



The Love Letters of Abelard and Heloise

Héloïse d'Argenteuil , Pierre Abélard , Ralph Seymour (Editor)

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From Reader Review The Love Letters of Abelard and Heloise for online ebook

Vanessa says

• It's so sad that 2 people who loved each other so much, being intelligent and brave, were so blind to what real joy is all about in life; mostly Abelard was so blinded by the horrendous church and Christianity that only he thought that suffering and abstinence on earthly feelings and body sensations could be the only purposes of life on earth through the path of the cross and only wanting to serve God by eliminating anything that has to be with human love seeing it as sinful and devil's work. And Heloise so intelligent and so authentic and she was the real heroine the one that stayed faithful to her heart till the end. Honestly I think Abelard was not deserving of that love. And even though all this is real and their story is authentic, we can glimpse into what was a very dark period of our time; the time of the Christian religion as a political power for 1000 years, suffering beyond measure, death, disease, torment and fear were the only things present in the tormented followers of the Christian faith. Love in the end conquers all... I do hope after they died Heloise and Abelard were able to really enjoy the love for each other without feeling it was a sin punished by burning forever in hell.

Zachary Littrell says

Normally, I'd gag at lovey-dovey hogshit, but there's little bits like these that I liked a lot:

That writing may be no trouble to you, write always to me carelessly and without study

Oof. I hear you loud and clear, girl. Write to me. Humor me with a response. Just give me a sign --any sign at all, Abelard-- that I threw my life down ye olde toilet for a reason.

The real tragedy in these letters isn't how Abelard and Heloise were torn from each other. It's that a bright, sparkling mind like Heloise was locked away in a convent when she didn't even want to be a nun. Hell, she didn't even want to be MARRIED:

I despised the name of wife that I might live happy with that of mistress

The end of the letters is of course disappointing, A) because it's well known Abelard doesn't change his mind about abandoning their relationship, and B) There needs to be more letters, dammit! It's amazing to see the tiny duel between their letters, between the lines. These are two extremely well-educated writers, and both use suggestive language that the other sees right through. One bit in particular stuck out to me from Heloise:

I often told you even then that I was more pleased with possessing your heart than with any other happiness, and the man was the thing I least valued in you.

Honey, it's okay my uncle lopped off your dingdong. Honestly, it sure wasn't why I stuck around....

Sue says

Provoking. The letters span the time from when Abelard was Heloise's tutor, their secret affair and then nuptials, his castration by her family, his leaving her for God, and her asking him to teach her how to devote herself to God since she can't devote herself to him....

It's both selfish and sacrificial - I still don't know exactly how I feel about it. I certainly do feel for Heloise, though.

Christina says

Not quite finished reading it yet, but definitely liking it so far.

Patris says

i will travel through time and space to beat Abelard's hypocritical, Jesus-freak, emotionally manipulative, sadboi ass

Linda says

Absolutely captivating. They were young and in love. He was her tutor and not "suited" for her. She has his child and he is castrated. That is the basis of this true story. They spend the rest of their lives writing to one another and searching for each other. He spends his life doing good deeds. She spends hers in an abbey. It is the poignant yearning just to see each other again that made the book so important to me. Do not we all long for a feeling, a word, a touch from some elusive entity?

One passage stood out for me. Heloise has not looked in a mirror in many years. While getting a drink from a pool of water she sees her reflection. She has become old. She has lost her teeth. Her hair has grayed. She has none of her youthful beauty that Abelard had so loved.

Lauren says

I am looking forward to discussing this one at book club. So much of their tragedy seemed self-inflicted, but it was a fascinating story. It makes me want to know the history of how the letters were preserved and found... and what happened to their son.

Roshan Singh says

These sugar coated letters were dipped in honey. Not easy to digest.

Nayla says

Speaking not as a medieval scholar but as a former lover who got herself in deep waters (unlike Abelard and Heloise, it got better), I'm going to side with those who say these letters are authentic. They ring true right down to the moments you wish you could reach across the three hundred referenced miles and smack Abelard for missing the point so phenomenally and repeatedly. In retrospect, referring to Abelard as missing the point is probably in poor taste, not to mention a truism that explains why things keep flying over his head. Ugh, again.

Dianne Oliver says

Tragic and beautiful, utterly literate. I suppose it is impossible in our modern age to understand the purpose of trying so desperately to forget ones true love in pursuit of monastery life when the motives to surrender ones life there are so begun. We have lost much in giving up hand written letters.
