



## Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows

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### **Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows** Balli Kaur Jaswal

A lively, sexy, and thought-provoking East-meets-West story about community, friendship, and women's lives at all ages—a spicy and alluring mix of *Together Tea* and *Calendar Girls*.

*Every woman has a secret life . . .*

Nikki lives in cosmopolitan West London, where she tends bar at the local pub. The daughter of Indian immigrants, she's spent most of her twenty-odd years distancing herself from the traditional Sikh community of her childhood, preferring a more independent (that is, Western) life. When her father's death leaves the family financially strapped, Nikki, a law school dropout, impulsively takes a job teaching a "creative writing" course at the community center in the beating heart of London's close-knit Punjabi community.

Because of a miscommunication, the proper Sikh widows who show up are expecting to learn basic English literacy, not the art of short-story writing. When one of the widows finds a book of sexy stories in English and shares it with the class, Nikki realizes that beneath their white dupattas, her students have a wealth of fantasies and memories. Eager to liberate these modest women, she teaches them how to express their untold stories, unleashing creativity of the most unexpected—and exciting—kind.

As more women are drawn to the class, Nikki warns her students to keep their work secret from the Brotherhood, a group of highly conservative young men who have appointed themselves the community's "moral police." But when the widows' gossip offers shocking insights into the death of a young wife—a modern woman like Nikki—and some of the class erotica is shared among friends, it sparks a scandal that threatens them all.

### **Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows Details**

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Author : Balli Kaur Jaswal

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## From Reader Review Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows for online ebook

### Megan Johnson says

This is the second book from "Reese's Book Club" that I've picked up, and the second that I was expecting to be blown away by. Unfortunately, this one fell a bit short to me. The premise sounded amazing and liberating and everything you want when reading a take on a culture that's less familiar to you. Instead, this felt forced and cliché and so predictable that I caught myself wondering if I should even bother finishing it.

That being said, it was an enjoyable enough read. It was different from everything else I've picked up recently which was welcomed and refreshing. I just wished there had been less things going on, less excerpts from the stories, less love stories...I'm not even sure, it just felt very bogged down in everything going on. I did love the dynamics of the various personalities and how they interacted with one another, so that's worth mentioning as a high point.

**Should you buy it?:** Despite me not loving it, I'm still going to say yes. It's one of those that's maybe not the best book you've ever read but will stay with you for a while regardless. If it looks interesting enough to you, I encourage you to pick it up.

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### Taryn Pierson says

Admit it: that title caught your eye, didn't it? If you're one of those people who "doesn't read romance," let me quickly say before you tune out that this book has so much going on beyond the steamy stuff. There are generational clashes, sisterly complications, challenges to gender roles, and even an unsolved crime. This is one of those books that is hard to categorize because it does so many things (and does them all really well).

(Also, if you don't read romance, why do you hate fun?)

Nikki is a modern girl who dropped out of law school and works as a bartender in a seedy London pub, much to her family's chagrin. When she sees a flyer advertising a creative writing teacher position at a Sikh community center, she jumps at the chance to secure a more legitimate gig. At the first class, though, she discovers that many of the Punjabi widows enrolled in the class can't read or write in English. Nikki assumes she will have to go back to basics and teach the women how to form letters and sound out words, but it turns out the ladies have some inspiration of their own. Instead of learning their ABCs, the widows discuss which vegetables are best used to describe male anatomy. (Pro tip for American readers: an "aubergine" is an eggplant. Just so's you know.)

Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows is a shot of female empowerment straight to the bloodstream. I really can't recommend it highly enough.

More book recommendations by me at [www.readingwithhippos.com](http://www.readingwithhippos.com)

## Jennifer says

Well, then!

I hadn't heard of this book until Reese Witherspoon named it as her book club choice for the month. Intrigued, I decided to give it a try.

There are a few overlapping storylines, but the primary premise involves Nikki a 22-year old first-generation Punjabi woman living in London who has dropped out of law school and doesn't quite know what she wants to do with her life. One day at her Shik temple, she sees an advertisement for a creative writing teaching position. She's hired for the job, but her students end up being older, mostly illiterate Punjabi widows who think that they're taking a class to learn basic literacy skills. Through a bit of a twist (which I won't spoil) the widows decide that they'll forego the literacy lessons and verbally exchange creative stories of a certain (ahem) mature genre.

