

# [PDF] Tipping The Velvet: A Novel

**Sarah Waters - pdf download free book**

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**Books Details:**

Title: Tipping the Velvet: A Novel  
Author: Sarah Waters  
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**Description:**

The heroine of Sarah Waters's audacious first novel knows her destiny, and seems content with it. Her place is in her father's seaside restaurant, shucking shellfish and stirring soup, singing all the while. "Although I didn't long believe the story told to me by Mother--that they had found me as a baby in an oyster-shell, and a greedy customer had almost eaten me for lunch--for eighteen years I never doubted my own oysterish sympathies, never looked far beyond my father's kitchen for occupation, or for love." At night Nancy Astley often ventures to the nearby music hall, not that she has illusions of being more than an audience member. But the moment she spies a new male impersonator--still something of a curiosity in England circa 1888--her years of innocence come to an end and a life of transformations begins.

*Tipping the Velvet*, all 472 pages of it, is as saucy, as tantalizing, and as touching as the narrator's first encounter with the seductive but shame-ridden Miss Kitty Butler. And at first even Nancy's family is thrilled with her gender-bending pal, all but her sister, best friend, and bedmate, Alice, "her eyes shining cold and dull, with starlight and suspicion." Not to worry. Soon Nancy and Kitty are off to London, their relationship close though (alas for our heroine) sisterly. We know that bliss will come, and it does, in an exceptionally charged moment. A lesser author would have been content to stop her story there, but Waters has much more in mind for her buttonholing heroine, and for us. In brief, her Everywoman with a sexual difference goes from success onstage to heartbreak to a stint as a male prostitute (necessity truly is the mother of invention) to keeping house for a brother and sister in the Labour movement. And did I mention her long stint as a plaything in the pleasure palace of a rich Sapphist extraordinaire? Diana Lethaby is as cruel as she is carnal, and even the well-concealed Cavendish Ladies' Club isn't *outré* enough for her. Kitting Nancy out in full, elegant drag, she dares the front desk to turn them away. "We are here," she mocks, "for the sake of the irregular."

Only after some seven years of hard twists and sensual turns does Nancy conclude that a life of sensation is not enough. Still, *Tipping the Velvet* is so entertaining that readers will wish her sentimental--and hedonistic--education had taken twice as long. --*Kerry Fried* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From Publishers Weekly** With a title that's a euphemism for cunnilingus and a plot awash with graphic lesbian sex, this lush tale fearlessly and feverishly exposes the political, social and sexual subversions of Victorian-era gender-benders: sapphists, libertines and passing women. Set in 1890s London against a backdrop of music halls and socialist demonstrations, Waters's debut (published to acclaim in England) is an engrossing story of a "tommish" woman battered and buoyed by the mores of the times. At 18, Nancy Astley is a fishmonger in coastal Whitstable, working with her sister and parents in the family oyster parlour. Smitten by male impersonator Kitty Butler, Nancy attends every show at the Canterbury Palace until the star notices her. A stunned Nancy finds herself Kitty's companion and dresser, and sexual tension keeps the pages turning as she becomes first Kitty's sweetheart, then her partner ("two lovely girls in trousers, instead of one!") in a wildly successful stage act. Kitty's shame over her sexual preference sends her into marriage to their manager, Walter Bliss, propelling devastated Nancy into a series of erotic excursions and a struggle for survival, first passing as a young man and hustling, then as wealthy widow Diana Lethaby's kept "tart," finally as the housekeeper for union organizer Florence Banner. Waters is a masterful storyteller, tantalizing the reader as Nancy endures melancholy squalor, betrayals, the lustful motives of swindling gay-girls and imperious ladies. The circumstances by which Nancy finally finds true love are unpredictable and moving. Amid the gentlemen trolling Piccadilly Circus for trysts with "renter" boys and the wealthy female guests of the Cavendish Clubs "Sapphists Only" parties, Nancy's search for love and identity is a raucous, passionate adventure, and a rare, thrilling read. Agent, Judith Murray.

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