

### The Reading Guide

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#### Reading Group Questions

1. The 52 Seductions gives a frank and honest account of one couple's sex life. Do you think that books and films in general portray an unrealistic view of sex and sexuality? What effect does this have on society?
2. Not all of the seductions work out quite as Betty and Herbert intended. How does this affect your reaction to their story?
3. Did you find any of the seductions particularly memorable, amusing or surprising? Why?
4. How do the more serious elements of the book, focusing on Betty's health, tie in with the often very funny seductions?
5. Betty and Herbert have been married for ten years, but is the book also relevant to readers who aren't in relationships?
6. "Safety is a death blow to desire"  
How difficult do you think it is to keep passion and lust alive in a long-term relationship?
7. By the end of the book, how do you feel about Betty and Herbert as characters and as a couple?
8. THE 52 SEDUCTIONS started out as a blog. How does this affect it as a book? If you could blog anonymously about any area of your life what would it be and why?

#### About the Book

Remember the days when you couldn't keep your hands off each other? When you were unable to contain the urge to snog in public? When you were capable of finding erotic suggestion in the way your partner loaded the dishwasher?

Well, Betty and Herbert remember those days too; it's just that, after ten years of marriage, that memory is growing increasingly hazy.

THE 52 SEDUCTIONS charts Betty and Herbert's quest to invite the lust back into their relationship. They make a pact to seduce each other once a week for a year, and then realise just how rusty they are. Has sex changed since they last checked?

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We follow their progress through an incredible, enlightening and exhausting mission, as they tackle the ordinary and extraordinary with great candour.

Funny, moving and occasionally gymnastic, this is the story of how one 30-something couple lost their inhibitions, reignited their desire and got their groove back.

#### About the Author

Betty Herbert lives by the sea with her husband and much-adored cat, Bob. In real life, she's been a PA, a marketing consultant, a teacher, a writing tutor, a cultural producer and a director of a literary festival that never quite happened. She likes sea-swimming, cocktails, Stevie Wonder, swallows and holidaying in Devon.

You can join Betty Herbert on Twitter @52betty or find out more on her website:

<http://www.bettyherbert.com>

#### Author Q&A

##### Describe Betty Herbert in 5 words...

Delightful, funny, tall, excitable, hungry

##### The 52 Seductions started as a blog, what made you start writing it?

Desperation! I really wanted to do something about our flagging sex life, and I knew from bitter experience that just trying to have more sex wouldn't work. I invented the project because I really wanted to force us to think about what turned us on, and I decided to blog about it because I thought it would force us to stick to it.

##### It's now a book o' awesomeness, how do you feel about sharing your seductions with the world in book form?

Great! But it's a weird feeling too – now it's out in the world, I have no control over it. Unlike blogging, I can't explain parts that people don't understand, or add and extra bits when I feel something is missing. It's a very disembodied experience to see it being talked about in the papers and on TV.

##### How does Herbert, your husband, feel about sharing his sexual exploits in this book?

I was really worried about it because he chose not to read the blog while it was being written – the first time he read it was when I'd completed the first draft of the book. But actually he

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loved it – he said afterwards, ‘I feel like you’ve written a book about how much you love me.’ I’m so grateful that he could see that – I was worried he’d fixate on the bad things and not see the overall good.

#### **Out of the 52 seductions in the book, which was your most successful?**

Ooh that’s a tough one! Different seductions were successful for different reasons. For example, the upside-down 69 made us laugh so much that didn’t matter I couldn’t do a headstand. And the final one was great because it felt like coming home – I could be honest about what would turn me on and not feel ashamed or shy.

#### **And the worst?**

There were plenty of those, too! Early morning sex sucked – and we’re still in dispute over whether Herbert fell asleep in the middle of it.

#### **So what is the REAL truth about sex in a relationship, Betty? Can sex REALLY survive after the heady excitement of first date passion?**

It can, but you have to work at it. For some couples, it comes naturally, but for most of us it’s about planning, organisation and commitment. Sounds boring, but it’s so worth it, because you reap the rewards in terms of communication and intimacy.

#### **Quick fire round – what’s your favourite:**

**Shop:** Daunt Books in Marylebone. A bookworm’s dream.

**Make-up brand:** I’m a Laura Mercier addict

**City:** Barcelona

**Food:** Spag Bol, but it has to be one I’ve cooked myself!

**Quote:** ‘Don’t wrestle with pigs. The pig enjoys it, and you get covered in shit.’

**Motto for life:** Get on with it.

**Book:** *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* by Susanna Clarke or *L’Etranger* by Albert Camus

**TV programme:** Currently, *The Killing*

**Movie:** *When Harry Met Sally*, of course!

(Interview taken from [www.thesassyminx.com](http://www.thesassyminx.com))

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#### Praise

'One of the most moving, honest, witty and smart books about sex, love and relationships I have read in a very long time. Brava!' **Barbara Carrellas**

'The 52 Seductions was really, genuinely grown up, in a way that's made me buzzy and sympathetic and motivated and full of love and lust for my own husband.' **Dear Child of Mine**

'A hymn in praise of something decidedly unfashionable – to working at it, to giving things another go, to not simply casting about for an alternative the minute the passion starts to cool.' **Emma Hughes, *The Erotic Review***

'The book is funny, absorbing and warm...The reader is seduced by the mix of good humour, Britishness and, most of all, love.' **Christina Hopkinson, *The Spectator***

'Delicious candour...This gloriously funny memoir charts their attempts to give their floundering sex life the jolt it needs.' **Susan Swarbrick, *Herald Scotland***

'Funny, touching, naughty, romantic, real. It's a testament to married life and it made me laugh out loud – lots of times.' **Rachael Lucas, *Tales From The Village***

'I read it compulsively over a couple of days – completely drawn in by the story of her year rediscovering sex, herself and her husband...un-put-down-able.' **Muddling Along Mummy**