



Stolen Women: Reclaiming Our Sexuality, Taking Back Our Lives

By Gail Wyatt

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"STOLEN WOMEN gives us what Mama couldn't--a way to be in charge of our own bodies. This probing, fact-based book dissects the myths, discards the stereotypes, and unshackles our minds."--BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL Author of Brothers and Sisters

"The culmination of twenty-two years of clinical practice and in-depth interviews with hundreds of African American women."--Ebony

"Groundbreaking research breaks down why we came to be at increased risk and how we can protect ourselves for the future."--Essence

"Finally, we have the first book that breaks the silence. Dr. Wyatt presents a well-researched and balanced perspective of the sexual experiences of African American women. It explodes the myths, examines our past, and sets the path for our healing and our future survival. This is a book that should be read by anyone who knows or cares about African American women."--Gloria Johnson Powell, M.D. Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard University

"A long-awaited look at the stereotypes and sexual myths that surround African American women."--The Chicago Tribune

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Gail Elizabeth Wyatt's *Stolen Women* explores how body identities are often shaped by deeply rooted myths and cultural stereotypes. Tracing black women's body images and sexuality from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, Wyatt powerfully explains in her introduction that "to the degree that we allow our sexual self-image to be defined by others, we will remain, as our ancestors were, stolen women, captives not of strangers but of the past, and of our own unexamined experiences. The challenge we face is to see ourselves not as others see us or want us to be seen, but as we are, as we were, and as we want to be."

Wyatt, a Ph.D. and professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral science at UCLA, explores the origins and hazards of these images through a psychiatric lens. Her use of case studies and behavioral research puts a human face on how these myths affect the development of young black women, and her careful analysis breaks down behavioral trends clearly and concisely. Black women are often seen in opposing sexual terms, either as completely nonsexual or perpetually sexually available. Wyatt fills in the gap between these two dangerous stereotypes, unpacking childhood messages about sex and exploring issues like how girls learn to be "ladies." She encourages all "stolen women" to regain control over their bodies from these external forces, allowing women to apply her work to their own lives and giving them the tools to break free, refusing to believe these painful myths are unchangeable. --Amy Wan

From the Publisher

For the first time, the premiere authority on black female sexuality expands upon her in-depth landmark study to provide a rich and insightful chronicle of black women's unique sexual coming-of-age, from early childhood through adolescence and adulthood. Reports previously unpublished findings and traces how the trauma of slavery continues to influence negative stereotypes of black women and their relationships. Also includes first-hand accounts by black women on their struggle for a positive sexual identity.

From the Back Cover

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