



The History of Love

By Nicole Krauss

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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*).

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The History of Love By Nicole Krauss Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #18005 in Books
- Brand: W W Norton Company
- Published on: 2006-05-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.30" h x .90" w x 5.50" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Nicole Krauss's *The History of Love* is a hauntingly beautiful novel about two characters whose lives are woven together in such complex ways that even after the last page is turned, the reader is left to wonder what really happened. In the hands of a less gifted writer, unraveling this tangled web could easily give way to complete chaos. However, under Krauss's watchful eye, these twists and turns only strengthen the impact of this enchanting book.

The History of Love spans a period of over 60 years and takes readers from Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe to present day Brighton Beach. At the center of each main character's psyche is the issue of loneliness, and the need to fill a void left empty by lost love. Leo Gursky is a retired locksmith who immigrates to New York after escaping SS officers in his native Poland, only to spend the last stage of his life terrified that no one will notice when he dies. ("I try to make a point of being seen. Sometimes when I'm out, I'll buy a juice even though I'm not thirsty.") Fourteen-year-old Alma Singer vacillates between wanting to memorialize her dead father and finding a way to lift her mother's veil of depression. At the same time, she's trying to save her brother Bird, who is convinced he may be the Messiah, from becoming a 10-year-old social pariah. As the connection between Leo and Alma is slowly unmasked, the desperation, along with the potential for salvation, of this unique pair is also revealed.

The poetry of her prose, along with an uncanny ability to embody two completely original characters, is what makes Krauss an expert at her craft. But in the end, it's the absolute belief in the uninterrupted of love that makes this novel a pleasure, and a wonder to behold. --Gisele Toueg

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. The last words of this haunting novel resonate like a pealing bell. "He fell in love. It was his life." This is the unofficial obituary of octogenarian Leo Gursky, a character whose mordant wit, gallows humor and searching heart create an unforgettable portrait. Born in Poland and a WWII refugee in New York, Leo has become invisible to the world. When he leaves his tiny apartment, he deliberately draws attention to himself to be sure he exists. What's really missing in his life is the woman he has always loved, the son who doesn't know that Leo is his father, and his lost novel, called *The History of Love*, which, unbeknownst to Leo, was published years ago in Chile under a different man's name. Another family in New York has also been truncated by loss. Teenager Alma Singer, who was named after the heroine of *The History of Love*, is trying to ease the loneliness of her widowed mother, Charlotte. When a stranger asks Charlotte to translate *The History of Love* from Spanish for an exorbitant sum, the mysteries deepen. Krauss (*Man Walks into a Room*) ties these and other plot strands together with surprising twists and turns, chronicling the survival of the human spirit against all odds. Writing with tenderness about eccentric characters, she uses earthy humor to mask pain and to question the universe. Her distinctive voice is both plangent and wry, and her imagination encompasses many worlds.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Krauss's second novel (after 2002's *Man Walks Into a Room*) originally appeared in abbreviated form in *The New Yorker*. That piece failed to capture the novel's maddening complexity and brilliance. Critics describe *History of Love* as poignant, hilarious, and ingenious—and perhaps too smart for its own good. The literary pyrotechnics that some commended—the doppelgängers, the "decoding" of different journal entries, translations, and lists, the nested stories—confounded others. "The writer's connections are closer to

tangles," complained the *Los Angeles Times*, and mask a simple, powerful, message. Yet most reviewers, who quickly compared Krauss's work to her husband Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (***) page 38), agreed that her work is more restrained, her characters more illuminating, and the novel as a whole a bit superior.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Geneva Richardson:

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