

Interview with Zondra Hughes **Author of *The M.O.O.D. Lounge***

Reader Views welcomes Zondra Hughes, author of the funny and thought-provoking erotica novel “The M.O.O.D. Lounge.” Zondra is being interviewed by Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor of Reader Views.

Juanita: Thanks for joining Reader Views today Zondra. We are interested in hearing more about your new erotica novel, “The M.O.O.D. Lounge.” Would you start by giving us an idea of your storyline?

Zondra: The novel is set in New York, where one renegade sex therapist recognizes that her female patients and women in general, have been sexed into stupidity. Men have perfected their lovemaking skills, and otherwise brilliant women are now allowing their men to run over them. The women have become workhorses, and the men are living like gods and rock stars. The therapist finds three of the most zombie-like women in New York and devise and attempts to rehabilitate them.

Juanita: I understand that you are a former Ebony Magazine sex editor. Would you tell us about your interest in the realms of sexuality, and your inspiration for “The M.O.O.D. Lounge”?

Zondra: As I grew as a woman, I realized that my assignments, and many of the great articles that I read, elsewhere were slanted to train us to become the perfect mate for men. It seemed that every article that I wrote and read focused on how to catch a man, or keep a man, and that felt so wrong to me. I had one central question: Who is attending to our needs? With *The M.O.O.D. Lounge* I am able to show the evolution of three women who initially subscribed to the idea of making a man the center of their being, even in the face of humiliation and heartbreak; but they eventually come to their senses and reclaim their power. I could have never written an article that encouraged women to be selfish and proactive about their sexual needs. I am doing that now—and then some.

Juanita: Would you tell us more about your main characters?

Zondra: Drusilla Vidal, 44, is a cutthroat district attorney that falls, terribly, for a 19-year-old convict; Eva James 26, is a public relations professional that falls for her married celebrity client; and Fawn LaFollette, 18, is a semi-clairvoyant Hurricane Katrina evacuee that finds herself in New York, and in the arms of a shady independent porn producer.

Juanita: How true to life are they? How did you come up with their characters?

Zondra: They are ME! Ha!Ha!Ha! Dru evolved from my love of the law; I'm studying it all the time, just for fun. Eva is the result of the many PR professionals that I had to work with as a journalist; and Fawn is my suppressed alter ego; we both have an adult toy collection that will shame Larry Flynt. They are all me, and what is disturbing, is that I have many, many more characters inside my head.

Juanita: What is Lovers Lobotomy Syndrome?

Zondra: LLS is that state of euphoria that we tend to slip into after we've had mind-blowing sex. LLS is what causes us to get up and prepare brunch the next day; and then take him to the mall and buy him a new outfit; and then allow him to wear that new outfit with his other woman, and it's not a problem, just as long as he delivers in the bedroom.

Juanita: Do you think that real-life women experience a version of LLS? How real is this type of problem?

Zondra: I've HAD it before! My friends still have it! LLS is very, very, real. I think that women that buy cell phones and make loans to men without jobs have it. I think women that volunteer to be in a man's stable have it. Women that allow their able-bodied men to stay home and look handsome while we work like dogs have it. Dating is so crazy right now.

Juanita: What is the M.O.O.D Lounge, who set it up, and what is the objective?

Zondra: The M.O.O.D. Lounge has evolved from a fictitious support group in the novel to a traveling social event for the toy curious and the veteran sexually independent women alike. It's much like a traveling Tupperware party, except with adult toys, motivational speakers, sex experts and comfort food. The M.O.O.D. Lounge is a classy, modern-day paradise that exists to fortify the Universal Sisterhood, raise self-esteem and inspire women to be more selective when choosing their mates. We will kick off this nationwide tour beginning in February. Interested women can sign up at www.moodlounge.org. (Must be 18). Right now, we have 51,023 members nationwide—and we're still growing.

Juanita: That really is incredible Zondra. With that many members, it sounds like you are offering something that women really want, and need. What are your thoughts on this unbelievable success so far, and how does this type of group serve as a bridge to women connecting with other women? What happens when women get together in a group form like the M.O.O.D. Lounge?

Zondra: We are launching Explorgasm: Live Your Best Sex Life®? tour in May, to celebrate National Orgasm Month. This is a ten-city tour, sponsored by leading personal care companies, among others, to enlighten women about sexual health. We are bridging the female consumer with personal care companies and sex health experts so that women will know of the products and services available to them. We will have seminars hosted by top experts; we will work closely with women's health organizations to finalize potential speakers as and participants well. This is a women-only tour (18 and older) so that women will have a forum to seek intimate information. The goal is for women to have an outlet to get informed and get proactive about their sexual health. We

will also have the world's largest traveling adult toy store (The Toy Shoppe) for the toy curious women! Finally there is a makeup bazaar for women that wish to get skin consultations, etc. We are in the final planning stages now, and we hope to meet with each member on the road.

