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# On Love: A Novel

By Alain de Botton



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## On Love: A Novel By Alain de Botton

*On Love* is globally bestselling novelist-philosopher Alain De Botton's iconic debut—the novel that launched his decorated literary career; and a funny, profound, and searingly true-to-life exploration of love.

A man and a woman meet over casual conversation on a flight from Paris to London, and so begins a love story—from first kiss to first argument, elation to heartbreak, and everything in between. Each stage of the relationship is illuminated with startling clarity, as de Botton explores emotions often felt but rarely understood. Now, in tandem with the arrival of *The Course of Love*—de Botton's first novel in twenty years and one about mature love—we celebrate the timeless debut about young love that serves as *The Course of Love*'s precursor and companion.

Reissued with a brilliant introduction by the *New York Times* bestselling author of *How Should a Person Be?*, Shelia Heti, *On Love* is a contemporary classic that should be read by anyone who has ever fallen in love.



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## **On Love: A Novel By Alain de Botton Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Two words on the cover ("a novel") are the only hint that this unusual first book is fiction and not autobiography. The unnamed narrator is a London architect who becomes involved with Chloe, a graphic designer. After about a year, Chloe leaves him for an office-mate, and, as a result, the narrator tries (unsuccessfully) to kill himself. Eventually he gets over Chloe and falls in love with someone else. The novel's action is minimal; the balance of the book is given over to the narrator's obsessive analysis of his relationship with Chloe. (There are diagrams--such as the seating chart of the Boeing 767 where they met--that are meant to illustrate various ideas with which the narrator toys.) The book was likely intended as a Barthesian look at that peculiar heart condition called love, but the overblown and pretentious writing obliterates any comparison, peppered as it is with such winking turns-of-phrase as "cartographic fascism." The author is clearly intelligent and well-read; perhaps some day he will put those assets to good literary use.

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From Library Journal

Chloe and Alain meet in a plane flying from Paris to London and fall in love. Their romance lasts only about a year, and after they have parted the narrator/author uses scenes from their time together as illustrations of his philosophical anatomy of romantic love. Chapters are formed of numbered paragraphs so that the book resembles a classical philosophical disquisition, and it's on this level that it reads best. First novelist de Botton writes well--dozens of sentences glisten with aphoristic insight--but neither Chloe nor Alain really engage our interest, and their story seems too slight to support all the heavy philosophizing. Recommended only for sentimental young romantics with a penchant for philosophy, readers who thought Nicholas Baker's *Vox* (LJ 11/15/91) was profound, and writing teachers who need an example of what happens when you write a novel before you have much life experience.

- Charles Michaud, *Turner Free Lib., Randolph, Mass.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

A tour-de-force pleasure of a first novel that takes a conventional love story and textures it with philosophical ruminations, ironic subtitles, and various sorts of playfulness, including pencil drawings. The narrator, on a flight from Paris to London, meets Chloe in the first chapter, "Romantic Fatalism": "The longing for a destiny is nowhere stronger than in our romantic life." In each ironically titled chapter to follow ("Marxism," "Beauty," "Skepticism and Faith," etc.), the paragraphs are numbered, as de Botton develops his disquisition upon love and its limitations. Apothegms abound: "If the fall into love happens so rapidly, it is perhaps because the wish to love has preceded the beloved...." The narrator falls for Chloe, but even at the beginning, dishonesty enters the picture: "What sides of myself should I release?" The narrator, in fact, is a prevaricator, leaving the relationship to speculate upon various matters: "Few things can be as antithetical to sex as thought." Soon enough, disillusionment sets in: Chloe, trying to read *Cosmo*, tells the narrator to turn down the "yodeling." It's Bach. "Understanding Chloe, I was like a doctor, passing hands over a body, trying to intuit the interior." Understandably, Chloe tires of such a creep, and the two practice "romantic terrorism." ("Is there anything wrong?" "No, why, should there be?") Chloe, unfaithful, leaves him to contemplate suicide--and "The Jesus Complex"--before he finds Rachel and the whole thing starts again.... A dissertation/novel on romantic narcissism that's both intellectually stimulating and emotionally touching. A very promising debut. (First printing of 25,000) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Andrew Waite:**

This On Love: A Novel tend to be reliable for you who want to be described as a successful person, why. The reason of this On Love: A Novel can be on the list of great books you must have is usually giving you more than just simple reading food but feed you with information that maybe will shock your before knowledge. This book is handy, you can bring it everywhere you go and whenever your conditions at e-book and printed versions. Beside that this On Love: A Novel giving you an enormous of experience like rich vocabulary, giving you trial run of critical thinking that we realize it useful in your day pastime. So , let's have it appreciate reading.

#### **Geneva Richardson:**

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