



Kafka in Love

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Kafka was an attractive, slender, and elegant man--something of a dandy, who captivated his friends and knew how to charm women. He seemed to have had four important love affairs: Felice, Julie, Milena, and Dora. All of them lived far away, in Berlin or Vienna, and perhaps that's one of the reasons that he loved them: he chose long-distance relationships so he could have the pleasure of writing to them, without the burden of having to live with them. He was engaged to all four women, and four times he avoided marriage. At the end of each love affair, he threw himself into his writing and produced some of his most famous novels: *Amerika*, *The Trial*, and *The Castle*.

In this charming book, author Jacqueline Raoul-Duval follows the paper trail of Kafka's ardor. She uses his voice in her own writing, and a third of the book is pulled from Kafka's journals. It is the perfect introduction to this giant of world literature, and captures his life and romances in a style worthy of his own.

Kafka in Love Details

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Vismant? says

„{...} geri patarimai {...} – pakib? tarp žvaigždži?, štai kod?l žem?je taip tamsu“.

Pirmoji daugiau tikroji biografij?, kuri? teko skaityti, tod?l neturiu su kuo palyginti. Vienintelis, kuris daugiau atitikt? (auto)biografijos r?mus, b?t? prieš milijonus met? skaitytas Anos Frank „Dienoraštis“. Taigi šiai biografijai ?vertinti pasirinkau ne autoriaus atlikt? darb?, kuris, beje, buvo tikrai sunkus žinant, kiek daug dokument? buvo rasta, o kiek daug prarasta. Š?kart vertinsiu emocij?, kuri mane užklupo beskaitant š? „k?rin“.

Ši knyga, nors ir yra biografija, labai panaši ? paprast? roman?, kuriam b?dingas XX a. stilius ir pasaul?ži?ra. Nenuostabu, nes veiksmas b?tent ir vyksta Pirmojo pasaulinio karo metais ir apima labai labai nedidel? dal? Antrojo (daugiausiai nupasakojant kit? asmen?, susijusi? su Kafka, likimus).

Iš esm?s, Kafkos gyvenimo istorija iš esm?s pakeit? poži?r? ? jo k?ryb?, leido pažvelgti ? jo k?rinis iš kitos pus?s, pamatyti tai, ko niekada net ne?sivaizdavau. Francas Kafka buvo didis romantikas, tiek geras išklausojas, tiek pasakotojas. Ar kada pagalvojot, kad „Metamorfoz?“ autorius paraš? pirm?kart ?simyl?j?s, š? k?rin? dedikuodamas pirmajai savo sužad?tinei Felicei? Metamorfoz? ir meil?... Visada ?sivaizdavau, kad Kafka yra stiprus, atžarus ir valdingas vyras. Pasirodo, jis buvo jautrus, silpnos sveikatos vaikas, kuris, d?l savo ligos, neužbaig? daugelio istorij?.

Skaitant apie rašytoj?, vis kirb?jo mintis, ar asmuo gali b?ti tuo pat metu ir didelis egoistas, ir be proto r?pestingas kit? atžvilgiu? O gal jis r?pinasi kitais tik d?l egoistišk? paskat?? Bet vis d?lto vienas mini epizodas išdav? jo tikr? jautrum? - pasakojimas apie maž? mergait? ir jos pamest? l?lyt?. Viena ašara nuried?jo ši? istorij? skaitant net autobuse.

Dar viena mintis, kuri nedav? man ramyb?s. Kokia yra dienoraš?io prasm?? Suprantu, kad kit? asmen? rašoma biografija dažnai yra pastatyta ant „nenusamenintos“ ribos, ta?iau ar mes, rašydami tik sau pa?ius intymiausius dalykus galime nor?ti, kad kada nors, kai po mirties galb?t b?sime ?vertinti, jog m?s? tikrai, pabr?žiu, tikrai intymios mintys b?t? paviešintos milijonams žmoni?, kurie tav?s niekada nepažinojo ir nebepažins? O jeigu pridur?iau, kad Kafka, jau jausdamas ateinan?i? mirt?, praš? savo geriausio draugo Makso sudėginti visus jo kada nors rašytus raštus? Šiuo atveju peikiu ne autori? d?l panaudotos turimos medžiagos, bet draug?, kuris pamina tavo pasitik?jim? ir, tik mano nuomone, peržengia rib?.

