Magia Privé

The Intimate Arts · Volume Eleven



The Art of Anticipation

by Margot Beaumont

The Pleasure Before the Pleasure

What we wait for, we feel twice.

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CHAPTER 1

The Erotics of Waiting

There is a moment — you have lived it — when a kiss is so close you can feel its warmth on your mouth, and it has not happened yet. A breath away. The air between you charged, the evening tilted on its axis, everything in you leaning forward — and still, the kiss is un-kissed. If you are honest, you will admit something slightly scandalous: that suspended second, the one just before, may have been the sweetest part of the whole night. Not the kiss itself. The *almost* of the kiss. This is the secret the hurried never learn: waiting is not the absence of pleasure. Waiting is pleasure in its own register — quieter, keener, more finely drawn. The body, denied the thing, does not go quiet. It sharpens. Time slows. Details magnify: the way the light catches a collarbone, the sound of a key turning in a lock you have been listening for, the particular gravity of an evening that is *about* to happen. Anticipation is the senses at their most alert, because wanting is a form of paying attention. Think of the last time you were truly, achingly eager for something — a journey, a reunion, a book you had waited months to read. Which was sweeter, the waiting or the having? The having is real and necessary. But the waiting had a texture the having could not reproduce — a brightness, a hum. That hum is not a flaw in your satisfaction. It is one of satisfaction's finest ingredients, and most of us throw it away. We throw it away because we are efficient. Modern lovers have collapsed the distance between wanting and having to almost nothing — a text, a touch, and there we are, already arrived. Efficiency is a virtue in kitchens and commutes. In the erotic life, it is a thief: every shortcut skips the scenery, and the scenery — the slow approach, the gathering charge — is where much of the beauty lives. Here is this book's reorientation: stop treating anticipation as the hallway you must

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The Art of Anticipation

by Margot Beaumont.

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