Feminine Persuasion
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When Alfred Kinsey’s initial study of human sexuality, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, was published in 1948, it caused a sensation with its statistical information about the sexual habits of American men. The publication of Kinsey’s survey of American women was eagerly anticipated, and when *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* appeared in September 1953, it immediately became a bestseller. Articles about the book appeared in most newspapers and in many mainstream magazines, including *U.S. News & World Report, Time, Redbook, Reader’s Digest, Newsweek, Modern Bride, Life, and Cosmopolitan*.

Many Americans were surprised by Kinsey’s findings, which indicated that women were much more sexually active than had ever been imagined. Of the nearly 6,000 women who were interviewed by Kinsey and his colleagues, 62 percent of women indicated that they had masturbated, approximately 50 percent had engaged in sex before marriage, 26 percent of women had participated in at least one extra-marital affair, and 13 percent reported at least one same-sex experience. It was apparent from September 1953 that female sexuality could no longer be ignored, and the world of men and women would never be quite the same.

*We dedicate this book to Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey and to the women who shared their sexual histories with him.*