Juanita: How does the support group help Dru, Fawn and Eva in your book?

Zondra: By fate or design, these women have made the doggish men in their lives their universe—and conversely, they have made the women in their lives the enemy. Most women don't recognize just how far we've sunk in relationships, until someone points it out to us. The M.O.O.D. Lounge delivers a three-pronged attack: 1). Forces each woman to confront the truth about their men; 2). Forces each woman to confront the truth about themselves; and 3). It offers a blueprint to exact the ultimate revenge for the men that have done them wrong.

Juanita: Your book offers a fun and slightly over the top look at women roles, sexuality, and personal power. What are the underlying messages of “The M.O.O.D. Lounge”?

Zondra: Don't sell yourself short. Love yourself enough to establish boundaries and deal-breakers when dealing with lovers. Be nicer to women; become someone's Big Sister or mentor. Take the initiative to establish who you are sexually and what you enjoy between the sheets.

Juanita: Do you think there is any truth to the value of a B.O.B. lessening a woman's dependence on a man, and in turn, a great tool of personal power?

Zondra: I divorced in 2003. B.O.B. and I have been going strong ever since. B.O.B. is an excellent, loyal lover. I've kicked men out of my bed for B.O.B. I'm empowered because I can spend time with a sexy man, flirt my ass off, and then go home and settle things with B.O.B. I'm not at his sexual mercy, I can be patient when choosing to sleep with someone.

Juanita: How do men view sexually independent woman?

Zondra: They love us because we are mysterious. A sexually independent woman could look a Casanova in the eye and tell him flat out that she's not interested. He will lose his mind attempting to win her over; she will take her time deciding if he's 'sponge worthy!'

Juanita: What do the women learn from their journey with The M.O.O.D. Lounge?

Zondra: The women confront their demons, learn to bond, and they discover everything erotica; from orgasm training to erotic cuisine.

Juanita: Zondra, it seems to me that if we look back to the past, many cultures and traditions have women talking with/teaching other women about women's sexuality. Do you think this type of communication and camaraderie is actually more natural than one would think? Why do you think it has been lost in today's world?

Zondra: Sex has been cheapened, we have been cheapened, and we are constantly fed messages that we are replaceable. The camaraderie has been replaced by competitiveness. I think sisterhood is natural. We are the mothers of the world and we have to whip our sons into shape!

Juanita: You include a M.O.O.D. Manual at the back of your book that will be of great interest for readers. What is this manual about?

Zondra: Each character brings their own experiences and advice to the manual; it includes a toy guide; intro to orgasms and sex positions; foods that make him horny, how to exact revenge, how to train your lover...

Juanita: Zondra, what do you think it means to be a strong, empowered woman?

Zondra: You must be honest on all fronts. You must be humble enough to ask for help and strong enough to offer it. You must be patient and fearless. You must know your worth and value yourself no matter your relationship status. And you must surround yourself with other women of your caliber.

Juanita: Who is reading your book, and what have comments been so far?

Zondra: I have sent review copies to friends and a few not-so-good friends; I've held a couple of impromptu focus groups at parties and I've targeted the book clubs. Men are reading this book too; they love it. I'm surprised by that. The book is shocking because it delves into group sex before you hit the tenth page, and the sex doesn't stop, so a typical comment is: "Very sexy stuff...it made me blush..."

Juanita: Zondra, I understand that this is your first novel, and will be the initial installment of a trilogy. Would you tell us more about the direction of your upcoming novels?

Zondra: In the second book, *M.O.O.D. Lounge: Explorgasm!*, I'm uncovering the relationship drama that's going down in Los Angeles. I'm very familiar with the dating scene there and I've been lucky to have a California native collaborate with me for this. It's super-hot, and set to be published in May, just in time for National Orgasm Month. I'm working on the third book, still untitled right now.

Juanita: Zondra, how can readers find out more about you and your book?

Zondra:

www.moodlounge.org;

Yahoo! Groups The M.O.O.D. Lounge (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/moodlounge/>)

MSN Groups <http://groups.msn.com/TheM-O-O-D-Lounge>

Juanita: Well Zondra, your book sounds like one that every woman should have on their bedside table. We certainly encourage the discerning reader to check out your humorous yet thought-

provoking novel “The M.O.O.D. Lounge,” and to keep an eye out for your sequel. Do you have any last thoughts for readers today?

Zondra: Be proactive with your health and happiness, and be protective with your heart.