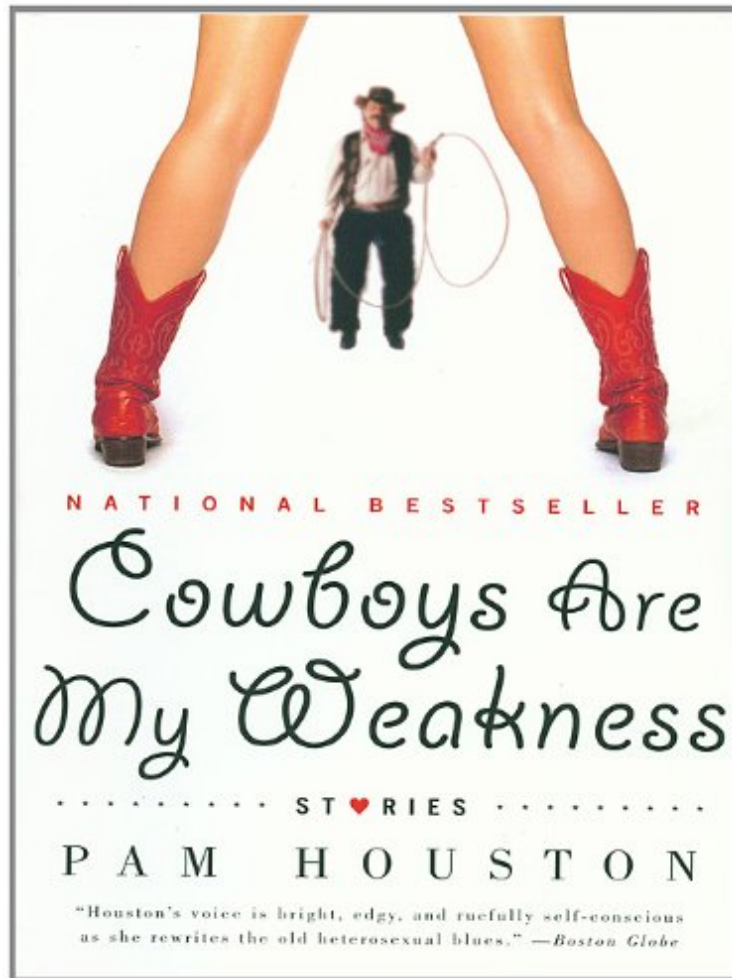


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Cowboys Are My Weakness: Stories (Norton Paperback)

Von Pam Houston

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Von Pam Houston : Cowboys Are My Weakness: Stories (Norton Paperback) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cowboys Are My Weakness: Stories (Norton Paperback):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Writing is Not Her WeaknessVon Ein KundeThis first collection of stories by a young writer is a stellar performance of expression and will. Pam Houston's stories are strong, powerful, and fun. She has been compared to Hemingway with her straightforward narrative style and depiction of the outdoors.Reading her stories is like a breath of fresh mountain air, or riding across the prairie full gallop on a horse, or white water rafting down a perilous spring runoff swollen river. With twelve stories in all, she explores the perils of relationships with men and women, nature, and animals. Her titles, "Highwater", "What Shock Heard", "Symphony", and the like, all explore the complex cacophony of living in America in the nineties. Her sentences are tight and frank. She encapsulates bits of knowledge in one

phrase. Throughout "How to Talk to a Hunter" she masterfully uses fragments to compose a narrative. She uses the course of a relationship portrayed through talks with a best female friend, talks with a best male friend, and talks with herself. Houston uses the interpolative device hailing the reader with the "you" statement. Particularly in the mistakes we all have made and we should have learned from. The narrator reminds herself of things, for instance: "This is what you learned in college: A man desires the satisfaction of his desire; a woman desires the conditions of desiring", or "This is what you learned in graduate school: In every assumption is contained the possibility of its opposite." The men are often clever in their own way and described as such. Here "the hunter will talk about spring in Hawaii, summer in Alaska. The man who says he was always better at math will form the sentences so carefully it will be impossible to tell if you are included in these plans." This same man who claims "he's not so good with words will manage to say eight things about his friend without using a gender-determining pronoun." Houston portrays men who are loveable, yet perhaps not dependable, wild and strong, men who the reader can sympathise with and understand why the narrator is in love with them. She involves her women in the same way. Her heroines are smart, but sometimes use poor judgement. In "Selway" the narrator is conceding to run a rapid stream with her boyfriend Jack, even though the river has claimed a young life the day before and was up another few feet. She says to herself, and the readers, "I stuck my foot in the water and it went numb in about ten seconds. I've been to four years of college and I should know better, but I lose it when he calls me baby." These heroines, brassy and daring, encompass the new woman, the Nike "Just Do It" group. During "Jackson is Only One of My Dogs", the heroine remarks that she has broken five major bones in her body. She states that she did drink enough milk as a child, she denies that she has brittle bones or that her boyfriend was the reason. She just reckons that the accidents are a result of her life-style. She believes it is "the sports I push myself into, whitewater rafting and stadium show jumping and backcountry skiing, the kinds of good times broken bones are made of." She tells the reader that "the only list that's longer than the things I've done is the list of things I've yet to do: kayak, hang glide, parachute", and she means to do them all. In "Blizzard Under Blue Sky", which perhaps is the most poetic and dazzling, the young woman is diagnosed as clinically depressed. She claims it was a result of "work that wasn't getting done, bills that weren't getting paid, and a man I'd given my heart to weekending in the desert with his ex." Instead of drugs and psychotherapy she turns to nature to heal her wounds, to "fix her machine." She takes off with her two dogs and spends the night in a snow cave, she pushes herself to her limits on the cross country skis, she talks to her dogs, and in the end, she finds what she is looking for, Joy.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Very moving.... Pam Houston knows what life is truly about. Von kimh@audioprecision.com Each of the short stories in this book found a common link in my life. I am recently divorced from my last "Cowboy Weakness", and her hunting stories really hit home for me. My ex is both a cowboy and a redneck! I also found that Pam knows how to communicate her stories in a way that actually involves the reader, and gives them a sense of participation in it. Definitely a must have book for the library of any lady that has found herself in love with the "Cowboy" type of man!

