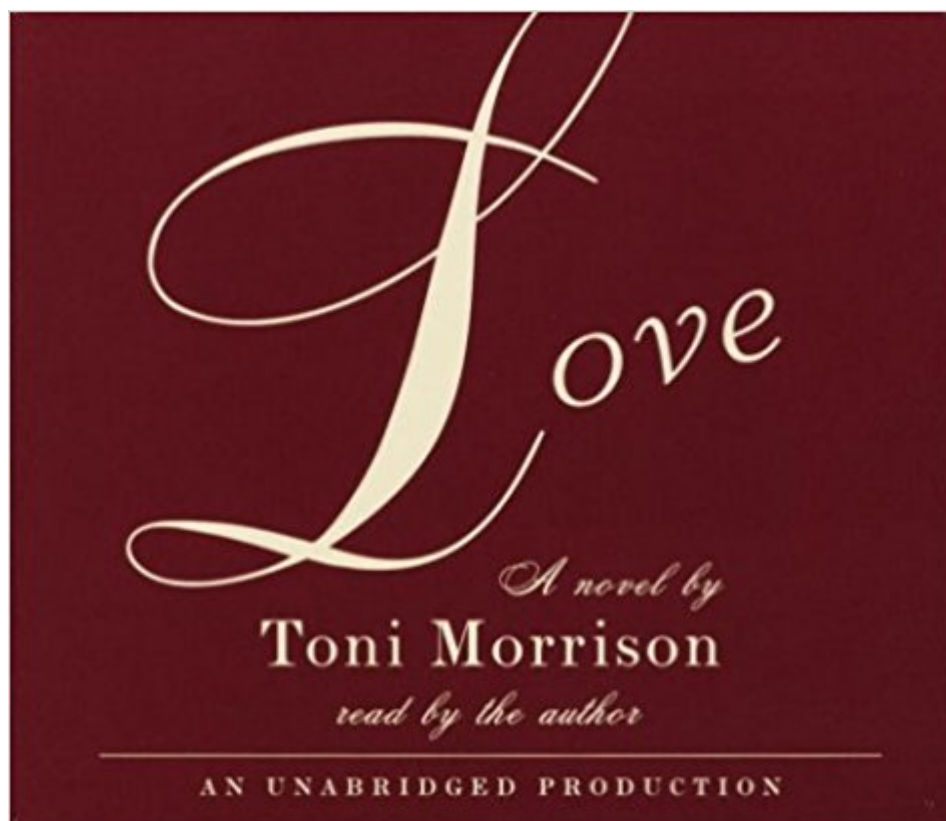


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Love



Synopsis

From the internationally acclaimed Nobel laureate comes a richly conceived novel that illuminates the full spectrum of desire. May, Christine, Heed, Junior, Vida -- even L: all women obsessed by Bill Cossey. More than the wealthy owner of the famous Cossey Hotel and Resort, he shapes their yearnings for father, husband, lover, guardian, friend, yearnings that dominate the lives of these women long after his death. Yet while he is both the void in, and the centre of, their stories, he himself is driven by secret forces -- a troubled past and a spellbinding woman named Celestial. This audacious vision of the nature of love -- its appetite, its sublime possession, its dread -- is rich in characters and striking scenes, and in its profound understanding of how alive the past can be. A major addition to the canon of one of the world's literary masters. This is coast country, humid and God fearing, where female recklessness runs too deep for short shorts or thongs or cameras. But then or now, decent underwear or none, wild women never could hide their innocence -- a kind of pitty-kitty hopefulness that their prince was on his way. Especially the tough ones with their box cutters and dirty language, or the glossy ones with two-seated cars and a pocketbook full of dope. Even the ones who wear scars like Presidential medals and stockings rolled at their ankles can't hide the sugar-child, the winsome baby girl curled up somewhere inside, between the ribs, say, or under the heart. -- from *Love* From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first page of Toni Morrison's novel *Love* is a soft introduction to a narrator who pulls you in with her version of a tale of the ocean-side community of Up Beach, a once popular ocean resort.

