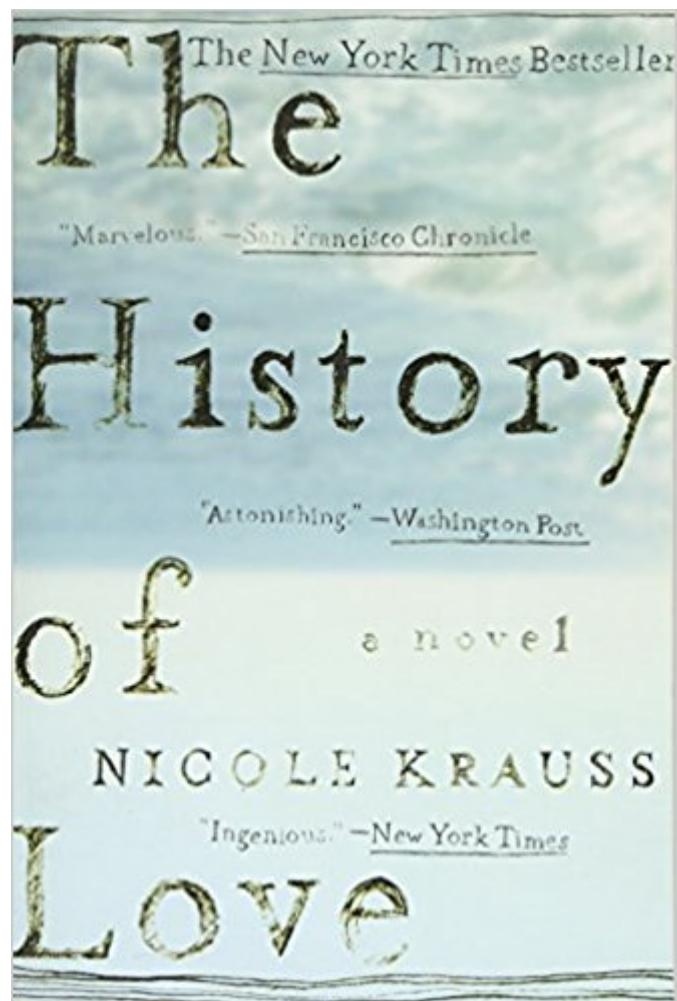


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# The History Of Love



## Synopsis

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).

## Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1st edition (May 17, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393328627

ISBN-13: 978-0393328622

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 780 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #15,797 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Religious & Inspirational > Jewish #233 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature #446 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Coming of Age

## Customer Reviews

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 uninteruption of love that makes this novel a pleasure, and a wonder to behold. --Gisele Toueg

**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. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

I had a hard time following along with the different viewpoints throughout the book. However, closer to the end I did get more into the book and didn't want to stop until I got to the end. End wasn't anything special. Entire book was okay. Might read a second time now that I have a better understanding of it.

Stunning story of love, loss, death, life, and survival. Some memories haunt you beyond any words. Truly deep and memorable.

I loved some of the characters and the writing style. But the shifting narrative "I" felt like an unnecessary complication that was irksome. I can make a case for that mashup of narrators reflecting their complicated relationships. But I could have done without that

We read this in our book club. Many of us for the first time ever had to go back and start over. Confusing the way it jumped around. The story itself turned out to be a good one, just could have been told better.

Poignant, heart wrenching, brilliant. All the feels. Don't let the occasional disjointed-ness bother you, it all comes together in the end.

Even if the story had not be so intriguing, I would have rated this five stars for the sheer beauty of Nicole Krauss's writing. I rarely read a book more than once (there's so much to read and so little time), but, when I read the last sentence and began to breathe again, I went right back to the beginning.

This is the kind of book where characters and settings are introduced to the reader slowly, kind of like Gilead. The pieces come together in a meaningful way in the end. I'll read it through a second time.

Intriguing... captivating... lived it!

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