

THE **sex** FILES

Honesty, addiction, pornography, the search for a female Viagra and the gulf between male and female sexuality. Six writers explore the issues.

WOMEN WHO PAY FOR INTIMACY

BY DONNA REEVES

Finding your sexual match can be a daunting affair. One woman who wasn't willing to search any longer, and the man she hired to help her explore her sexuality, talk frankly about how this unconventional relationship works for them.

AFTER A STRING of unsatisfying romances and nearing the age of 50, Rebecca had almost given up on finding a fulfilling relationship again. The professional had neither the time nor inclination to hit the dating scene, and had discovered that most of the decent men her age were already taken anyway. Still, there was a desire to have some intimacy in her life, and she wanted it on her terms. She found male escort Daniel Landon via his website almost a year ago, and the two have been seeing each other ever since.

Rebecca, 48

"I'd never really found a normal relationship that was satisfying sexually. Some of them came close, but I never reached a point where I was completely happy. I couldn't make the gentleman understand what I needed, I suppose.

"To be honest, I'd given up in my life. I'd got to middle age and I'd given up ever having a satisfying relationship with anybody – I believed I was going to the grave that way. But then I thought, 'No, I am going to find a professional who understands women, and I'm going to explore my sexuality at this stage of my life'. It was a huge decision.

"I found Daniel on the internet. We talked on the phone... I was apprehensive of course, but I said I'd like someone who I could look up to; somebody I could respect, but also

someone who was pretty authoritative with their sexuality and was also interested in mine.

"When we met for the first time it was really interesting. I was obviously nervous but he has a manner – and I'm not sure if all escorts are like Daniel, or I was just lucky to find him – that is so disarming. The moment he walked into the room all my inhibitions just disappeared and I felt so comfortable with him.

"In the first few sessions we had there was a lot of exploring our bodies; there wasn't this drive to just put on a condom

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and do it, which is what happens with most men I go out with.

"I used to see Daniel at least once a week. That went on for about six months. These days we have a drink now and then. Sometimes, even now, I will call him and we might spend a night together at a hotel. We'll have dinner and relax... read poetry, have a long bath – all those lovely things I've always wanted to do.

"After I've been with Daniel I feel amazing for the next two or three weeks;

I really feel like I'm something. It would almost be impossible for another man to measure up. From where I am at this point, nobody else does it for me, but then if I'd only used Daniel once or twice perhaps it wouldn't have been that way. I'm very happy in my life now and thanks to my time with Daniel I'm a lot more confident as a woman. I understand my own sexuality and I understand my own needs and that's made me strong. I can walk into a club or a bar now and have a drink, and I'll have a conversation with three or four different gentlemen, whereas before I met Daniel, I could never have done that.

"I suppose in some ways we are friends, and sometimes it is hard work separating the professional service from the personal attachment. But, in another way it's easy because I don't have to wash his socks and deal with that side of a relationship, so he remains this amazing romantic figure."

Daniel Landon, 31

"Women are looking for intimacy – someone they can communicate with, who knows how to handle women, and someone who knows how to be sensitive. In my experience, they want someone who's not the typical Aussie male stereotype.