Pats k?rins be proto ?domus, skaityti apie asmens, ?simyl?jusio daugyb? kart?, bet taip ir nevedusio, gyvenim? atskleid? tokias asmen? baimes, apie kurias niekada neb??iau pagalvojusi.

Labai rekomenduoju Kafkos gerb?jams ir dar labiau lauksiu juo besidomin?i? komentar? apie kitas apie j? rašytas knygas :)

Zeynepozmenunlu says

Bir roman olsa bile bence Kafka'n?n kendi yazd??? romanlar?ndan önce bu kitap okunmal?. Onun dü?ünceleri, hayat ?artlar?, ya?am ?ekli , ni?anl?lar?, öncelikleri ve en sonunda ölümü hakk?nda bilgi

veren bir kitap. Çok severek okudum. Çok keyifliydi. Hüzünlüydü. Ama insan ilişkilerinde, ikili ilişkilerdeki çeşitliliği gözler önüne seren bir kitap.

Natalie E. Ramm says

In the early part of the twentieth century, Franz Kafka was exploring what it means to be in love. He was living with his family in Prague and began a series of long distance relationships with four women. He proposed to all of them, but never once married. *Kafka in Love* is comprised of lengthy quotes from letters he wrote to his lovers and friends and a third person narrative of Kafka's life during that time. Kafka is riddled by anxiety, idealism, and a compulsion to write, which all keep him from really loving the women in his life. I loved the story in as much as I love reading about writers' lives, especially their romantic lives. However, perhaps it was the format I read this novel in (netgalley ebook), but a lot of it was hard to follow. The narrative was sort of schizophrenic. I think I would have rather read an entirely fictional narrative about Kafka's life, or just his letters themselves. This book was in between and it often lost me. I was compelled to finish only because Kafka's life was so interesting.

Wodehousian says

This is one of the most exceptional books I have ever read and I'm absolutely shocked and saddened that not everyone could enjoy it and appreciate its grandeur to the extent that I did. This book changed my life and brought Kafka's biography to life more than any thing I have ever read. It is in one word: Magical.

Nicki Markus says

I have long found Kafka and his writing of interest and have visited the Kafka museum in Prague three times. I therefore knew he had a number of different women in his life over the years and that he had fairly volatile relationships with all of them.

What I enjoyed about this book was the real human quality it brought to those relationships through quotes from letters. It really showed the impact those women had at different times in his life and the way that, and his ill health, affected his writing.

I found the book easy to read and I never felt bogged down by detail or too many quotes. It was a book both sad and entertaining at the same time. I also appreciated the fact the author didn't end with Kafka's death, but went on to tell what had happened to his friends and family in the following years.

This is not a book that will give you in-depth scholarly insight into Kafka's works, but if you are interested in the life of authors and the things that went on outside of their writing, then this is a worthwhile read.

I received this book as a free e-book ARC via NetGalley.

Leslie says

As a perpetual writer of love-letters, sent and unsent, and one with a tendency to love the unattainable, I began this text expecting complicity. Kafka is fierce, intense, unrealistic, overwhelming. There's something about reading true love affairs that feels hopeful and desperate, voyeuristic and human all at once. It just makes me wonder how this insecure, unsettling, manic state is one so widely accepted and encouraged--perhaps the DSM V should have "in love" as a diagnosis. Still, the fire of inspiration it provided Kafka, and the sustaining peace he found in his last love, suggest it is worthwhile.

Tina says

I wish I would have known how much this book was going to affect me before I picked it up. In my defense it was a spur of the moment buy after midterms, although the book rested on my shelf for months, neglected. I think that I read the book at the perfect time in my life, not yet 20, bright eyed and hopeful yet still very pessimistic of the world. Franz Kafka's life was an extraordinary one, one that at times I longed for and at other times pitied him for. His loves and his passions spoke to me, I do not know if this is due to my respect for him or if it is due to my dream to one day be able to love something as he loved literature.

Raoul_Duval does a magnificent job of bringing this man to life and giving us a sense of who he really was and the effect that his relationships with these women as well as that of his close friends and family had on his writing. I will never be able to forget this book, I am currently suffering from a book hangover because of this novel.