Morrison introduces an enclave of people who react to one man--Bill Cooney--and to each other as they tell of his affect on generations of characters living in the seaside community. One clear truth here, told time and again, is how folks love and hate each other and the myriad ways it's manifested; these versions of humanity are seen in almost every line. Monsters and ghosts creep into young girls' dreams and around corners and then return to staid ladies' lives as they age and remember friendships and cold battles. Men and women--Heed, Romen, Junior, Christine, Celestial, and the rest of Morrison's cast--cry and sing out their weaknesses and strengths in rotating perspectives. Sandler, a Cooney employee, is a brilliant agent of Morrison's descriptions of human behavior, "Then, in a sudden shift of subject that children and heavy drinkers enjoy, 'My son, Billy was about your age. When he died, I mean.'" And Romen is allowed to play hero by saving a young girl from a brutal gang rape, while at the same time, he battles disgust like no superhuman would be caught dead feeling. Though slim in pages, Morrison constructs *Love* with a precision and elegance that shows her characters' flaws and fears with brutal accuracy. *Love* may be less complex than others in the grand Morrison oeuvre, but not because Morrison performs literary hand-holding. Readers will experience in this smooth, sharp-eyed gem another instance of the Toni Morrison craftsmanship: she enters your mind, hangs a tale or two there, and leaves just as quietly as she came. --E. Brooke Gilbert --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

At the center of this haunting, slender eighth novel by Nobel winner Morrison is the late Bill Cooney-entrepreneur, patriarch, revered owner of the glorious Cooney Hotel and Resort (once "the best and best-known vacation spot for colored folk on the East Coast") and captivating ladies' man. When the novel opens, the resort has long been closed, and Cooney's mansion shelters only two feuding women, his widow, Heed, and his granddaughter, Christine. Then sly Junior Viviane, fresh out of "Reform, then Prison," answers the ad Heed placed for a companion and secretary, and sets the novel's present action-which is secondary to the rich past-in motion. "Rigid vipers," Vida Gibbons calls the Cooney women; formerly employed at the Cooney resort, Vida remembers only its grandeur and the benevolence of its owner, though her husband, Sandler, knew the darker side of Vida's idol. As Heed and Christine feud ("Like friendship, hatred needed more than physical intimacy: it wanted creativity and hard work to sustain itself"), Junior of the "sci-fi eyes" vigorously seduces Vida and Sandler's teenage grandson. In lyrical flashbacks, Morrison slowly, teasingly reveals the glories and horrors of the past-Cooney's suspicious death, the provenance of his money, the vicious fight over his coffin, his disputed will. Even more carefully, she unveils the women in Cooney's life: his daughter-in-law, May, whose fear that civil rights would destroy everything they had

worked for drove her to kleptomania and insanity; May's daughter, Christine, who spent hard years away from the paradise of the hotel; impoverished Heed the Night Johnson, who became Cosey's very young "wifelet"; the mysterious "sporting woman" Celestial; and L, the wise and quiet former hotel chef, whose first-person narration weaves throughout the novel, summarizing and appraising lives and hearts. Morrison has crafted a gorgeous, stately novel whose mysteries are gradually unearthed, while Cosey, its axis, a man "ripped, like the rest of us, by wrath and love," remains deliberately in shadow, even as his family burns brightly, terribly around him. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm in daily appreciation for the themes behind *Love*, although I'm not too crazy about the actual story. Which shocks me because the more I got to know about the Cosey family, Junior, and L. I really began to delve into their individual histories as a gateway to understanding how these women could sacrifice their lives in the name of Billy Cosey? A man who was too proud to marry his whore although capable of publicly molesting and marrying a child? And yet the women in his life who navigated both his personal and professional realm, love him no less and defend him to the end. A question that points back to the title of the novel and most poignantly the danger of a woman's love. Where we find beautiful, intelligent, and multi-faceted women loyal to a dangerous self-serving man? Women who can name the ever-ending and deep evils of a man, but don't feel comfortable calling him such? Although when speaking of Celestial's influence of men via her sexuality, or Heed's WANT to be rid of poverty by any means necessary, they are quickly deemed whores or self serving opportunist, never being given the same hesitation or consideration as their god, Bill Cosey. That speaks to a moment in the text where Ms. Morrison states, "now, exhausted, drifting toward a maybe permanent sleep, they don't speak of the birth of sin. A moment that still points the blind eye given to the circumstances crafted by Bill Cosey. A man, who did awful, cruel, unexplainable things to the women who sacrificed their lives for him. Does that not deserve it's rightful title? One that doesn't fall back on a man being a man?" I could go on, but I would continue with more statements that lead to more questions about the women in this story and their inability to authentically love. Women who didn't every truly recognize and cherish the love of each other which was really all they had. When instead they rather love the shell of a man dressed in important clothing? The story is frustrating, and the end too soon. Although I'd argue it's a text geared to confronting women and wondering why they're love is not enough? Why they must ignore the strong spiritual ties of

