

# **The Broke-ass Housewife's**



**Expensive  
Plaything.**

From the first moment she gazed upon its sleek form and inhumanly clean lines, she knew it was lust, not love. The deep red colour, the slim body and touchable surface all beckoned to her to put down the spatula, ignore the wailing children, and lose herself completely in its literary embrace. Shoving the included CD of Sony Software aside, she went directly to the internet thinking; 'If this is anything like I-tunes, my best bet is to download the newest version!'. Swiftly she connected to the Sony Store, breathlessly counting the minutes while her faithful PC's fan whirled. Unable to wait for her desires to be sated, the housewife grabbed the one and only digital book she owned "Knight Moves" by Jamacia Layne; a saucy .PDF that she spoke of only to others in the hushed tones of italics and snarky emoticons on those message boards which her husband knew nothing about. Fingers flutter on her keyboard, she dragged and dropped that scandalous document on to a SD card, ejected it from her still warm drive, and forcefully drove it home in the hot red E-Reader's waiting drive. Oh! The instant gratification of flipping through pages that are not actual pages! But that...that...twitching? That visual stammering, stuttering...is the E-Reader possessed by the late Emperor Claudius? Does it suffer a form of epilepsy? Shamefully, and less than politically correct, she turned her head as she clicked her way through text that was so easy to read, so smooth and silky, she couldn't believe it wasn't paper!

But to the actual business of putting freshly bought product on her newly acquired trophy- the computer's low wheezing indicated to her that the program was ready to install, which it did with nary a hiccup. And then, not satisfied with having done it once, she downloaded yet another bit of library management software called "Calibre", shamelessly putting its shortcut right next to Sony's on her desktop. Reveling in the afterglow of her torrid morning, the housewife reluctantly returned to her regular regimen of slavish drudgery while using what precious hours she had for sleep in to dream of her next encounter with the roguish red reader.

After receiving a miracle healing from the gorgeous new plaything of the Broke-ass Housewife, the Stodgy PC's broken-for-months USB ports surged back to life and gladly accepted the stranger and allowed it to dock- connecting formally with the Sony library. An orgy of book acquisition soon followed; every free title in the Sony Online Library was perused, then plucked and placed onto the waiting reader. After receiving a full charge, the housewife sighed in contentment at the adventures soon to be hers- but wait! What's this? The files are unavailable? How can this be? Oh, to be betrayed so early in the relationship, the heartbreak, the loss! Quickly, she grabbed her SD card, dragged, dropped, and slapped that bitch in place. There were the books! Now press menu and enjoy- but no! Foiled again? Was it her meddling kids? Her husband in shirts that had not been ironed in weeks? A critical mass of cat fur? NO! The frustration of desire unfulfilled led her to a desperate act; the housewife opened the instruction manual. Upon seeing it spread out before her like a sprawling map of crazy, she had a small fainting spell, but recovered and located the information she needed, even managing to fold the bastard up again properly instead of balling it in to a clump of tattered paper.

Yet its instruction proved fruitless. Availing herself of the fountain of wisdom that is the Readers Test-drive Email list, the problem was found to be fixable in a very simple, if absolutely unintuitive way. She shuddered to think what terrible snags may have been encountered had she not had this resource of valuable information to consult. Now the E-Reader and the housewife could truly consummate their blossoming relationship with real commitment: CASH MONEY!

Conflicting thoughts consumed her every waking moment. Was the E-Reader really all that and a bag of chips? Was she ready to divest herself of the multitude of books that made her friends no longer offer to help her move house and necessitated the strengthening of any new home's foundation? Oh, but the joy seemed inevitable. The happy ending not just a thing reserved for romances and certain types of massage parlors...she prepared to surrender fully to the digital embrace.

Ah, but lurking beneath that lick-able automaton surface, the specter of DRM lay between them. Does one ever truly own an E-Book? Are they subject to the whims of the publishing industry and distributors? If one has paid money for a series of ones and zeroes and they get vacuumed back through the intertubes from whence they came? And the terrible, terrible fear; fear that she could never: take this book along for a relaxing bath, consult it while cooking, even carrying it in her bag gave her grave doubts as to the sturdiness of the reader. She had broken so very many expensive and shiny things before.

Added to this was the very silly and battery wasting features of crappy photos and music. Didn't she already have an mp3 player? And a flickr account? And of course this would absolutely never do for all her graphic novels. The affair is just not meant to be. Perhaps it is just ahead of its time, perhaps later iterations will see the format wars sorted, and copyright protection for authors without the expense of the loyal readership's ire and irritation. The housewife sighed, and poked at her pretty portable plaything while hoping that the potential of the E-Reader will one day be realized, but for now she will return to the world of paper and ink; for it's time to read goodnight moon to a wriggly baby. A baby who loved to turn the thick cardboard pages and touch each colourful picture, to bring the book into her crib for 3am re-readings, and to lavish big, sloppy, open-mouth kisses on those two little kittens.

True love was hers, and always had been, waiting on the book shelf.