While there are several premises in the book that just don't make sense, there's a lot to like in this book. It's funny, heartfelt, and a very fast read. I enjoyed the celebration of female friendship, feminist themes, and positive portrayal of older women.

Readers should know that the widows' erotic stories are, well, quite erotic! I wasn't expecting that as it isn't my usual fare. Text (and audio) are definitely not suitable for work, children, or the easily offended.

4.5 stars

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## Jennifer says

“His throbbing organ was the color and size of an aubergine and as she gripped it with her hands and guided it to her mouth he became so excited that his knees began to shake...” Nikki gasped and dropped the pages on the desk. The women were laughing loudly now and their voices had begun to echo down the corridor.

“What's the matter?”

“This is not the type of story I had in mind.”

Oh yeah - this book is full of dirty old women. Actually...back up and let me take the "dirty" out of that statement. It's full of oppressed and policed Punjabi widows who have finally found the ultimate outlet for memories, laughter, and imagination. What was supposed to be an adult literacy class turns into a group of erotic storytelling and it is hilarious. It's also full of perspective, cultural awareness, respect for the women who have lived through traditions that may be questionable today, and an honorable appreciation for sexual intimacy. If you are a reader who does not enjoy reading adult content, the erotic stories are each woven separately throughout this book and are easy to identify and skip over if you so wish. In addition to this main plotline, there is a parallel suspense element and mystery to follow that mirrors the overall theme of gender control within this culture. Overall, *Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows* is a thoroughly enjoyable novel that uses fun humor to bring awareness to important subjects. Check it out!

### My favorite quote:

*“Laughter rang down the corridor, breaking her thoughts. Strange, she thought. There were no other classes*

on at the same time. As she made her way to the room, the noise became louder and she could hear a voice clearly speaking.

“He puts his hand on her thigh as she’s driving the car and, as she’s driving, he moves his hand closer between her legs. She can’t concentrate on driving, so she tells him, ‘let me just get to a small side street’. He tells her – why do we have to wait?’ ... “Chee, why is he so impatient? Can’t keep it in his pants until they get to a side street? She should punish him by driving him around the car park until his little balloon deflates.”

Another wave of laughter.”

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## **Kelly (and the Book Boar) says**

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

First let me take a moment to say that I carried this around for TWO DAYS at work and not one person asked me what I was reading. I can’t get in the stinking elevator or make a cup of coffee any other day without someone asking that question, but when I’m sitting on a goldmine of awkward title????? Nope . . . .

I don’t know how I planted the idea in my own head that this was going to be like *The Joy Luck Club*, but I sure enough thought that’s what it was going to be. (In case you aren’t familiar, that is the story of four Chinese women and the sharing of memories of the most monumental moments of their lives in hopes their American-born daughters will understand what made them the way they are.) In case you were wondering even more, that book (and movie) made me cry the ugliest of all the cries and I highly recommend it. I’m happy to report *Punjabi Widows* did not (and wasn’t supposed to) do the same.

The story here is one of the East-meets-West variety about Nikki, a 20-something “modern London girl” who doesn’t quite know what she wants to be when she grows up, but applies to teach a “writing workshop” two days a week to ladies at the local Sikh Community Center in order to be able to tell her mother she does something other than work in a pub. What she doesn’t realize until her first class is the students have literally signed up to learn how to WRITE – not stories, but the alphabet. These women are widows from traditional households where educating girls was the least of the family’s concerns and some of which were married (or at least had their marriages arranged) when they were just children. When Nikki arrives on day two with a bag of workbooks and games from the local charity shop in order to begin her arduous task, *Red Velvet: Pleasurable Stories for Women* - a book intended to be a gag gift for Nikki’s conservative/wants to arrange her own marriage sister – becomes the focus of the widows. It is then the women decide they would prefer a storytelling class – they will each make up stories and the one widow who knows how to write will transcribe them. And then????

**“Whoa! I was not expecting that. I thought these were going to be granny romance stories. These are all-out naughty.”**

Please don’t get confused and think this was only a “dirty book.” It did have a bit of similarity to *The Joy Luck Club* as well as a bit of *The Help*. Most surprising of all, this could have been considered a selection for the Winter Reading Challenge . . . .

And been a better fit than a couple of the books I read. It was chick lit at its finest and I’m glad that bizarre little title popped up on my feed and caught my eye.