there own love that has kept them together despite all their abilities to leave one another. Rather than hold tight to a phantom dream of a man who wasn't capable of love himself. I'm still torn if I would recommend the book. Although I can't deny that the text does move the reader to a deeper questioning of love and what it means to women.

Tony Morrison can do no wrong...that's how I feel about her writing, her marvelous language & her authenticity. She is a BRILLIANT writer, an astute thinker and one who understands people in all their complexities. She has laser insight, acute intuition and a deep understanding of the human condition. It is about the Blacks' caste system; the lighter you are, the greater your chances for love & success AND it's about a very Black girl, who despite all the barriers makes it "big" in spite of the difficult childhood, the rejecting mother, & the color of her skin which complicated so many relationships and which cheated her in so many ways. It's a WONDERFUL book. READ it. READ it. Read it !!! It's worth it...& the AMAZING ending which took me by surprise. Tony Morrison is a REALIST...a pragmatist...no romantic bones in her body when it comes to parenting or motherhood. It ain't easy & she says it so many different ways. ENJOY IT !!! It will also TEACH as well as entertain & inform.

I am never disappointed when I pick up a Morrison novel. Love is a telling novel, one that, at first, is a little hard to get a hold of because Morrison doesn't spell everything out for you. Her chapters each consist of recursive narration, where we travel backwards in time to get the necessary explanation for the present point in the novel. With this being said, each chapter is a dynamic story in and of itself, full of life. In Love it is hard to find the love that the title indicates. This in and of itself is a Morrison trademark. For certainly Paradise was not a paradise, Beloved was not beloved, and the little black girl in Bluest Eye would never get her blue eyes. So the irony is in the title. At first you think it is the love of Mr. Cosey, which is certainly there in a form, but you soon come to realize that Mr. Cosey isn't that nice or good of a character. In the end it is a tale of Love, although thorned and warped, between two women as we watch how it affects their lives. Read and savor every chapter. Take in Morrison's ability to form the words in such a melodic fashion that the image is firmly placed in your head. I adore Morrison's writing and cannot wait for her next novel. I would most certainly recommend this her latest novel, as well as anything that she has written.

Great book. Can't go wrong with Toni Morrison.

For years, I tried to read Ton Morrison's works but couldn't get into the rhythm of the writing. Then I ordered her works on CD with her as the reader! That did it. Now I have all her books on CD that she reads herself, and they are magical! The lyric sway of her speech, the slow, low cadence of the way she speaks make the stories come alive - and that's what I needed. As a white woman from a middle class background, I needed the alluring timbre of Ms. Morrison's voice to captivate my heart into hearing her stories. Once that happened, her own magic became alive and my own life richer for having heard her tales.

The novel comes together only as one reads it, in jagged bits and pieces of uncommon brilliance. As usual, Morrison's ear is fine-tuned to the language of others in a way that makes any story she tells as real as "good morning" and as enigmatic as a dream.

What I like best about this book (and about several of Morrison's books) is what you DON'T KNOW until the end of the book. Pieces of the story, in this case the relationships between the characters, slowly unfold as the story builds. I found I often need to read her books in one sitting in order to keep myself from cheating AND of course that would ruin the story!

Definitely one of Morrison's most complex novels, Love is incredibly moving and always keeps you on your toes. An amazing book and a must-read

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