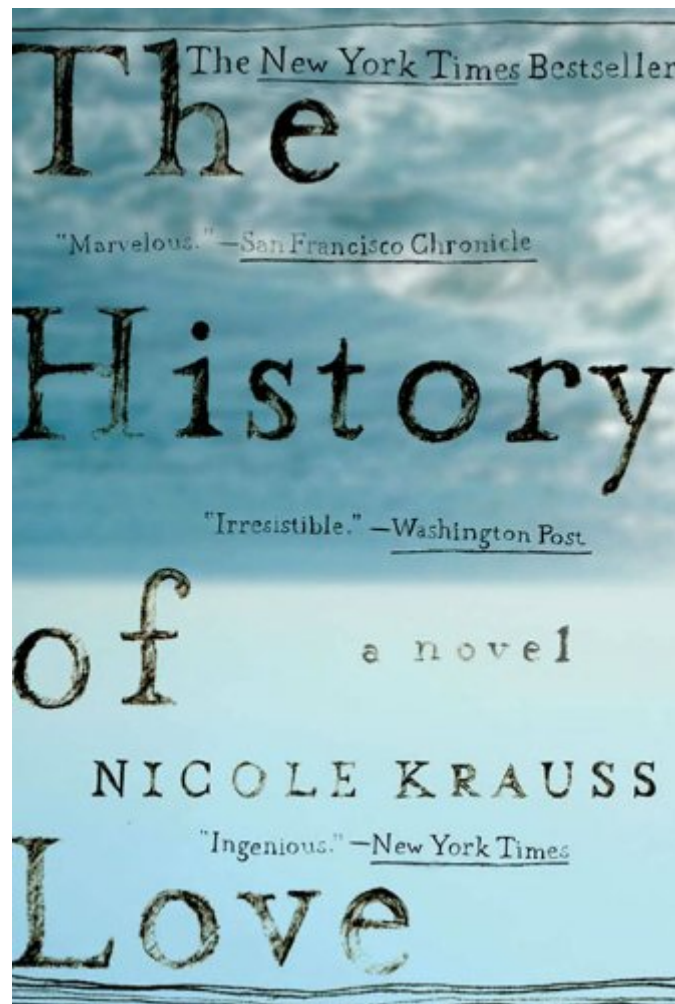


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The History Of Love: A Novel



Synopsis

ONE OF THE MOST LOVED NOVELS OF THE DECADE. A long-lost book reappears, mysteriously connecting an old man searching for his son and a girl seeking a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness. Leo Gursky taps his radiator each evening to let his upstairs neighbor know he's still alive. But it wasn't always like this: in the Polish village of his youth, he fell in love and wrote a book. Sixty years later and half a world away, fourteen-year-old Alma, who was named after a character in that book, undertakes an adventure to find her namesake and save her family. With virtuosic skill and soaring imaginative power, Nicole Krauss gradually draws these stories together toward a climax of "extraordinary depth and beauty" (Newsday).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nicole Krauss's astonishing novel about a manuscript that survives the Holocaust, a flood, broken friendships, a plagiarist, misunderstanding, and obscurity has all the heart and intelligence of the best fiction being published today. Elderly Leo Gursky is afraid of dying unnoticed, and he plans his days so that people will see him and remember him. Among other schemes, he makes a scene in Starbucks and poses nude for a drawing class. Leo wasn't always this lonely. Decades before, in a

small town that was then part of Poland, he fell in love with a girl named Alma. He wrote a book about her before the two fled at different times and circumstances to safety during World War II. Despite the disappointments in his life, Leo continues to write, convinced that he will die when this next book is finished. Meanwhile, a teenager also called Alma, named after a character in a book titled *The History of Love* by a Chilean named Litvinoff, finds herself in the heart of a mystery: her mother is hired by a mysterious man named Jacob Marcus to translate *The History of Love* from Spanish. Since Alma's father passed away years before, her mother has been overcome with sadness, and Alma sets out to find Jacob Marcus as a possible suitor. Oblivious to Alma's quest, her brother Bird has decided he is one of thirty-six holy men, a "lamed vovnik", and might even be the Messiah. And then there's Litvinoff himself, in the past, with his personal story and connection to the manuscript and to Alma and to his own beloved Rosa. The stunning coup of this novel is how Krauss brings these diverse elements into a single, concluding moment. Krauss has complete command of a story that could get away from a lesser novelist.

The History of Love is a great novel. Plotted with exquisite precision, propelled by deeply sympathetic characters, and crammed full of mysteries and solutions, this book lights up neural networks you never knew you had. Besides recounting the stories of a 15 year old girl and a Holocaust survivor, Krauss's novel is also the story of a book (*The History of Love*). What it says about books is just as important as what it says about love, even if it isn't going to make the end-of-paper movement at cartel Microsoft very happy. Nicole Krauss understands books to be what no other medium is: self-contained, tough, mobile over continents and generations and languages, full of the future as inscribed by a piece of someone's soul. *The History of Love* (the novel within the novel) has a provenance that would make a Rembrandt painting blush: written in Poland, manuscript given away then stolen, conceived in Yiddish, translated to Spanish, published in Argentina, found by a Jewish traveler, given to his wife, secretly translated into English, discovered by a 15 year old girl in New York, AND MORE. In Krauss's telling, none of this is random, and even though characters act unaware of each other, the larger plan somehow manifests G*d in the lives of the Living. Why don't I just write it: according to Krauss, when the soul of the writer is pure, a book becomes an immanent sacred object. And in that way, books are a lot like love, only rectangular and full of numbered pages. If we esteemed writers by what their novels hold faith with, Nicole Krauss would sweep this year's fiction awards.

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