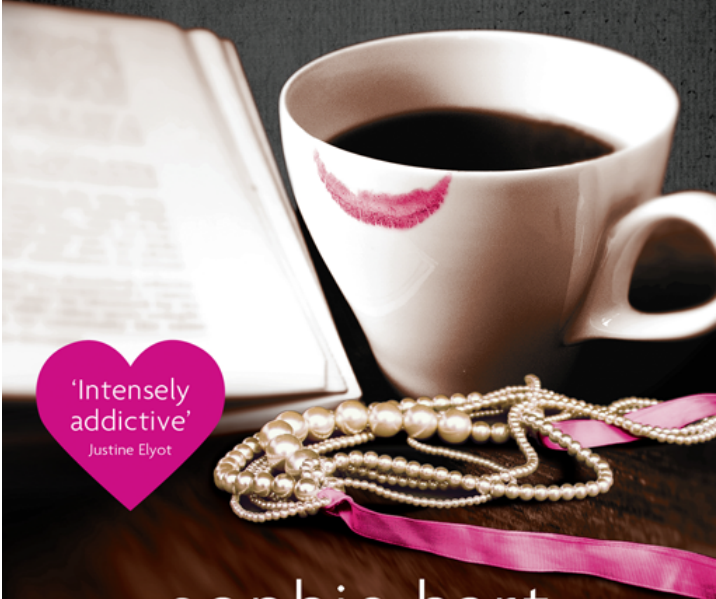


Passions will be awakened at...

the **naughty**
girls
book club



'Intensely
addictive'

Justine Elyot

sophie hart

Sophie Hart

The Naughty Girls Book Club

Аннотация

Loved Fifty Shades of Grey by E.L. James then erotic romance The Naughty Girls Book Club is a must have. A quaint suburb. A quiet little reading group. A very naughty reading list...Estelle sets up a book group in order to increase custom to her struggling cafe, what follows is more scandalous than she could have ever imagined...As the first book club meeting flounders, Estelle suggests a spot of erotica to spice things up. Inspired by their naughty novels, this group of shy suburban readers shake off their inhibitions and discover that their own lives can be just as scandalous...Saucy and sexy chicklit fiction at its most seductive, this is romance perfect for fans of Jilly Cooper and Indigo Bloome.

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SOPHIE HART

The Naughty Girls Book Club

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'You've been a bad girl, Christina ... A very naughty girl ...'

Christina gazed up at Alexander, her eyes dark with longing, her face flushed. 'I'm sorry,' she panted helplessly. 'I won't do it again.'

'I need to make sure of that,' Alexander said, as he stalked across the room. He'd removed his shirt, and his torso was taut and muscular. 'I need to teach you a lesson.'

His gaze turned to the candle that blazed on the bedside table, the flame dancing and twisting.

As Christina stared, the wax spilled over from the slim, white candle down to the antique silver holder. She watched as it cooled and hardened.

'I think you know exactly what I have in mind,' Alexander murmured, his voice low and husky.

Christina could only nod, mute with longing.

'But first – the sweetness,' Alexander promised, as he moved towards her, bending down to kiss her lips, her neck, her collarbone.

Christina moaned in delight as his mouth moved lower ... past her navel ... over the soft, white mound of her stomach ... and then lower still, before finally, exquisitely, she felt his hot lips on the delicate, pink flesh of her—

Estelle Humphreys glanced up in panic and slammed the book

shut, hastily shoving it beneath a pile of papers. Her heart was pounding wildly, while her ears strained to listen.

The noise came again – *thump, thump, thump* – and Estelle realised with relief that it was just her fourteen-year-old son, Joe, in the flat upstairs. The racket meant that he'd finished his homework and turned on his music – Kasabian, by the sound of things.

She stood motionless for a moment, feeling her heart rate return to normal and her cheeks turn from flaming red to their more usual milky shade.

Guiltily, she removed the copy of *Ten Sweet Lessons* from underneath the distinctly less exciting pile of HMRC forms, and stared at it. The cover was deceptively innocent – a dark grey background, with a single red ribbon looped across it – but *Ten Sweet Lessons* was an erotica novel that was currently causing a sensation up and down the country. Selling thousands of copies every day, it had topped the bestseller lists for weeks. And it was the closest Estelle had come to a shirtless man with hot lips and an unbridled desire for a very long time ...

With a sigh of longing, she stashed the book in her handbag, tied her mousey-brown-with-a-hint-of-grey hair back in the scruffy ponytail it was trying to escape from, and turned to the worksheets that were spread across the counter in front of her.

Back to reality.

The accounts for her little cafe made grim reading, as she calculated the day's receipts and entered them on a spreadsheet.

The takings had plummeted in recent weeks, and it didn't seem as though anything Estelle did could reverse that trend. She knew that this time of year was always tough – after the Christmas rush, everyone cut back on their little treats, and no one wanted to venture out in the chilly February weather. But if business didn't pick up soon ... well, it didn't bear thinking about.

Forty-two-year-old Estelle had opened Cafe Crumb five years ago when she and her husband, Ted, had got divorced. Married life had left her feeling as though her own identity was slowly being swallowed up by the demands of being a wife and a mother, so after she and Ted had split (realising they made much better friends than spouses) Estelle had resolved to do something for herself.