"Women come to me for a lot of different reasons. Some are sick of playing

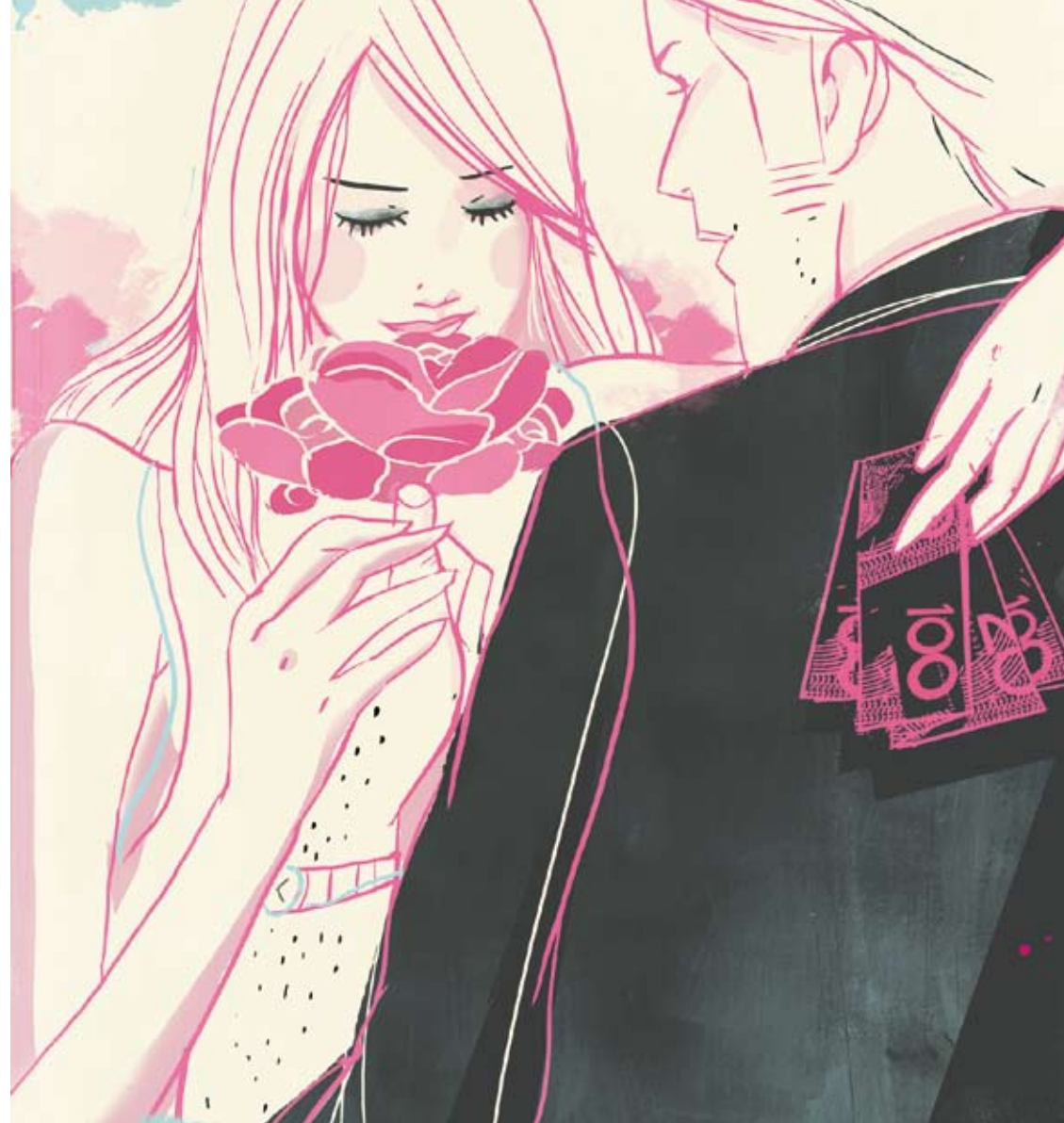


ILLUSTRATION: PIETARI POSTI

games, or don't want to go to bars to meet people. Others have tried internet dating and discovered online profiles don't match the reality. Recently I'm finding there are a lot of women in their early thirties who are married and not getting what they want sexually from their partner. Some have their partner's okay to come to me, and others go behind their back. I generally get about two or three new enquiries a week and see one client a week.

"With some clients in particular it's almost a life-coaching thing. They want to gain more experience; they want to explore certain things and can't find anyone else to explore them with safely. There is a lot of education about what I do because I care about sexuality. I'm very open – you can say whatever you want to me and I'll try anything.

"Before I meet a client I usually talk to them about three or four times. It's because they feel uneasy, but women are like that; they're generally driven from

their hearts, whereas men are driven by their genitals. Women are a lot different in that they need to develop trust.

"In that respect I'm not like a female sex worker – you know, 'I'm here, your time starts now; go for it.' My service is not like that. I spend more time with them and talk with them during the week if they feel like talking to me. Often I have text relationships with them as well, and they book me periodically. Sometimes I just go out for a drink with them because the relationship has grown to that degree.

"I believe in giving people the tools to take into new relationships so when they do find someone, they don't repeat certain behaviours or patterns they have in the past. There's a lot of follow up for me. We call it 'after care'. It's a lot like basic therapy. I'll call them after a session and that's important to me because it gives me time to debrief them as they're often going through a lot of changes and I'm really careful with that."

FAILURE TO LAUNCH

BY ANDREW CLOVER

Dirty dishes and a sleepy wife stand between this husband and his mission.

10PM. KITCHEN. I'M reading an article to my wife. "The average married couple," I announce, "have sex five times a month." "What!" she says. "That's more than once a week! We do it five times a year!" "Darling," I say, "we need to get our average up." "Do you want to do it twice in one night?" she challenges. "I always want that," I reply. "But only before we do it the first time." She laughs. Then she snogs me.

That's confusing. She is luscious, she's sexy, she's a real, live, genuine lady. But she's doing that thing of retreating her tongue, making me stretch for it. Plus, she's blocking my good nostril, so I can't breathe. I'm not against French kissing, but I'm not prepared to drown. And, then, something happens inside – the little love buzz at the base of my rude area. "Baby," I whisper. "The rocket is on the launch pad once more. Let's probe for Planet Love." "Okay," she breathes. "But could you quickly tidy?"

What? There's loads of tidying. But I am a rocket. I blast through it. I press dishwasher buttons. I wipe the sink. Then I run upstairs. She's in the bath. Good. I put on my show pants – the black Calvin Kleins. I leap into bed. Then I realise I've not cleaned myself. I run downstairs and shower. When I return, the light's out. I get in and shuffle over. She kisses my hand, holds it round her... Is that foreplay, or cuddling? There's no time for cuddling. I touch her breasts. She slaps them off. I touch her stomach. It's soft and womanly and gorgeous. "Leave me there," she says. "I feel fat." "For God's sake," I want to say, "can we agree on all zones that are out of bounds?" This is the trouble with our sex life. She gives notes; I sulk. I send in the ground crew once again. Engines are roaring. It's blast-off time. Ten. Nine. I kiss her cheek. Eight. Seven. I touch a buttock. Six. There's no response. Five. She snores. Four. She's really snoring. Three. She's flatlined. She's gone.