



A New Map of Love

Abi Oliver

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How can you pack for the journey of a lifetime?

George Baxter has settled for a comfortable life, content as the years unfold predictably - until Win, his wife of twenty-six years, dies.

With his loyal dog Monty by his side, George throws himself into his work as an antiques dealer. His business is at the heart of the village and all sorts pass through the doors, each person in search of their own little piece of history.

When George meets local widow Sylvia Newsome, he imagines a different kind of future. But life has more revelations to offer him. Over the course of an English summer George uncovers some unexpected mysteries from his past, which could shape his tomorrows . . .

A New Map of Love Details

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From Reader Review A New Map of Love for online ebook

Bethany says

I was provided an e-arc of this book through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. *A New Map of Love* is a charming story about a small-town widower connecting with his past and re-discovering love after the death of his wife. Set in 1970's rural England, George is an antiques dealer grieving the loss of his wife, and a marriage that was perhaps more practical than passionate. Now middle-aged, he works to process his conflicted feelings of grief and freedom, manage his business, re-discover his sense of self, and deal once again with the challenges and rituals of courtship.

A bumbling, good-hearted sort to whom women are a bit of a mystery, you can't help but like George, even when he makes terrible decisions. The book is populated with a delightful cast of characters, full of their own quirks and small problems. A stroll through a community on the cusp of significant change, we follow George, his employees, neighbors, and love interests through a year of life with all of its ups and downs. There are some funny moments and some poignant ones as well, all leading to a quite satisfying ending.

However, I will say that even for a slow-paced book, this one dragged at times, getting bogged down in unnecessary detail beyond what was needed to paint a portrait of events. I also took issue with the fact that George's foibles extended to infidelity with a partner who was also married. This was used as an important plot point, portrayed as positive but unsustainable, and I just wasn't on-board with that.

On a better note, I liked how the author discussed the possibility of men being sexually assaulted by women, and not just the other way around. The author also takes a more feminist stance on women's abilities to have successful careers and George is generally supportive of this, although he sometimes struggles with society moving away from more traditional gender roles. Overall, this was a sweet story with entertaining characters, despite problems of pacing and a light take on infidelity.

Linda Hill says

Newly widowed George Baxter finds he is somewhat out of practice when it comes to women!

I so enjoyed this lovely book. Abi Oliver has created a world where the rhythms of life, nature and society hark back to a gentler age so that reading *A New Map of Love* feels like a nostalgic and wistful homecoming.

I thought the settings were wonderful. The 1960s are so well evoked through the musical references and the terrible dilemmas George has in balancing chivalry with emancipation. Vera in particular embodies the new spirit of the age whilst George really doesn't have a clue which of the many women he encounters following Win's death can be relied upon or who are genuine. I enjoyed meeting all the people between the pages of *A New Map of Love*. Yes, there are villains, but they are loveable rogues rather than psychotic murderers of so many books and I was frequently reminded of P. G. Wodehouse as I read. I thought George was a triumph. He's genuine, warm and not a little foolish so that I felt I wanted to protect him as he feels his way to a new life after Win. It makes such a change to read about those not still in their first flush of youth and to have them portrayed as real people who retain emotions and desires.

Abi Oliver has a super writing style so that there is great humour in *A New Map of Love*. It isn't hilarious side splitting prose, but there's a wry and familiar drollness and irony that is infectious and I found myself chuckling frequently. However, what I appreciated most was the attention to detail. The antiques of George's world are vividly described so that I could picture them incredibly well, but for me it was the natural imagery that helped make *A New Map of Love* so beguiling. I felt transported back to the landscape of my youth.

If you're a lover of hard boiled crime thrillers then Abi Oliver's *A New Map of Love* is probably not for you. If, like me, you're looking for a gentle book with loveable characters that will transport you to a more benign and serene era, then you'll love it.

<https://lindasbookbag.com/2018/01/25/...>

Sally says

Not a literal road novel, as suggested by the cover and a passage near the beginning of the book, but a metaphorical...no, I won't use the 'J-word'! I have read and enjoyed lots of the author's work under her other name. I can see why she wanted to have a fresh start for this one, as it's from a man's point of view whereas she has mainly written about women before. A very tender and 'grown-up' story about a widowed man and his struggles to find love. He finds more than he expected in the end! Very satisfying.

