



Anatomy Of A Rose: Exploring The Secret Life Of Flowers

Sharman Apt Russell

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In *Anatomy of a Rose*, Sharman Apt Russell eloquently unveils the "inner life" of flowers, showing them to be more individual, more enterprising, and more responsive than we ever imagined. From their diverse fragrances to their nasty deceptions, Russell proves that, where nature is concerned, "wonder is not only our starting point; it can also be our destination." Throughout this botanical journey, she reveals that the science behind these intelligent plants--how they evolved, how they survive, how they heal--is even more awe-inspiring than their fleeting beauty. Russell helps us imagine what a field of snapdragons looks like to a honeybee; she introduces us to flowers that regulate their own temperature, attract pollinating bats, even smell like a rotting corpse. In this poetic rumination, which combines graceful writing with a scientist's clarity, Russell brings together the work of botanists around the globe, and illuminates a world at once familiar and exotic.

Anatomy Of A Rose: Exploring The Secret Life Of Flowers Details

Date : Published April 4th 2002 by Basic Books (first published 2001)

ISBN : 9780738206691

Author : Sharman Apt Russell

Format : Paperback 215 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Science, Environment, Nature, Gardening, Natural History, Biology, History

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I will likely seek out her other books to read.

Marvin Rowe says

[illegible]

Sandy D. says

This was a rather poetically written short volume on botany - specifically, the botany of flowers. Nice chapters on scent, pollen, trapping insects, classification (a la Linnaeus), evolution, etc.

Here's a fun sentence about pollen that illustrates Russell's style:

"On the very nicest of days, when the air is slightly fresh, when the sun is pleasantly warm, when troublesome insects have not yet appeared or are already gone, we live and breathe in an effluvia of male sex cells." (p. 93).

However, she's wrong about the pollen found on the Neandertal skeletons in Iraq....it was said in 1975 that it was evidence for burial with flowers (cited in the endnotes), but the rebuttal (from the 90's) showing that the pollen was just in the water and sediment that covered the skeletons never was as well popularized. Just FYI. Just not as cool a story as the flowers, I guess.

GarnerGoingsOn Library says

It was a gift, about a beloved topic, that I really wanted to like. But I couldn't. There were some good moments, but they were all too soon intruded upon by inane comments and overly personal memoir with scant connection to flowers. Perhaps retitling would clarify the content for those who love flowers, who love Botany, who love genuinely good nature writing, and who will not enjoy this book.

Mary says

Absolutely beautiful. This author certainly knows how to entrance.

Amy says

I lucked into this book after I discovered and read Ms. Russell's An Obsession With Butterflies: Our Long Love Affair With A Singular Insect. If you love flowers and bees and perfume and nature and lovely escape reading where you learn something, this book is perfect. And if you're looking for an intelligent scientific tome on nature's flowers and insects, this book is perfect as well, with an added bonus of a detailed chapter-by-chapter bibliography and index.

Estefania Pereira says

3.5

Alexia Polasky says

3.5 stars.

Very interesting. Reminded me of The Hidden Life of trees. If you liked one, you'll most likely enjoy the other.

Nestad1 says

Sharman Apt Russell's novel surprised me to say the least. I expected nothing less than extremely dry 170 pages of excruciating reading, yet I actually experienced was a great basis of information on the physiology and inner workings of flowers delicately mixed into a beautiful writing style, resulting in what felt like the most poetic lecture I've ever received. The novel is separated in chapters based on different aspects of flowers, ranging from information on the spectrum of light all the way to the tree of life and evolutionary history. The author uses this flow of information while also connecting various personal experiences to relate the reader to the subject, a seemingly difficult task. I reached the bibliography at the end of the novel, which is well broken down by chapter, yearning for a few more pages that would leave me to ponder my relationship to this set of organisms that somehow feels so alien.

Personally, I feel that I could easily recommend this book to anyone, regardless of the amount of knowledge that they have on the topic of plant biology. The way the author conveys information on the subject seems natural and the points made by Mrs. Russell are straight forward to anyone without a biological background. With that being said, this is a must read for any student that is interested in plant biology. All topics covered by the author are relevant to coursework that would be expected of a collegiate course with such a narrow focus.

Tasia says

Very interesting information on the secret life of flowers. Definitely opened my mind to the many facets of these fleeting beauties. The writing style can be a bit like a butterfly, flitting to and fro between subjects and focuses, but I do like the author's overall voice. She draws you into the romantic mysteries of the botanical world while still keeping a level head. This is more for a layperson, too, so if you're a professional, you might not gravitate towards this work.

Some information in here can be considered out-of-date, so make sure you follow up with other current scientific peer-reviewed resources.

Jamie R says

This book is my bible. I carry it around with me and reread bits of it.

Terry Ransom says

This is such an amazing book! Though packed with science about flowers, pollinators, and evolution, it reads like an engaging poem or romance novel. This wonderful little book gave me a new appreciation and growing wonder about our shared natural world. Very highly recommended!!!

Rachel Brown says

A slim book with not a word wasted, this exploration of botany, the physics of color, and the human relationship to flowers is educational nonfiction that reads like poetry.

Absolutely gorgeous, and you don't have to have a pre-existing interest in flowers. (A pre-existing interest in excellent prose would be good.)

Foxthyme says

I love science and I love good writing. This book gives you both. A quote from the book: "Beloved by gardeners around the world, orchids have all the ambiance of a carnival fun house." To bugs that is. The writing is very approachable.

Naomi says

Although the author might not describe this as a book of spiritual practice, it can orient the reader to the

spiritual practice of attention and to dancing with wonder. Beautifully written, one meditation on flowers after another invites readers to a deeper appreciation of the world in which we live.
