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If You Love Porn, You Need to Check Out Erotica Audiobooks

You might get VERY turned on by what you hear.

By Stephanie Bouchard

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We've all heard about the benefits of couples watching porn together. Humans are, after all, highly visual creatures. But we're also turned on by what we hear.

"We're very attuned to the sounds of sex," says sexologist Eric Garrison.

So put those porn videos aside for a little audio adventure: listening to erotic audiobooks. (They're usually categorized as "romance," FYI.) Listening to erotic audiobooks is just like listening to any non-erotic audiobook: A narrator reads the text of the book, and you listen along.

The idea of listening to a narrator reading text as part of your erotic play may sound unsexy, but don't dismiss it just yet. Lots of people are into this. Some proof? The romance genre is one of the most popular audiobook genres, according to the Audio Publishers Association.

Romance titles such as *Lucky Suit* by Lauren Blakely, narrated by Zachary Webber and Andi Arndt, regularly appear on Audible's overall bestsellers list, says a company spokesperson. (Audible, owned by Amazon, is the biggest audiobook seller and producer around.)

The strength of the romance genre prompted the company to launch the Audible Romance Package, a subscription service, in 2017. Audible doesn't release sales figures, but the spokesperson says subscribers to the romance package have been growing month-over-month since it was launched, and consumer demand has been so strong that the company is commissioning its own titles.

What makes listening to erotic audiobooks so appealing?

Lots of things, say sex experts.

For one thing, it's a lower-threshold entry into erotic fantasy than watching porn, says sex therapist Sandi Kaufman, because erotic audiobooks don't necessarily have the stigma that's associated with porn.

Listening to erotic audiobooks can also be less threatening than watching porn, she says, because there are no body image insecurities raised by watching actors that don't look anything like you.

But the thing that makes erotic audiobooks so exciting is that listening stimulates the brain, and as we all know, the brain is our biggest and most powerful sex organ.

“When we read aloud to a person or when we listen to something being read to us, that stimulates parts of our brain that the written word would not—or the physical touch or something else—would also not,” says sexologist Garrison, who is also the author of *Mastering Multiple Position Sex*.

Listening gets our imaginations working in a way that watching porn just can’t do. “Sex is all about permission,” he says. Hearing an erotic story rather than viewing it gives you permission to create the scenes in your own mind, he says, making it more personal to you.

And because it’s hands-free, he notes, you and your partner can be touching each other while listening—maybe even in the same ways you’re hearing about in the story—and because you’re listening rather than watching, you’re seeing each other rather than what’s on the screen.

It might even be a way to strengthen your bond with your partner, Kaufman and Garrison say. “Sex is the least-talked-about thing in relationships,” Kaufman says. Erotic audiobooks give couples a way to talk about sex in a fun way.

Together, you can pick out audiobooks to listen to, explore different story lines, and use what happens in those stories to talk about what turns you on and what doesn’t and even to open up to fantasy play. “It could be a way to actually deepen the experience of knowing the partner,” she says. “The more intimate and the more comfortable we are with one another, obviously, the more rewarding sex can be—and satisfying.”

So, listening to erotic audiobooks isn’t as corny as you initially thought. But we haven’t yet addressed the obvious: the giggle factor.

Use the laughter, says Garrison. Laughter increases oxytocin, a hormone that creates bonding, so laughter during sexual experiences helps connect you with your partner. It also reduces tension and stress so sex is more fun and unrestricted. “Sexuality is a human experience, so the more humanistic traits we can put in there, the better it becomes,” he says.

And don’t you worry about having to groan through cliched romance stories. The romance genre is pretty broad. Whatever you like in non-romance genres, you name it, there’s a romance for you: suspense (*Waking with Enemies* by Eric Jerome Dickey, narrated by Dion Graham); paranormal (*Shades of Wicked* by Jeaniene Frost, narrated by Tavia Gilbert); aliens (*Alien Instinct* by Tracy Lauren, narrated by Noelle Bridges and Mason Lloyd); horror (*Libidinous Zombie* by Rose Caraway, Jade A. Waters and Tasmin Flowers, narrated by Rose Caraway).

You and your partner can also read erotic books out loud to each other.

Audiobooks aren’t the only erotic aural fun to be had. Try reading erotic books aloud to each other. Want to know how to make reading aloud steamy? Try these tips from Andi Arndt, an award-winning audiobook narrator who narrates romance and other genres under her own name and erotica under a pseudonym:

- Don’t fight the giggles. Giggle your way through until they’ve worked themselves out of your system. It might take a few sessions.

- Give yourself permission to speak steamy words and scenes out loud. Don't be intimidated: they're just words.
- Work yourself up to the comfort level you want. Practice by yourself. Use the voice memo function on your smartphone to record even one simple sentence then send it to your partner. When you are in a room with your partner, sit back to back for reading. Use book lights so the lighting in the room can remain subdued.
- Don't try to sound sexy. Just read in your own voice. You don't have to change yourself into something you're not. You're incorporating this new thing into who you already are.
- Watch your breathing. The breath can be expressive. Calm your nerves to relax your breathing and let your voice be soft. You are, after all, speaking into the ear of someone right beside you.
- Leave your judgment at the door, approach it with an open mind and just have fun!