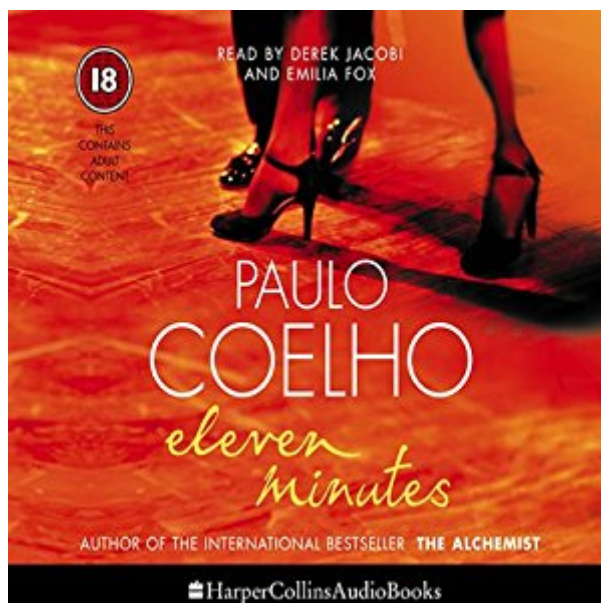


The book was found

Eleven Minutes



Synopsis

Maria, a young girl from a remote village of Brazil, whose first encounters with love leave her heartbroken, goes to seek her fortune in Switzerland. She works for a time in a nightclub but soon becomes dissatisfied and after a heated discussion with her manager one night, she quits her job. She tries to become a model but is unsuccessful. Because she is running out of money, she accepts 1000 francs from an Arab man to spend the night with him. She then decides to become a prostitute and ends up in a brothel on Rue de Berne, the heart of Geneva's red-light district... There she befriends Nyah who gives her advice on her "new profession" and after learning the tricks of the trade from Milan, the brothel owner, she enters the job with her body and mind shutting all doors for love and keeps her heart open only for her diary. Quickly she becomes quite successful and famous and her colleagues begin to envy her. Months pass and Maria grows into a professionally groomed prostitute who not only relaxes her clients' mind, but also calms their soul by talking to them about their problems. Her world turns upside down when she meets Ralf, a young Swiss painter, who sees her "inner light". Maria falls in love with him immediately and begins to experience what true love is (according to the author, it is a sense of being for someone without actually possessing him/her). Maria is now split between her sexual fantasies and true love for Ralf. Eventually she decides that it is time for her to leave Geneva with her memory of Ralf, because she realizes that they are worlds apart. But before leaving, she decides to rekindle the dead sexual fire in Ralf and learns from him about the nature of Sacred Sex, sex which is mingled with true love and which involves the giving up of one's soul for the loved one. This book explores the sacred nature of sex. "Eleven minutes" describes the duration of sex. Also, it depicts two types of prostitution: prostitution for money and sacred prostitution. There are also direct references to sadomasochism. The story is of Maria's journey to find what true love is by letting her own life guide her. She enters a life that leads her down the path of sexual awakening and almost leads to her self-destruction when she is introduced to all sides of sexual experience. When she has given up hope to find true love, she finds her true "inner light" and her everlasting true love. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book to get a different cultural perspective, and it fulfilled that well. The content of the book does describe the reality of being desperately, poor, rural, and third world, and finding a way to "succeed" in an urban capitalist society. Not the best writing in the world, but that could be the translator, not the original author. I don't read Portuguese.

Paulo Coelho is one of my favorite authors. However, *Eleven Minutes* was really disappointing especially when Coelho referenced his other work (*The Alchemist*) within the story, it came off as arrogant. The story depicts a woman's fall into prostitution as a means of saving her pride after making some poor life choices. It glorifies the sex industry. Coelho's depiction of the prostitutes experience is in no way convincing, I felt the author's "maleness" in every part of the protagonist which made her a man's ideal porn star (sexy, young, happy, adventurous) and not a tangible human character for this kind of story. Coelho had a wonderful story idea here...something really different that could of set this book apart from all his others... but I feel the story never lived up to the potential of the idea and the author regressed into the themes and styles of his former hit books (which were wonderful), *The Alchemist* and *The Road to Santiago*. It was a failed effort to do something new.

I don't recall what I was expecting before I read this book but whatever it was the book wasn't what I expected. There was quite a lot of philosophy around sex and prostitution that some will call rationalization. I often felt as if the protagonist was observing herself but not quite participating in her life most of the time. I suspect that there were points made that went right past me, or at least I hope that there were. I did enjoy some of her inner monologue and her growth and intelligence. She was a bright woman caught up in a foreign world, often just going with the flow, being trusting, and for the most part her trust was not misplaced. That is if you accept her points of view about being poor and being a prostitute. If reading about that life is likely to repel you then don't read this book. And if

you're expecting lots of explicit sex you'll be disappointed, though there is a little of it. In the end you'll likely have mixed feelings about Maria, if you have any thoughts at all.

I love this book so much that I've literally given it to all of my friends. Sure, at first glance, it's a book about sex, but once you dig a bit deeper you'll find a book about the complexities of love. From love of self to romantic love. Coelho bravely attempts to tackle questions such as: what is love? how do I love? how do I receive love? how do I not confuse sex with love? how do I use sex to show love? Each answer left me pondering my own ability to love. I found this book moving and filled with moments that required a highlighter and some prayer. At its conclusion, I found that it really changed my young views on love for the better. I dare you to give it a try.

Coelho always surprises, and never disappoints. Every book is new, fresh--in style--and powerful. I will be mentally processing the messages in this particular book for a while. I'm not usually one to read an erotic novel, but in this case I was hooked with the first pages. Another compelling book by Paulo Coelho.

This is one of my favorite books written by an incredible writer, I think its quite hard to actually say I don't like any of his books because they are all so profound in their own ways. They are impeccably put but this one is definitely my top favorite!

If you are interested at all in understanding the true nature of human sexuality, you should read this story of a young Brazilian woman who chooses a life of prostitution in Europe while she seeks the meaning of true love and its connection to sacred sex.

Hard to believe this is the work of the same man who gave us *The Alchemist* and *The Valkyries*. I couldn't slog my way through it. Wasted my money and some time.

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