Joanne says

A New Map of Love is a lovely, gentle read following George Baxter as he comes to terms with the death of his wife. They had been married for 26 years but it is only now that she has died that he realises that their marriage had perhaps become rather too comfortable. Although filled with feelings of guilt, he starts to feel that he does not want any more of his life to simply drift by. Most of all he wants to find a soulmate, a true soulmate which he feels his late wife wasn't. There certainly seems to be no shortage of candidates!

George was an endearing character who put me in mind of Rachel Joyce's Harold Fry. He is a decent, hard-working man running his own antiques business and trying to do his best for all his employees. I did get the sense of his being older than he actually was, especially when he referred to his wife as 'old Win'. He was only 56 which these days is nothing and he certainly wouldn't be considered old, but perhaps in the 1960s when this book is set, he would have been considered older. I would say he was a true gentleman but sometimes his thoughts were far from gentlemanly! I would love to have known from Win what she thought of their marriage and whether she had been contented or not but this, of course, was not to be and was something George also wondered about.

It is the characters which made this book so enjoyable for me from George himself, to his wife's friends who he dubs 'the cronies', widowed Sylvia who I couldn't help but wonder if she was all she seemed, pompous Lady Byngh, eager young worker Kevin who got so excited at auctions, wise and dependable Vera as she moved from housekeeper to more valued employee and not forgetting his beagle dog, liquorice-allsort-loving Monty. This varied cast of characters are all portrayed so well and combine to make this book a delightful depiction of small English country life.

Add in some mystery regarding George's past, the hunt for an elusive antique, various women who see George as quite a catch, not a small dash of warm humour and you have all the ingredients for a quietly

compelling story. A New Map of Love is a charming and uplifting read.

Kim says

It's February, 1964 George Baxter, proprietor of Chalk Hill Antiques, has recently lost his wife Winifred. George is a mild mannered, likable sort of man, with a lifetime of loneliness facing him every time he looks in the mirror. It isn't that he is without friends as the cronies off his wife are determined that he not be left behind. Poor George just can't face any of it.

He has his antique business and his basset hound, Monty. He isn't a saint and he isn't strong. He has been known to find solace in the arms of his neighbors. He needs more than he gets most of the time. He wants "someone he can love to the depth of his soul" and to be loved equally. What could be easier? What could be more difficult? George is about to find out.

Told with wit and charm this is the best of this genre of writing. "Gain-loss, up-down, beginning-end."

Thank you NetGalley and Pan Macmillan for an ARC

Heidi says

In February George runs away from the funeral of his wife of over twenty years, by November he finds himself. A New Map of Love is a character driven story about self-discovery in your fifties, loss, new beginnings, making mistakes and learning from them. I can't say that I was smitten with any of the characters, except perhaps George's dog, Monty, but I could certainly relate to them. We all have so much to learn, let's hope we use the time we have to accept who we are and become who we always hoped to be.

Jasmine says

I was surprised to discover that this book was written by a woman, as it read a bit like a middle-aged male fantasy. As if the [male] writer had written the story using the *pen* down the front of his pants (if you know what I mean). I just couldn't understand why women were throwing themselves at the protagonist, George - some of them two decades his junior - when he seemed to me rather unattractive with his domestic ineptness, his grouchiness, and his very average job. I never quite grew to like George as a main character and I didn't particularly want him to have a good end. I had hoped that he would, instead, experience an epiphany. And, in some ways, I guess the author suggested at that in George's new-found comfort in taking a lover, rather than in finding a wife who would give up her life to support his. I think what turned me against George in the first instance was that he had an affair with his neighbour while his wife was on her sickbed dying, because he had a 'need'. I simply couldn't warm to him after that.

Susan Aldridge says

I came across this book through a mention in Myslexia, a magazine for women who write that I subscribe to.

Listened to on audible while walking around on a mini-break in Ambleside! It's about an antiques dealer looking for love when he becomes widowed after a less than satisfactory marriage. At first I thought this was just a bit 'quaint' and easy reading, but actually it's better than that - very well structured and a very nice portrayal of supporting characters. The background of antique furniture and so on is very well described too. Would recommend as a satisfying read!

Elisabeth says

A new map of love
By Abi Oliver

After a long and comfortable marriage to his wife Win, George Baxter has recently become a widower. Now the only companionship that he has is his loyal dog Monty, a stream of Win's well-meaning friends and his successful antiques business.

