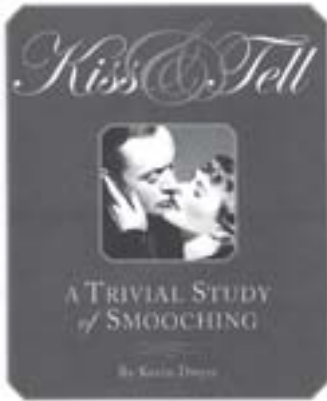


# INTHEMARGINS

## BOOKREVIEWS



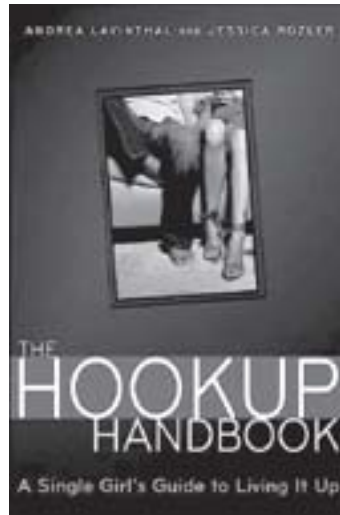
**Kiss and Tell: A Trivial Study of Smooching**  
by Kevin Dwyer  
Quirk Books, 2006, \$14.95

While there's certainly nothing trivial about the act of kissing itself, *everything* about this little volume is trivial—it's length, it's content, it's scope ... which isn't really a problem when you consider the book's self-effacing subtitle. What Dwyer is trying to achieve is a fun, if cursory, look at the history of kissing from Classical times all the way up to Monica Lewinsky kissing Bill Clinton (no, not *that* kiss). He does an admirable job of achieving that end, too, and, thankfully, without including a single how-to on lip-locking.

In fact, *Kiss & Tell* answered most of my burning questions about kissing. Like why is kissing sometimes called "necking"? It turns out that the term comes from the Roaring Twenties. In what is probably his most lucid observation, Dwyer simply writes, "That's what happens when everyone's hopped up on reefer and gin." Tongue-in-cheek stories of prudish Puritans and monkey love are interspersed with bizarre kissing laws from around the U.S., and no entry lasts more than two pages.

*Kiss & Tell* is an amusing diversion, but at 127 lightly written pages (with pictures, I might add) the diversion doesn't last long. My advice: save yourself the \$15, get a pizza at Romeo & Juliet's, pick up a bottle of Yellow Tail and rent a quirky romantic classic, like *Benny & Joon*. You'll score more points with your significant other, and save yourself from idly bringing up the kissing habits of Alexander the Great. (Rest assured, all you cash-strapped trivia lovers, "Jeopardy's" already secured a reference copy, and Alex Trebeck is perusing it this minute for French phrases that he can pronounce in his holier-than-thou, asshole-ish tone of voice.)

—peter koch



**The Hookup Handbook**  
by Andrea Lavinthal and Jessica Rozler  
Simon Spotlight Entertainment, 2005 \$14.95

Ladies: If, as a single female, your idea of a really great Saturday night on the town does not include hours traversing various hot-spots on the Chip strip, clad either in too-tall heels, a too-short skirt, or a dangerously low-cut top, *The Hookup Handbook* probably isn't your best bet for a helpful read. However, for the hordes of you that typically migrate downtown each weekend night, crowding Buffalo's deserted city streets with cosmo-fueled abandon, Lavinthal and Rozler's guidebook to the newest way to "get together" will be, at the very least, an entertaining read. At its best, this anti-self-help book is a must-read for those in the game; offering hilarious insight, useful tips and dirty jokes. It's hilariously funny only if you've (shamefully) experienced the many, all-to-common and oftentimes unappealing situations described in the text.

At its heart, this is an anti-romantic, extremely sexually-liberated look at the dating scene today's pre and post-college grads encounter when looking for that not-so-special someone. I took it as a sort of twisted (and amusing) commentary on the fear of commitment that many of my peers so cruelly suffer through as the idea of "growing up" and settling down takes on an ever more unappealing veneer.

If you pick up this book looking for a fun, romantic Valentine's Day read à la *Bridget Jones's Diary*, I'd advise you to look elsewhere. If, however, you're young, single, and don't mind self-deprecating humor, Lavinthal and Rozler's *Handbook* may be just the thing to combat a case of the lonely Saturday night blues—that is, until eleven o'clock or so, when you slip into your cutest jeans, newest cami and heels to hit the strip.

—jill froebel



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