Neihart's first novel might be your second chance at a brighter, if vic-

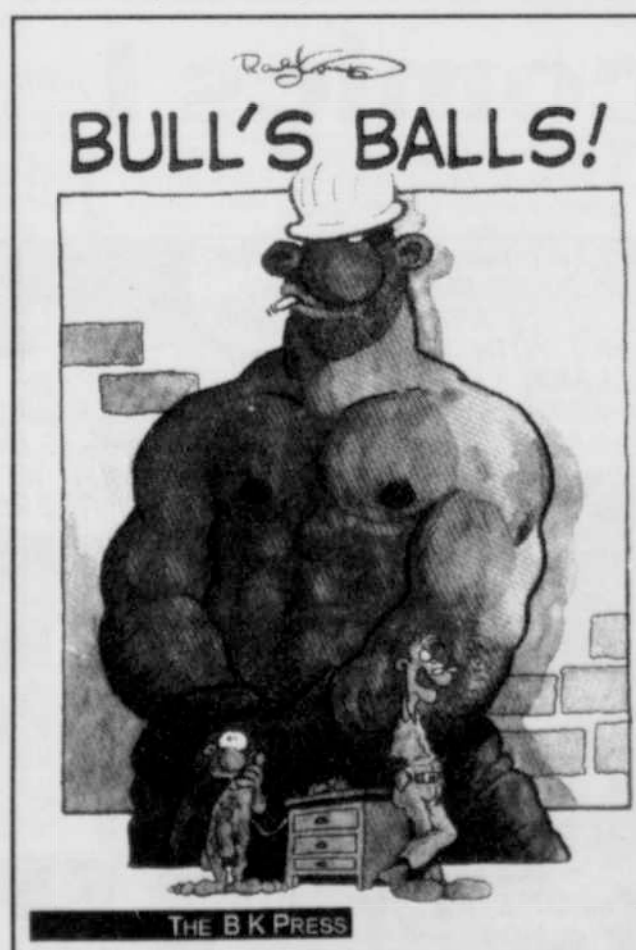
arious, adolescence, or it might send you into the doldrums all over again wondering why real life never measures up to fantasy. It's a classic coming-of-age novel rife with titillating teen escapades and an educational encounter with the dark side.

Flesh and the Word 4: Gay Erotic Confessionals edited by Michael Lowenthal. Plume, 1997; \$13.95 paper. Lowenthal's anthology is a welcome addition to the ranks of queer erotica, a genre that has really taken off in recent years (hell, how many years of *Hustler* are we competing with?). As with all anthologies, some tales are better than others; highlights in this edition include stories by Darieck Scott and Robert Glück, both authors of excellent novels and two of my personal faves.

Kept Boy by Robert Rodi. Dutton, 1996; \$23.95 cloth. This argyle-sheathed book is yet another example of the quintessential wittiness of gay men. Rodi is the comedic antithesis of Michelangelo Signorile, dissecting gay culture one arche/stereotype at a time. With novels like *Drag Queen*, *Fag Hag*, *Closet Case* and now *Kept Boy*, Rodi has captured the ironies and subtle pathos of queer culture.

Graphic Novels Men

Bull's Balls by Ralf König. The BK Press, 1997; \$15.95 paper. König has written over 20 full-length comic books that have been translated into 14 languages and inspired the largest-grossing film in German history, but this is the first of his works to be released in the United States. The story of two lovers struggling to keep it together after 10 years, *Bull's Balls* is sexually explicit and emotionally honest—proof that, in all the impor-



tant ways, gay life is the same everywhere. Except that when they laugh, it comes out "gack" instead of "ha."

Nonfiction Men

Life Outside by Michelangelo Signorile. Harper Collins, 1997; \$25 cloth. With praise from some of queendom's most esteemed authors (Armistead Maupin, Martin Duberman, Larry Kramer, and, yes, even Chastity Bono), Signorile's most recent effort is assured a place on every thinking homosexual's shelf. Critiquing what he calls the "cult of masculinity," Signorile continues asking questions that don't have easy answers: Will the first post-Stonewall generation pass on a new maturity to subsequent generations? Or will a legacy of narcissistic attention to physical ideals, excessive drug use and unsafe sex continue to bring on new waves of anxiety, emotional insecurity and HIV transmission?

Coming Out Every Day: A Gay, Bisexual or Questioning Man's Guide by Bret K. Johnson. Ph.D. New Harbinger Publications, 1997; \$13.95 paper. Hot off the press, this self-help workbook by a gay psychologist builds on the idea of coming out as a lifelong process. Complete with true-to-life examples taken from the author's practice, Johnson's book leads the way through self-examination, conquering shame and guilt, discovering a sense of pride and joining the larger community. Even if you think you're already out, it's never too late to increase your self-awareness.



Subtitled "An intimate history of the sex lives of gay men postwar to present," Sadownick's new release is part factual chronicle and part psychological profile.

Sex Between Men by Douglas Sadownick. Harper Collins, 1997; \$12 paper. The sexy cover belies the seriousness of this book, meaning it may not be the best choice for the beach (though you can never tan your backside enough). Subtitled "An intimate history of the sex lives of gay men postwar to present," Sadownick's new release is part factual chronicle and part psychological profile. It pulls no punches and spares no secrets in its examination of the philosophy, politics and pleasure of gay male sex, sexuality and sensibility.