## **Ammar says**

This novel transports the reader from wherever they are reading to Southall and its Punjabi population. One can smell the spices and look at the colourful saris and fabrics in stalls and bazaars. While at the same time, one can look at the dichotomous us vs them paradigm that plagued humanity since the beginning of time.

Where people who are similar are friends or feel safe, while the other who is different is a sort of an enemy or a nuisance at least.

The narrator Nikki, a London born and bred British Punjabi young lady, who works as a bartender and lives in the flat above, gets a chance to teach widows how to write.

The widows each of them widowed at a different age, each had a different experience in marriage, some had better marriages than others, and each widow brings a new story and a new spice to those classes.

The stories those widows tell, as they are storytellers, reveal a fantasy of sort, a hope, an image they have deep inside and long to let it be out in the public.

There is backlash and hostility from the traditional surrounding, but under it all there is a unity of women, there are tender moments, and a realistic tale of immigrants and women who want a better life or just more fun.

The stories are erotic in their nature and they explore a prism of sexuality, so keep that in mind if you are not comfortable with erotic literature.

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## **Pri Srinivasa says**

### **HANDS DOWN BEST BOOK I HAVE READ ABOUT BEING BROWN IN MY LIFE**

wow this book was revolutionary. ever questioned why aunties judged us but havent come to terms with our own judgement of aunties? assumed they were sexless? assumed that they were frustrated? tried to diagnose them? the author in this book handed me a god damn mirror and made me think about honor, sex, judgement, and being indian. i could not put the book down- i read it in 1 day. the story is about a desi girl named nikki who dropped out of college and needed a job. she saw a writing class instructor position in a gurudwara to teach creative writing. instead nikki found herself in front of the community widows- ignored by society, deemed voiceless, and considered to be gossipy horrible women. in some ways she was right because the community sits on secrets. if you want a read that interrogates our unfair notions of honor on ALL WOMEN- i highly recommend. full of desire and suspense. plz plz read i swear to god.

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## **Laura says**

**I loved, loved, LOVED this book and am now furiously recommending it to everyone as the best summer read of 2017.** Set in the Punjabi enclave of Southall in London, it takes a careful and entertaining look at the many issues faced by women living in that community.

Nikki is a young British-Punjabi woman who isn't quite sure what to do with her life. She dropped out of her law degree to her parents' horror, and then made the highly controversial decision to leave the family home to live alone above the pub where she pulls pints. On a visit to the Gurudwara in Southall she sees a notice advertising for a tutor - someone to teach illiterate widows in the community how to read and write; what could possibly be more wholesome and fulfilling? Nikki puts herself forward and, as the only candidate, is promptly given the role. However, the widows of Southall have a few surprises in store for Nikki; they have no interest in learning their ABCs, they just want to talk about S-E-X and in the most graphic terms imaginable.

[I'm not sure if this is the shape of aubergine they were going for, but same effect]

At first, the filth that comes out of these old ladies' mouths is shocking to Nikki, but slowly she begins to understand how biased she - and everyone else - is being towards these women. Just because they dress in white and wear dupattas, doesn't mean they can't be as horny as a bunch of teenage boys, right?

The widows set her straight:

"She doesn't like it because she's just like everybody else", Arvinder said. "All these people who say 'Take no notice of the widows, without their husbands they're irrelevant'".

And this is one of the most interesting and oft overlooked issues that this book tackles. In almost all human societies, women's value is based entirely on their role as sex objects or caregivers (either to husbands or children). When a woman doesn't fit either of those roles (eg, women who wish to remain single ["spinsters"], women whose husbands have died and children have grown up) society isn't quite sure what to do with them and they're treated with disdain and suspicion. By bringing this phenomenon into the light and turning it on its head, Kaur Jaswal highlights an important feminist problem.

Anyway, duly pwned, Nikki reassesses her biases and begins to become more involved with the community she's always rebelled against. But it's not all throbbing aubergines and chiselled abs; as Nikki becomes more involved in the community she begins to uncover some dark secrets about girls who have gone missing, secrets that she can't ignore...

By turns hilarious, thought-provoking, and heartwarming, this book is a full-on page turner and I solidly recommend it.