And she had, she thought proudly, surveying the little cafe with its red and white checked tablecloths, a single red gerbera in a white vase on each table. As it was now the end of the day, everything was wiped down and perfectly clean, the window cleared of its usual delicious-looking selection of cakes and pastries.

It might not be much, but it was *hers*, Estelle thought with satisfaction.

But for how much longer? she wondered with a shudder, as she looked down again at the depressing figures. They seemed to swim in front of her tired eyes.

Of course, she had her regular customers – the businessmen who rushed in for their morning latte with a buttery croissant

for their daily commute into Bristol city centre; the yummy-mummies who dropped by for gossip, green tea and a low-fat muffin after dropping the kids at school; the lunchtime rush who chomped their way through piles of toasted sandwiches; and the afternoon pensioner crowd who loved their traditional cream teas – but there just didn't seem to be enough of them anymore.

And if she lost the business, Estelle realised, hardly even daring to consider the possibility, she lost their home too – the flat above the shop where she and Joe lived. Poor Joe. He was a good kid, but he seemed to be at that stage where every time she turned around he'd grown another six inches, none of his clothes fitting him for more than a month at a time. He tried not to ask for too much, but Estelle knew what it was like at that age – to fit in, you had to have the right trainers, the newest phone, the latest games console. It was all just so expensive.

Anxiously, Estelle reached for a slice of lemon drizzle cake, breaking off a corner and popping it into her mouth. *Mmm*, she sighed in satisfaction. It was moist, tangy and delicious, just as it should be. At least there wasn't a problem with her baking. She just needed to get more people through the doors to try it out ...

A movement from across the road caught her eye, and she looked out through the cafe windows which were dotted with droplets of condensation. It was dark outside, but in the amber light of the streetlamp she could see two people coming out of Bainbridge Books, the local independent bookshop.

Estelle's heart lurched as she realised it was the owners, Mary

and Alan Bainbridge, and that the couple were locking the door for the very last time. A few boxes of books stood forlornly on the pavement outside – the ones they'd been unable to get rid of in the closing down sale – and even from here Estelle could see that Mary was close to tears as Alan fished the key out of his pocket.

Instinctively, Estelle grabbed one of the stiff, white cake boxes from the shelf behind her – usually reserved for her big-spending customers – and began filling it with an assortment of goodies. Two slices of pecan pie, a large slab of ginger cake, a couple of glazed doughnuts topped with hundreds and thousands. Oh, and some of her special double-chocolate brownies. She knew how much Alan loved those.

Hurriedly, Estelle snatched up the cakes and dashed outside, the bell clanging behind her.

'I brought you these,' Estelle blurted out as she crossed the street, proffering the box, which Mary took gratefully.

'Thank you, Estelle,' she said, her voice wobbling dangerously. 'It's very kind of you.'

'It certainly is,' echoed Alan, as he took the box from his wife and peeped inside.

'I'm just so sorry to see you go,' Estelle told them helplessly, wishing there was something more she could do. Mary and Alan had run Bainbridge Books for over thirty years, but they simply couldn't afford to keep it open any longer. They were moving down to Devon to be closer to their grandchildren, and though Estelle knew they'd been planning their retirement for a while,

they certainly hadn't wanted to leave like this – unable to sell their business, and forced to close due to lack of custom. It was a chilling reminder of what could happen to her if things didn't pick up.

'Well, we all have to move on,' Alan replied stoically. 'Times change.'

'I'll miss you,' Estelle swallowed, feeling overcome with emotion. She'd loved the atmosphere in the cosy little bookshop, and had whiled away many a happy hour with the friendly owners, chatting about books over a cup of tea and a generous slice of battenberg.

Mary was shaking her head sadly. 'Oh, we've had some wonderful times in there,' she sniffed, staring through the window at the now-abandoned shop, with its bare walls and rows of empty bookshelves. 'You know what I'll miss the most?' she confided, her eyes glistening with tears behind her oversized glasses. 'Talking to all of our customers every day. Everyone thinks that reading is such a solitary occupation, but it doesn't have to be,' she insisted.

Estelle nodded in agreement as Mary continued speaking, warming to her theme. 'All the best books should be shared and discussed and debated. It's a centuries' old tradition. People have always loved stories. Oh, I'll miss this place so much!' she sobbed, dabbing at her eyes with a soggy tissue.

Estelle reached out towards her, enfolding Mary in a comforting hug. It was so true what Mary had said, she thought,

remembering all the chats they'd shared, from debating their favourite Jane Austen novel to discussing the merits of Mr Rochester versus Heathcliff as a romantic hero. Not that she'd have admitted to Mary about reading *Ten Sweet Lessons*, Estelle thought guiltily, remembering the creased paperback hidden at the bottom of her bag.

Suddenly, she pulled away from Mary as though she'd just had an electric shock. 'That's it!' Estelle exclaimed. Her eyes were sparkling, her face shining with enthusiasm.

'That's what, dear?' Mary asked, looking at her husband in confusion. Alan simply shrugged, staring nervously at Estelle as though she'd gone mad.

'The solution to my problems,' Estelle squealed. '*You*, Mary Bainbridge,' she declared, throwing her arms around her once again, 'are a genius!'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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