

I'm Just Not That Into It

Sex and the City writers don't score. BY MELISSA BEARNS

He's Just Not That Into You by Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo. Simon Spotlight Entertainment, 2004. Hardcover. \$19.95.

Fabulous. Just what the world needs: another book full of rules and guidelines to help a woman snare the perfect man. Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo, writers for the Emmy-winning *Sex and the City*, teamed up to give single women a dose of their medicine.

Based on a popular episode from the show, *He's Just Not That Into You* cloaks its flippant, narrow-minded, schlock advice in the guise of girl-empowerment. And it's popping up on the nightstands of single women faster than mosquitoes hatch in a swamp the first 70-degree day of spring. It's mostly drivel; "tripe," one reader called it. But if you dig through the mud, you'll find a few jewels.

With 18 printings and 1.9 million in print, *He's Just Not That Into You* is currently ranked 25 on Amazon. Sales reps at the local Barnes & Noble and Borders say they've skimmed through it because so many people are coming in to buy it.

A quick and easy read, the book uses letters from actual women, which present real-life scenarios, then ask Greg and Liz for advice. The Q&A format is light and entertaining, and so are Greg's responses. Liz often weighs in after Greg's response in a section titled "Here's Why This One is Hard." She takes on the complicated questions Greg's flip phrase (the book's title) doesn't address, digging in a little deeper. She reminds us that women get into these situations because advice isn't as simple as applying a glib phrase then kicking a guy to the curb.

But Greg gets most of the ink. Some readers find his blunt, direct approach and male perspective refreshing. "I think it's funny, which is a new spin to relationship advice," said 24-year-old Annie Murphy of Eugene. "And it's written from a man's point of view, so it's a little more honest."

Sabrina Messenger, 44, of Corvallis, goes by the name of Lady Cascadia on the Net. She took the time to write a

lengthy review of the book on Amazon.com. Messenger gave *EW* her real name via e-mail, along with permission to quote her. "[Greg] Behrendt may speak a truth, but it is not the ONLY truth," she writes in her review. "I'm not saying I completely disagree with him re: deep six-

ing guys who are obviously 'not that into you.' [But] Behrendt doesn't have the whole story, and he doesn't have a clue about what the dating scene is like outside of NYC."

He's Just Not That Into You claims to be all about empowering the goddess within. Here's my favorite: "Remember, you are the catch. They [men] are out to snare you. They are not the tasty little mako that will be so good mesquite grilled in a nice lemon sauce. You are." That one's funny.

The rest are all self-help and ooey gooey and make me cringe. Take this response to a letter from a woman whose boyfriend broke up with her, but then started calling again: "Don't be flattered that he misses you. You're deeply missable." Or better yet: "You are an excellent, foxy human being worthy of love, and the only way you can pursue that idea is by honoring yourself." Little missives like those appear throughout the book. So does the title phrase — over and over and over again.

"Any girl who reads it will recognize an aspect of some relationship that they've had or characteristic of someone they've dated," Murphy said. "[Behrendt] is just trying to show people: cut your losses."

Murphy made another good point. Women already know most of this stuff. "He's just not that into you if he's not calling you." Duh. Oh wait, this one's even better. "He's just not that into you if he's married."

The only reason a book like this would sell a single copy is because women don't listen to that little voice inside them. And therein lies the value of this powerful little phrase. It's a reminder, an affirmation, that when something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. And that's OK. Move on. ♥



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