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## Paromjit says

This novel is a real revelation of the immigrant experience and community set in Southall, London. Nikki is an independent woman, law school dropout, protester, caught between the traditional values of her Punjabi home and her more natural inclination to adhere to the more modern feminist agenda. She is living above a pub on a peppercorn rent where she works as bartender. She is skint, pondering her future, and against all her natural instincts, goes to a Southall temple to post a flyer about her sister, Mindi, who is looking for an arranged marriage and requesting that suitable men get in touch. Whilst there, Nikki spots a job advert for a tutor to teach creative writing for two evenings a week. She gets the job only to discover that she is getting more than she bargained for.

The class comprises primarily Punjabi widows, lonely, lost, isolated and mostly illiterate. There is no way they are in a position to engage in creative writing. However, the women do not take kindly to being taught

how to read and write with resources aimed at young children. They are interested in engaging in oral storytelling, but of the type that is traditionally frowned upon in the community and challenges the role of women. They want to connect with and express their sexuality through the telling of rather racy and erotic tales. All of this has to be kept secret from the course organiser, Kulwinder, who is still grieving over the suicide of her daughter, Maya. It also has to be kept secret from the rest of the community and a group of hardline brothers who have set themselves up to police the morality and honour of women to ensure they stick to traditional expectations. Nikki finds herself getting closely involved with the women, caught up in a new love affair, and untangling a mystery that brings her great danger.

This novel is full of wit, warmth and humour. It took me a little while to get into it, but once I got absorbed, I absolutely loved it. This is a story of women finding the courage to express their sexuality and become both more decisive and more independent. They support one another and the group grows as more women join them. Nikki finds a new place for herself within the community, becomes closer to her family and gains the impetus to change the direction of her life. Absolutely wonderful book that I highly recommend. Thanks to HarperCollins for an ARC.

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## Victoria says

*You will never look at ghee the same way again!*

The title hooked me, but it's the story of the inner lives of these widows, all in perpetual mourning, that completely beguiled. What is advertised as a literacy class for women becomes an exploration of sexual experiences and desires and the author does a wonderful job of weaving their erotic stories into the narrative. At times rather amusing--the women's use of produce to describe anatomy for instance--it is also touching and thought-provoking.

Lest you think this is all one big bodice-ripping read, however, there is more than just eroticism here as the author explores identity, patriarchy, indoctrination and societal mores. There are also numerous subplots as she explores the tension between generations, weaves in the mysterious and unsolved deaths of two young women and all of the action takes place under the watchful eye of a self-appointed militant group, the Brothers.

I'm intrigued with books about cultures and religions of which I know little, there's so much to learn, to understand, and this was an enlightening first glance at the Punjabi community and Sikh religion. I found the characters enchanting, the writing entertaining and while it was slow to start, once the erotic stories are introduced the plot moves at a rapid pace. All in all, I would recommend this as a light read with some complex subjects that are handled with humor and heart.

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## Carol (Bookaria) says

The story revolves mainly around **Nikki**, a first-generation Punjabi, born and raised in England. She's a law-school dropout trying to earn some extra money by signing up to teach creative-writing classes at the Sikh temple. What she doesn't know is that the students she gets are mostly illiterate Punjabi widows looking to kill the boredom and routine by engaging in lively, oral, sexy storytelling... And this is where the fun begins.

Of course, that's not all that there is to the story, it also deals with the challenges that multi-cultural people face when it comes to tradition, pressures of close-knit communities, family relationships, and so much

more.

This book reminded me of **Reading Lolita in Tehran** but much more lighthearted and charming. As soon as you start the book you are immersed in the story, and oh, **the story is just wonderful**.

Overall **I enjoyed this book** and recommend it to all!

#### **About the author:**

Website

Review also posted on **blog**

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### **Jo (An Unexpected Bookish Geek) says**

"His throbbing organ was the color and size of an aubergine and as she gripped it with her hands and guided it to her mouth he became so excited that his knees began to shake."

I'll start as I mean to go on here. That is the kind of erotic stories that the punjabi widows in this book create. I'll say, that I was in a rather busy staff room when I read that part, and I think it caused my coffee to go down the wrong pipe.

This story is about an adult literary class that rather quickly turns into an erotic storytelling class, and to be honest, the stories are pretty hilarious, but at the same time, they are quite heated. There is much cultural awareness, the notable appreciation for sexual intimacy, something that is so often hidden, and not talked about, and, it is also full of a huge amount of perspective from women who live through these kind of traditions. It truly shocked me to learn about female subjugation in Indian societies, too.