George meets local widow Sylvia Newsome and quickly becomes besotted with her and begins to see his future as very different as to what it would've been with Win. However, things never turn out the way you expect them to and meeting Sylvia certainly changes many things for George.

A lovely, gently read which would be perfect for fans of 'A man called Ove', 'The Love song of Miss Queenie Hennessey' and 'The Pilgrimage of Harold Fry'.

I will definitely be tempted to read further books by Abi Oliver.

Karen Whittard says

This book is very well written. It has some flawed but humane characters that burst out of the page and feel like you know them as soon as you first meet them. It is very light and would be great for people who don't like to read heavy books. Abi's observations and circumstances that are written about in this book as all very well thought out and feel very down to earth and believable.

Unfortunately thou the book was just not for me. I felt it was a little hard to like George the main character. Who had been having an affair behind his wife's back. I also thought that some parts of the book were a little long winded and certain parts seemed to go on for far to long. I also didn't like some of the characters and felt it difficult to get really into it.

Other than that it was a book for me that was ok. Not great but ok.

Paula Sealey says

A gentle plot and beautiful writing with lovely observations carry this sweet story about George. Recently bereaved, he is trying to put his life back into some sort of order and along the way encounters women who are set to change his future.

I loved all the characters, conniving Shelia, heart of gold Vera, George himself and even Monty the dog! They were all portrayed so well and village life was described in such a charming way.

A lovely book to lose yourself in for a few hours.

*I received a copy of the book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Monique Mulligan says

A New Map of Love by Abi Oliver brings readers an old-fashioned life-in-an-English-village story about George, who leads a predictable but comfortable life until his wife, Win, dies. Life is suddenly a whole lot less predictable but a whole lot more exciting, especially widow Sylvia arrives on the scene with her heaving bosom and fluttering eyelashes. I enjoyed this sweet and cleverly characterised story - at one point I was telling George what I really thought about Sylvia, but he didn't listen! And what I liked was the gentle way George finally experienced his loss before accepting the life he now had.

Leeza Robertson says

I need to preface this review by saying that I do not normally read books about white middle age men. Mainly because I don't really relate to them as main characters and this book was no different. I could not get into the MC of this book. I just did not find George relatable at all. But, again, this is a personal thing. The book itself is beautifully written and the supporting cast in this book is wonderful. Kevin, Vera and in the end Elizabeth are wonderful characters. I also liked the inclusion of the Venus and Mars antiques into the thread of the narrative. The antiques and the thrill of finding the separated pair would have actually made a better main story. I will say this, I did find the book far more interesting near the end, but even then, I found it really hard to feel any empathy for George.

All in all, a well-written book with an interesting take on finding love in middle age, just not a book for me.

Maggie BB says

This is a charming book, but not exactly a book for me. There was nothing I particularly disliked about it, but nothing that really grabbed me either.

This is very much a character driven book, and Abi Oliver creates a wonderful cast of varied characters. They all have such unique and full personalities - even bit characters who have very little page time come out of the page as real people and you get a immediate sense of who they are. I really like that.

The story is sweet, and real. George Baxter's experiences as he find his way through life after his wife are believable. His marriage wasn't perfect, and he certainly is a flawed individual, and his journey to new happiness hits some bumps along the way... and that is real life. This is a book about life. The people we meet, the experiences we have, and the impact they can have on us if we let them.

I don't really have any complaints about the book, and I think if you are more drawn to charming, understated stories of loss and love that are more light and airy vs dramatic and heavy than you will enjoy this book. The writing is good, and the story flows well and it reads like you could easily believe this to be a true story about real people.

Shannon says

A lovely book. It's like a lazy afternoon under the trees or a long bubble bath. It's set in a small English village, with a mostly lovely cast of characters. While I wasn't completely enamored with George, he was entertaining. It's beautifully written, and the author does a good job describing the characters and setting the scenes. My biggest complaint was that on occasion it could get a bit verbose, there could be too much time spent on descriptions or even too much time spent in George's head. It's a book that requires you be in a certain mindset. But if you are looking to spend some time just lazing in a hammock, or luxuriating in a bubble bath with a glass of wine, this book could be worth trying out.

I received a copy of this novel via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.
