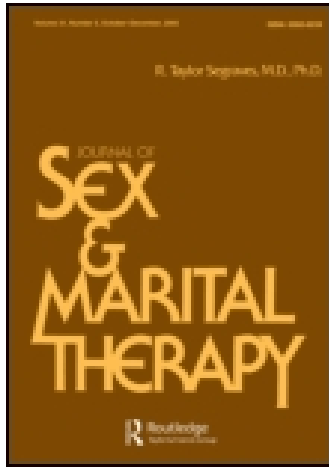


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Cuffed, Tied, and Satisfied: A Kinky Guide to the Best Sex Ever

Margaret Nichols Ph.D. President and Director^a

^a Institute for Personal Growth, Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

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Cuffed, Tied, and Satisfied: A Kinky Guide to the Best Sex Ever, by *Jaiya*. New York: Harmony Books, 2014. 263 pages, \$12.99 (paperback), \$7.99 (Kindle).

Cuffed, Tied, and Satisfied: A Kinky Guide to the Best Sex Ever is the kind of self-help book aimed at a general adult audience that almost instinctively triggers a cringe reaction in the kind of professionals who read this journal. The author goes by only one New-Agey name, and the book jacket shows her looking more like a young yoga instructor than a renowned and award-winning sexologist, as the publicity blurbs proclaim. In short, at first glance this book looked like just one more hastily-put-together attempt to capitalize on the *50 Shades of Grey* phenomenon. And as a kinky guide, the book is up against stiff competition; there are many excellent BDSM manuals that exist written by experienced kinksters.

And then I read it, and discovered quite a good book. I will probably recommend it above other guides to a certain type of couple—sexually adventurous, who want to learn what all the fuss is about BDSM without leaving their home. What makes it good? To begin with, *Jaiya* may not have generally recognized professional credentials (if she does, they are not mentioned in the book), but she's no dummy: she quotes Esther Perel, Camille Paglia, and Jack Morin, and the conceptual models she uses are sophisticated. The book is well-written and engaging; it draws the reader in with personal stories, not only of fictional couples but also of *Jaiya* and her husband Ian, both of whom the reader gets to know quite well by the end of this book.

For what could have at first seemed a disadvantage—that *Jaiya* had no kinky sex experience—turns out to be a huge plus. The narrative ploy that carries the book along is ingenious. The average reader will probably identify with and feel engaged with these two attractive, intelligent people as they tell the story of the experiment they conducted where for 40 days *Jaiya* would be sexually dominant with husband Ian and for the next 40 they would switch. Along the way, *Jaiya* did her homework: she interviewed experienced BDSM practitioners, hired some as coaches, and appears to have read and drawn inspiration from most of the high-quality popular sexology books in the literature, including Esther Perel's *Mating in Captivity* and Jack Morin's *The Erotic Mind*.

In addition, *Jaiya*'s book is also one of only two I've seen that is truly aimed at the beginner. When I pulled out my kinky sex manuals, I was struck by the fact that all the classics—from Jay Wise's *SM 101* to Tristan Taormino's *Ultimate Guide to Kink* have cover images that, to the average person inexperienced with BDSM, would look scary and unappealing, or X-rated and vulgar. Only this book and Bo Blaze's *50 Shades of Curious: BDSM for Beginners* sport sexy but discreet covers, covers one could read in public. And only these latter two books are written at a beginner's level.

Cuffed is intended to be a guide to help couples in which one or both partners are kinky-curious and, to use Dan Savage's term, "game"—that is, willing to experiment. It contains a blend of information, including up to date online resources, stories of fictional couples, accounts of *Jaiya* and Ian's experiences with their sexual experiment, and homework exercises and activities. Readers can use this book as a step-by-step guide to explore what appeals to them as individuals and as a partnership.

Two other things make *Cuffed* special as a guide for self and couple sexual exploration. The first is that *Jaiya* guides the reader with great care: with softened, nonthreatening language ("impact play"—not flogging or hitting), and by emphasizing role playing and sensory play over BDSM activities that involve pain. For example, the chapter on impact play appears deep in the

second half of the book, as are other practices more difficult for a newcomer to understand. Jaiya also ties BDSM to spirituality, likening it to tantric sex, to peak experiences, and to more intimate connection with a partner. In other words, she accurately portrays kink as not just unusual sexual practices but for some, pathways to love and faith.

The first three chapters address common fears of people with no kink experience, bust myths, and painstakingly explain the many aspects of consent. Role playing, the intricacies of dominant and submissive roles, and sensory experiences are covered, as well as impact play and bondage. However, woven through the book from the first are concepts that help readers explore their own and their partner's sexuality. Jaiya's models of core erotic wiring and empowered erotic persona are intelligent, nonjudgmental, and helpful ways of looking at unique individual erotic maps, and the book includes thoughtfully constructed exercises. By the end of the chapter on consent, couples who have done their homework will have developed specific individual guide maps of desires, fantasies, desired erotic roles, and specific practices that appeal to them, and a mutually agreed upon map of sexual activities to explore together—playfully, without judging themselves and each other. Jaiya is a sexual cheerleader, but not just a cheerleader: her ideas and facts are solid.

In short, far from dismissing *Cuffed, Tied, and Satisfied* as merely an attempt to capitalize on a current fad, I recommend it as a resource that might expand your clients' understanding of their own sexuality even if they ultimately decide kink isn't for them. Anyone who does the exercises in the first half of this book will gain an expanded understanding of the core erotic themes and roles that drive their deepest sexual desires, regardless of how much they do or do not ever embrace BDSM.

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Margaret Nichols, Ph.D.
President and Director
Institute for Personal Growth
Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Wild Connection: What Animal Courtship and Mating Tell Us About Human Relationships, by Jennifer Verdolin. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2014. 302 pages, \$18.95 (paperback).

Wild Connection: What Animal Courtship and Mating Tell Us About Human Relationships is a fascinating book that details one woman's personal attempt to reveal the mysteries of human courtship and mate selection through the lens of animal evolutionary sociobiology. It is written by animal behavior biologist Jennifer Verdolin, a researcher at Duke University who studies lemur