Kafka's struggles, fears, loves, anxieties and dreams touched me. Truth be told I wasn't crazy about the writing style at the beginning but I warmed up to it and find it quite refreshing.

I highly recommend this book, even if you are on edge about Kafka's works, this is a captivating read. I will probably reread Kafka's works after this, I will be reading them with a different perspective.

Emily says

Finished reading "Kafka in Love" and now I am in love with Kafka. He was a fascinating man, and this author does a wonderful job incorporating his letters and diaries into a semi-biography. It's a wonderful way to learn about someone, and I couldn't get enough.

I loved Kafka's "suffering artist" lifestyle, his humor, his anxiety, his feverish obsessions, and his neurotic tendencies. Anyone who is a fan of Kafka (either his writing or the man himself) should read this.

Lulu says

Wonderful book! I recommend with four stars. Raoul-Duval has done her homework about Franz Kafka. She describes the four great loves of his life drawing on diaries and letters that Kafka wrote to these women. Oh, what a complex and brilliant man he was. The complexities, idiosyncrasies, insomnia, obsession with writing, asceticism, all are beautifully drawn in this book.

Although this is classed as a novel, it draws so heavily on the real Kafka's letters, diaries, etc, that it really borders on non fiction. A wonderful read. To tell you the truth, this would make a great tv series with one

episode for each of his four engagements.

Kent Winward says

A Kafka biography told through his relationships with women had a passing interest in the impact of the women on his writing, but ultimately it was too myopic a view.

Clem's says

Un texte assez barbant et inutile sauf peut-être pour les thésards sur Kafka dont la Muse s'en allée voir ailleurs...

Hale says

"Sen benim en sevdi?imsin Milena, benim bir parçams?n (seni bir daha görmemem gerekse de) ama sen benim yaram?n içinde çevirdi?im b?çaks?n."

Alexis says

Like it or not, all French translations suffer from the same problem when I read them, there's always a lingering clunkiness of language alternating with overly flowery, dated writing. But *Kafka in Love* does better than most, most likely due to the terseness with which the characters 'speak' and also because so much of the material is drawn from the actual writing and recollections of the people in the book themselves rather than Raoul-Duval herself. Slow-going in the first chapter with Felice, *Kafka in Love* picks up until the crescendo of Kafka's final act, (literally). An infuriatingly eccentric man, at the end of *Kafka in Love*, he remains elusive; we only see his effects on the people around him, and the missing letters and diaries tantalize us with the possibility of further insight into his mind. The coda is quite poignant given that so many of Kafka's family and friends died during WWII in the Holocaust.

Sara says

3.5 stars.

Favourite quotes & moments -

* 'A married friend is no longer a true friend.'

* '[Kafka] struggles with his anxiety attacks and his fits of despair. He could have built the pyramids, he joked, with the effort it takes him to cling to life and reason.'

- * Kafka finding a girl crying because she has lost her doll, and telling her that the doll isn't lost but has gone on an adventure. Then proceeding to write the girl letters everyday from the doll, describing her adventures.
 - * Sitting in the countryside spending days doing nothing while his lungs recover - 'Perhaps I will become the village idiot some day.'
 - * 'It wasn't to be your destiny' - Kafka's mother's consolation after he breaks off his engagement to Felice.
 - * About companions making openly anti-Semitic comments in his presence - 'Everyone laughs appreciatively, then apologises to me once more.'
 - * 'Is it not reasonable to leave Prague, rife as it is with anti-Semitism? Is it not natural to leave a place where one is the object of such hatred? To stay despite everything is to emulate the heroism of the cockroach, which nothing can drive from the bathroom.'
 - * 'One day [Tile] says, "You see, I speak every language, only I speak it in Yiddish," and she is proud to have made him laugh.'
 - * 'One's native city is always inhospitable, a place of memories, of melancholy, of pettiness, of shame, of temptation, a place where one's resources were put to poor use.'
 - * Kafka on why he can't go to the cinema - 'I identified too strongly with the actors. When someone suffered or died on the screen, I would see myself suffer or die. Certain images haunted me to the point of obsession.'
 - * 'I have finished none of my novels, I have abandoned several of my stories in the middle of a word.'
 - * Ottla asking her husband, an Aryan, to divorce her so that their kids will be spared.
 - * The obituary that Milena wrote after Kafka's death.
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