



Fifty Shades... a Love Story?

Just what is it about “Fifty Shades of Grey” that resonated with women across the country?



Cherub Cupid has aimed his little red, pointed arrows in the direction of hearts everywhere, and if you are aware and very quiet, you will hear the “whoosh” of their journey and the “zing” of contact. February is the month dedicated to love. Commonplace are the exotic aromas of deep-red roses, fiery cinnamon, rich dark chocolate and complex berry-red wine. Romantic cards are exchanged along with heartfelt gifts of jewelry, candy, oils, silk ties, eye masks, binding cords, whips—*whoa!* That’s not Valentine’s Day, it’s the “Fifty Shades of Grey” influence.

Female author, E.L. James, wrote this titillating trilogy and sold an amazing 20 million copies in five months, surpassing sales of the “Twilight” series and “Harry Potter!” Set in Seattle, this story centers upon the lives of naïve, virginal and new college graduate, Anastasia Steele, and the not-even-30-year-old buff

CEO billionaire, Christian Grey. Oh, did I mention that Gray is psychologically damaged (50 shades worth) from severe childhood abuse, which is demonstrated in a disconnect from intimacy and physical contact and a need to dominate through contrived, controlled and cruel sexual activity? The trio of books offers an erotic therapeutic journey, of sorts, as Gray works through his pain at Anastasia’s expense, and begins to heal and learn to love with Anastasia dutifully by his side.

Societally speaking, we are so enamored by this story that it has become part of our vernacular, creeping into our everyday language and characterized in various TV shows. “Saturday Night Live” provided an excellent and comical piece depicting women hiding from their families to read a few pages in privacy with the obvious hope of creating a dopamine surge in their brain’s pleasure center,

brought on by the strangely erotic and descriptive passages. Marge Simpson showed her “Fifty Shades of Grey,” when she stopped coloring her blue hair, displaying her independence and lack of submissive

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behavior; Ellen DeGeneres provided an audio reading complete with blushing and paraphrasing; E.J. DiMera on “Days of Our Lives” was described as being “50 shades of screwed up” by ex-wife, Sami; unofficial movie trailers are available on YouTube; and talk show host Steve Harvey provided an intervention for a young woman whose obsession with the fictional Grey was negatively affecting her marriage.

As women, we want it all and this story crosses all age and gender boundaries. We desire passionate, intimate encounters, intense eye contact and a partner who is “present”—listening when we speak, showing interest in every word. We also want “better-than” financial comfort, exciting exotic adventures and a wonderful career with everything packaged in the muscular arms of the most beautiful man ever created. Add to that mix a heaping helping of severe abuse and resulting attachment disorder...and what do you have? A realistic lifetime of trouble!

What happens in a child’s first three years of life absolutely affects the developing psyche and personality for a lifetime. If a child experiences pain the parent cannot alleviate, or if he suffers abuse, neglect or is cared for by a depressed primary caregiver, the child will have difficulty developing an ability to trust anyone, even those with whom he is close. Those who are afflicted, as Grey, with an attachment disorder, find it nearly impossible to allow deep, connected relationships and turn to distant and detached forms of connection and addiction. Therapeutic intervention is difficult. The data shows that the

hill toward a healthy relationship is mountainous, and will start with the psychological re-parenting of the affected partner through the use of consistent love, kindness and boundary setting. Anastasia puts these aspects into play as the storyline develops. We root for her success and the continuation of their love.

The popularity of the “Fifty Shades” trilogy demonstrates the magnificent desire of a woman’s heart and its need to nurture, mother, heal and love on a truly deep level, perhaps to the detriment of the woman herself. This is not news. It is what women have done throughout the ages. We believe beyond the boundaries of our intellect, and trust in the magical nature of love. We see the best in our mates, often on the worst of days, and have faith that the sun will shine a bit brighter in the light of tomorrow.

Why? Because we are women. ✪

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