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Disappointed Von Ein Kunde Based on the glowing recensions for this book I bought the audio tape and was sorely disappointed. The stories turned out to be boring (I really didn't see what the author was getting at and were the tales were leading) and the voice of the author reading her own stories droned on, putting me to sleep. Perhaps one has to be a redneck or into hunting to appreciate this book/tape.

Kurzbeschreibung "Exhilarating, like a swift ride through river rapids with a spunky, sexy gal handling the oars." Washington Post Book World In Pam Houston's critically acclaimed collection of strong, shrewd, and very funny stories, we meet smart women who are looking for the love of a good man, and men who are wild and hard to pin down. "I've always had this thing for cowboys, maybe because I was born in New Jersey, says the narrator in the collection's title story. But a real cowboy is hard to find these days, even in the West. Our heroines are part daredevil, part philosopher, all acute observers of the nuances of modern romance. They go where their cowboys go, they meet cowboys who don't look the part and they have staunch friends who give them advice when the going gets rough. Cowboys Are My Weakness is a refreshing and realistic look at men and women together and apart. From Kirkus s`... I should know better, but I love it when he calls me baby." That about sums up the sentiment running through these fresh, highly crafted, image-packed stories by the debuting Houston. Her setting is the West, her protagonists women in their late 20s, rugged, outdoorsy, independent types looking for the love of a good man no less doggedly than are their yuppie sisters; it's only that when the guys out there disappoint--as, according to Houston, guys must--they howl instead of whine. In the collection opener, "How to Talk to a Hunter" (Best American Stories 1990), the down-spiraling course of a love affair between the narrator and a classic Houston male (a cowboy who's shared more intimacies with the stuffed mule deer on his wall than he ever will with a woman) trickles out amid amusing aphorisms about the ultimate incompatibility of the sexes. The theme gets replayed in "Selway" (from Mademoiselle), though this time in the Deliverance-like action and adventure of a maniacs-only trip down a high-water river, undertaken by the narrator in order to win the love of a professional white-water rafter. It's not until "Cowboys Are My Weakness"

that the female voices of these stories begin to show some starch. In that story, a woman first discovers the difference between real and ersatz cowboys, then figures out that neither variety is ever going to provide "the impossible love of a country song." And when "In My Next Life" finally rolls around, Houston delivers up a rich, sad relationship between two women, one dying of breast cancer, both locked in hopeless affairs with men, both flirting with lesbianism--"Aren't there women who...wake up ready to hold and be held by somebody who knows what it means?" The author doesn't always search far enough for the reason why smart women behave like dishrags--but most of these stories are fine things from a writer one hopes will come up with a novel before too many suns sink in the West. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From Library Journal Houston, whose short stories have appeared in such periodicals as *Mirabella* and *Mademoiselle*, now has her first collection, the highlights of which are "How To Talk to a Hunter," a story selected for inclusion in *The Best American Short Stories, 1990* (LJ 10/1/90), and "Selway." Though these two stand out, the collection as a whole showcases a fresh, original, strong feminine voice. Houston is almost Hemingway-esque in her spare prose, yet richly eloquent in her descriptions of the Western sensibility. "How To Talk to a Hunter" oozes sensuality and masculinity, while at the same time getting inside the feminine mind in love with a man of few words. Likewise, "Selway" brilliantly shows what the experience of loving an adventurer is like. Houston is a part-time guide in Alaska. This is a strong woman who is wise and cynical but refreshingly optimistic. Her view of man-woman relationships is realistic: wise women get involved with "cowboys" they should know better, but they don't. Recommended.- Rosellen Brewer, Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Lib. System, Cal. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.