



A Woman of Science: An Extraordinary Journey of Love, Discovery, and the Sex Life of Mushrooms

Cardy Raper

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A STORY OF TRUE LOVE, DETERMINATION, SACRIFICE, AND DISCOVERY.

A Woman of Science catalogues a decades-long journey of inspirational hardship and success that serves as a model for what women can do in a field largely dominated by men.

Cardy Raper succeeded in becoming what she dreamed of as a young girl: a scientist. This beautifully written memoir details her struggles with the “boys’ club” mentality of the scientific and academic worlds, her grief over her husband’s premature passing, and above all her relentless, passionate efforts to unlock the secrets of mushroom gender and reproduction.

Cardy Raper is not a woman to accept “no” for an answer. When her mother told her that she could be a nurse when she grew up, Cardy informed her in no uncertain terms that she was going to be a true scientist, making grand discoveries. Science was a man’s world then. But despite lack of encouragement through college, Cardy learned what she needed. Then, at the University of Chicago, she met her mentor, John “Red” Raper, an equally stubborn and spirited scientist. They became soul mates, and, together, studied sexual reproduction in the amazing water mold *Achlya*. Cardy and Red married, had children, and continued to share their passion for science by unraveling the means of sexual reproduction in mushroom-bearing fungi.

They moved to Harvard University and continued their research. Years later, Red’s untimely death left Cardy alone in the competitive world of cutting-edge science. But Cardy carried on. She achieved her doctoral degree, learned the techniques of molecular genetics, and established her own laboratory. Ultimately, Cardy’s discoveries helped to uncover the way in which genes found throughout the animal kingdom—including humans—encode molecules for mating, sight, smell, and taste.

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