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**Courting Kathleen Hannigan** Reviewed By Wendy Thomas Of Bookpleasures.com  
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 By Wendy Thomas  
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Wendy Thomas



**Reviewer Wendy Thomas. Wendy lives in Southern New Hampshire with her husband and six children, ages 9-17 and has been published in various regional magazines and newspapers. She writes a weekly column, Simple Thrift for the Nashua Telegraph.**



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Author: Mary Hutchings Reed  
 Publisher: Ampersand, Inc.  
 ISBN:- 978-0-9761235-6-9

With its intelligent writing, fast pace, and brilliant humorous observations, *Courting Kathleen Hannigan* is as delightful as reading your favorite episode of *Sex in the City*. Honestly, I started this book and couldn't (or more accurately wouldn't) put it down until I was finished



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Katherine (don't call her Kitty when she's in lawyer mode) Hannigan is a bright, young, knife sharp lawyer trying to find her way in the male dominated world of American law in the mid '70s.

We are introduced to her as she readies herself to take the stand defending her law firm from a sexual-discrimination case initiated by another woman in the firm who had been passed up for partnership.

“The stakes were high; she would be playing with the truth and her own career. No, she decided reluctantly, hot pink was too hot, too controversial, Instead, she chose a gray suit with a skirt two inches above her knees, which added length to her legs and made her feel younger than her 41 years. Still, gray was the Allbright & Gill party line, so she smiled a wicked smile when she slipped into her favorite shoes – horse hair dyed to look like leopard. Sexy. Strong. Savage. Confident camouflage for Kathleen's uncertain soul.”

The story then goes to deconstruct Kathleen's experiences as she begins her law career in a Chicago firm while trying to fit into what was then a man's world unable to conceive of women joining the ranks. Mistaken as a Secretary at the firm, naive Kathleen, who assumed that her sex was not an issue, is continually frustrated by the blatant male superior behavior she keeps encountering. Why, women can't even be members of the elite dining club and are only allowed to dine if invited and escorted to a private room.

Being true to the women's movement, Kathleen had chosen her career first deciding that she didn't need a man to make her life complete. The constant dismissal of her intelligence and identity simply because she is female, however, frustrates sensible and logical Kathleen making her question what is really important in her life.

It is only when she realizes the power women collectively have that she starts to feel her own self empowerment. Her realizations as she struggles on defining her roles as a lawyer and as a woman touch a poignant chord in anyone who has not fit in simply for being who they are.

Well written, funny, and at times aggravatingly true (even in today's times) *Courting Kathleen Hannigan* is a wonderful and compelling story with which any strong and powerful woman can identify.

Mary Hutchings Reed, Yale law 1976 has been a partner in the Chicago law firms of Sidley & Austin and Winston & Strawn. She is the author of six novels, a memoir and a handful of short stories, and wrote the book and lyrics for *Fairways*, a new musical about golf, honesty, and love. She had won honors from the William Wisdom-William Faulkner Prize competitions for three of her novels. Her world has also been commended by *Pariah Publishing*, *Writer's Digest* and *ByLine Magazine*. She lives in Chicago with her husband Dr. William R. Reed.

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