



Age

Saturday 17/3/2007

Page: 30

Section: A2

Region: Melbourne Circulation: 295,500

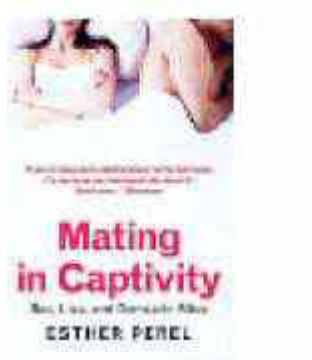
Type: Capital City Daily

Size: 93.51 sq.cms.

Published: MTWTFS-

Brief: HODDER

## RELATIONSHIPS



### **Mating in Captivity**

Esther Perel

Hodder, \$35

Reviewer *Dianne Dempsey*

ESTHER PEREL IS A fashionable New York psychotherapist who has hit upon an angle different enough to sell her first book in truck loads. The idea is this: rather than nurture a better sex life, a stable and intimate marriage actually works against it. The more we know about our partners, the more open and wonderful the communication, the less excited we are by each other.

According to Perel, sexual monotony is one of the reasons our divorce rates are so high. We may value fidelity but it comes at a high price. This contention is the most provocative aspect of her book. The rest is fairly predictable.

In order to spice up your sex life, Perel suggests creating an air of mystery around yourself. When he says, "What did you do today, darling?" you say, "Nuthin'." Another ruse is to play dress-ups and book into expensive hotels. Perel also asks the reader to consider moving from the realm of fantasy into an open marriage. Personally, I've always taken the view that the really nice thing about pretending is that you get to wake up in the morning cuddled up with your mate, rather than swinging from a chandelier with Vegemite on your toes.

Perel's theory that intimacy and trust equal boredom is worth considering, but her advice on the solution to the problem is at best unoriginal and at worst dangerous.