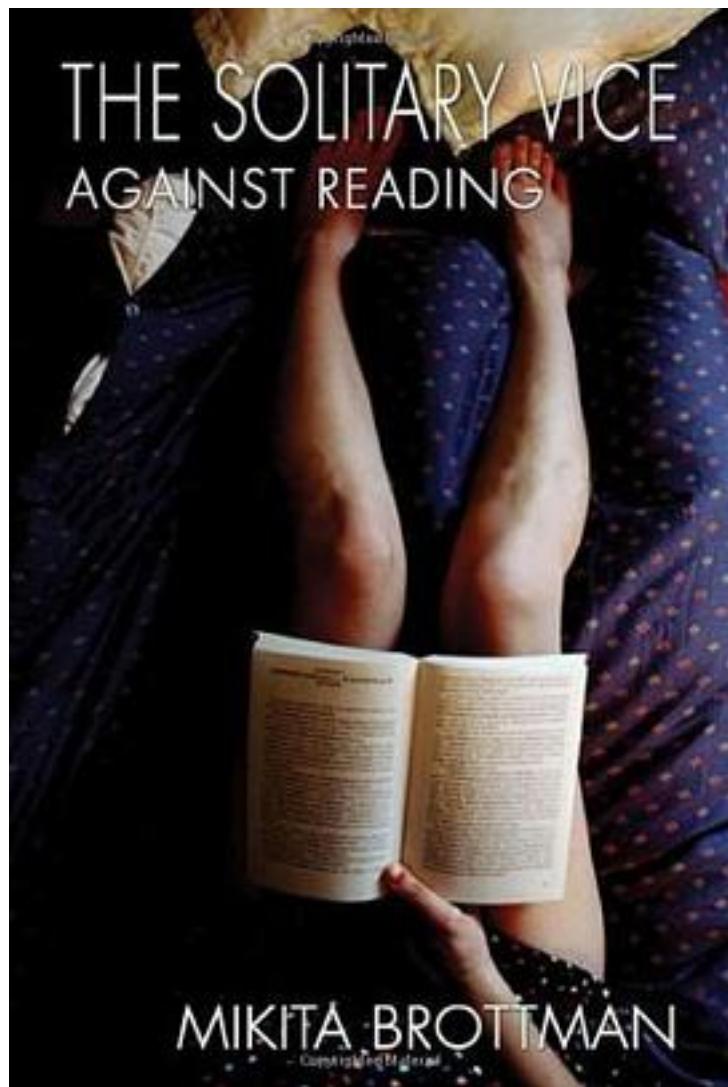


The Solitary Vice



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出版者:Counterpoint

出版时间:2008-4-15

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9781593761875

Mikita Brottman wonders, just why is reading so great? It's a solitary practice, one that takes away from time that could be spent developing important social networking skills. Reading's not required for health, happiness, or a loving family. And, if reading is so important, why are catchy slogans like "Reading Changes Lives" and "Champions Read" needed to hammer the point home? Fearlessly tackling the notion that nonreaders are doomed to lives of despair and mental decay, Brottman makes the case that the value of reading lies not in its ability to ward off Alzheimer's or that it's a pleasant hobby. Rather, she argues that like that other well-known, solitary vice, masturbation, reading is ultimately not an act of pleasure but a tool for self-exploration, one that allows people to see the world through the eyes of others and lets them travel deep into the darkness of the human condition.

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