

True confessions

1982

A Man's Tale by John Pepper (Quartet £6.95) — San Francisco 1968: as the last of the bras are going up in flames, John Pepper—writer, journalist, TV presenter — coyly asks his girlfriend if she'll save one for him. For Pepper, a Doncaster lad raised on the legendary prowess of Errol Flynn, this was the climax of a sexual education that had taken him from heavy petting in the back of an old Vauxhall to a suburban Sixties marriage. Membership of a transvestite organisation was not the

solution nor was a sex change. He eventually found solace at a Buddhist enclave in Scotland.

Books like these are important for their frank revelation of sexual character, but at the same time they expose themselves to the charge of offering not so much a vision of a more tolerant world as a narrow endorsement of the very sexual stereotyping they aim to transcend. It's hard to tell where the self-parody begins and ends.

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