While I thought this was an amusing and a rather light hearted read, the plot wasn't written in enough depth for me, and to be honest, the characters were totally flat, and I didn't actually warm to any of them. I thought the back story was rushed, and it didn't combine well enough with the erotic stories. However, I'd just read it for the amusing erotic stories!

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### **PorshaJo says**

Rating 4.5

Oh my! This one was completely unexpected. The title....I thought, surely it does not contain erotic stories. But it did...and I listened to this one via audio! Thankfully, I was home alone cleaning while I listened. I so enjoy reading anything about India and Indian culture and when I saw this one, I knew I had to read it.

Nikki is a young, modern Punjabi Indian girl living in London. Her parents, immigrants, want the best for her. Her father wanted her to be a lawyer and go to law school. But Nikki didn't know what she wanted, but knew it was not law school. So she drops out. She lives above a bar where she tends bar but she needs money for her now widowed mother. Her sister wants a traditional Indian marriage that is arranged, she asks Nikki to place an add for her on a community center board at the Punjabi temple in Southall. Here she instead finds a job add for someone to teach creative writing to Sikh widows. Nikki takes the job, well, no one else really applied to teach it either. During class, Nikki finds that many of these widows are illiterate. But what they really want is to tell stories....erotic stories. It makes them feel bold, strong, and a bit naughty. Nikki is thrown into the Sikh community and their rules. This is forbidden. There are a bunch of young local Sikh

men, The Brotherhood, who go around keeping all the women in community inline, branding themselves the morality police. It's all quite scandalous. Women are so afraid to do anything and someone is threatening women in the community. But as more women hear about these stories told at class, more want to join. They begin to step out from behind their fear, and now their husbands (it's not all widows in the end), and do things for themselves. They stand-up for themselves.

Oh I enjoyed this one. It is funny, a bit tense, there is murder, jealousy, scandal....and more than I wanted to know about ghee and aubergines (in the stories). One passage I so enjoyed was the telling of the phrase 'book regret'...where Nikki saw a book and wanted it so bad, but decided not to get it. And since then she has suffered from book regret as she can no longer find the book in print. I learned so much about the Sikh culture also. It's not heavy on the erotic stories (that's not my thing) but a few are weaved into the story, it's more about the culture of these women and how they bond together and grow from the strength to actually tell these stories, their fantasies. The audio was wonderful and I loved every minute of it. I had to knock it a 1/2 star just for some predictability. I do highly suggest this one if you want a fun story, to learn about Indian culture, and want to listen to a fabulous audio. I just suggest....maybe some earbuds for the more racy parts.

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### **Emma says**

This was a great story with many themes. It is set around the Sikh community of Southall, London. It addresses the difficulties for young British Sikhs, born and raised here and developing different values to their Indian born parents. It covers levels of illiteracy within the Sikh community, the gossip, lack of privacy and repressive quality within, but also the incredible support network that it can be. We get to think about the pros and cons of arranged marriages. There is a darker undertone too in relation to honour killings. The story is about the empowerment of a community of women and is wittily done. The Punjabi widows of the title have felt unseen and unheard and creating these stories together gives them self value and meaning, as well as stirring up the indignation and disapproval of the Brothers. There is a love story and a mystery as well as the main plot and there are some happy outcomes from the Erotic stories produced, for the community and main characters. A thought provoking book wrapped up with a light hearted touch. Recommended.

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### **Elyse says**

Love, sex, intimacy, and community.

What's not to like?

How about oppression- or violence against women?

Punjabi widows didn't like being thought of as chopped liver. Could you blame them?

Lots of fun, laughter & sexy steam...

but it's also a kaleidoscope of deeper themes to explore...

....a hidden culture and religious traditions ....

....secrets kept & why...

....education, (older illiterate women),

....arrange marriages,... and why would modern women choose it today?

....a single Punjabi widow and the stigma of what that often means?....

....conflicts between old traditions and the modern world ...

Mystery & murder....

....gossip ( universal theme)

.... Love and forgiveness....

( universally theme)....

The specialness of this book are the lovely women characters exploring their culture —wearing their vulnerability on their sleeves....with hopes & dreams.

Erotically thought provoking !!!

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