
Barbara Gowdy

The Romantic

barbara

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the romantic

#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

"Fiercely observant, intelligent and funny. . . .
A masterful accomplishment"
the globe and mail



Title: The Romantic

Author: Barbara Gowdy

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Description

Not long after Louise Kirk's mother vanishes, the Richters and their adopted son, Abel, move in across the street, and Louise falls furiously in love. Skillfully interweaving the stories of Abel and Louise at different ages, *The Romantic* is a powerful exploration of the many incarnations of love and loss.

Insightful reviews

Jenna: I love Barbara Gowdy's writing style and there are so many great lines from this novel, in particular . . .

"I see myself tied to railway tracks, and the approaching train is being driven by Maureen Hellier." -- Louise

"He scanned me up and down, a relay between my breasts and mouth, as if in these features lay the clues to my integrity." -- Louise

Janet Adams: Wonderful simple but layered prose. Emotionally honest and smart without being self-consciously clever. Did NOT find it depressing as some did. Though it was melancholy it was still alive and kicking.

Sariah: Upon reading the last page in this novel all I felt was a sense of disappointment—disappointment in the story as a whole. In the *Romantic*, Louise Kirk is abandoned by her mother and left in the care of her passive father. Shortly after her mother leaves Louise becomes obsessed with a boy (Abelard) who has moved in across the street, and he remains the focus of her love well into her adult life. Abelard is just as passive as her father (if not more so) and finds Louise's love, and the love of his parents, overwhelming. For Abel the only way to escape is to commit suicide; but he is so passive that his suicide takes the form of slowly drinking himself to death.

The reader knows the love between Louise and Abel is doomed because Gowdy begins the story with Abel's death. The narrative then jumps back and forth through time as Gowdy relates the events of their childhood, and their adult lives. I enjoyed the narrative structure Gowdy uses and her writing style is excellent. My disappointment is with the characters themselves. Ultimately I found Abel unlikable (to me his total passivity was boring) and a little unworthy of the love lavished upon him. And while Louise, fierce in her love and hate, is a compelling character, in the end one loses patience with her.

If you like dysfunctional and doomed relationships then this is the book for you. If you like dysfunctional and doomed relationships with interesting and compelling characters then you might want to look elsewhere.

Madeleine: Argh! Barbara Gowdy can write so fantastically yet this! This infuriated me. Louise is much less a personality than a wad of tear-soaked tissues and Abel only a Tortured Artist Type. She tells you the result at the first page, so she lacks the section of shock to beat the wafer-like characterizations and predictable plotting. There are attractive passages, yet by some means these served merely to make me angrier on the rest. Two stars simply because i've got one of these powerful reaction.

Anita Adams: the idea of this e-book intrigued me. A mom walks out of her 9 12 months outdated daughter's life, and the daughter turns into absolutely obsessed and enamored of the mummy of a local child. She desires to be adopted, just like the followed son. She falls in love with the mum first...then the son. the 1st few pages appeared fascinating enough, yet as one will get a bit additional into the tale the reader will get whiplash because the writer jumps from one concept to another, one decade to another, and one tale to another. the basis was once simple. it may well were an exceptional story, informed simply. because it was, it plodded alongside like a Clydesdale. this is often one I selected to not finish. lifestyles is simply too short.

Lia: i will by no means come to a decision if i love the note "poignant". The sentiment appeals however it sounds half-swallowed, and upon listening to all of it i will be able to contemplate is my high-school Latin textbook explaining that gn in Latin (eg "magnus") is mentioned as within the English "hangnail". yet i'd use it to explain this story. Brief synopsis: Louise is ten, and her mom has left. a brand new relatives strikes in on their street. Louise first falls in love with the mother, Greta, then a 12 months later, the son, Abel. A dozen years later he's dead. The blurb means that this can be "the unravelling tale in their romance", yet i believe it really is fairly the tale of Louise's adventure of romance: As an idea, an emotion, an event. Gowdy's credible portrayal of kids maintains to provoke me. during this novel her accuracy in depicting the brain of a kid isn't so startling as in her brief stories, quite the single concerning the women and their foster mom in *We So Seldom glance on Love*, yet stable brief tales are regularly compacted, explosive. i love them for a similar cause I hate commencing bottles of champagne. right here the characters are crafted with an identical precision yet brought in threads, weaving from side to side via time, collecting form. there's a softness and house the place brief tales are sharp, urgent, tight. For me this started out as a very good novel, good yet unspectacular -- fascinating but typical characters, becoming yet unremarkable style, a narrative ordinary adequate to intrigue yet good inside plausibility. relaxing sufficient to maintain me studying until eventually compelled to place it down, yet in time most likely insignificant. Then somehow, with out an visible turn, it touched me. because the grownup Louise got here to dominate, the narration constructed a wry humour that I hadn't obvious prior within the novel. It appeared to supply every little thing this tenderness. rather than a indifferent curiosity within the story's movement, I felt a hurry of affection for every personality within the moment. every little thing that had occurred used to be transformed; a similar desperation turned cute rather than basically intriguing. Pathos, I guess, yet for me it usually brings to brain the note "exquisite". i suppose simply because it is a synonym for "beautiful" or "magnificent" that i think is simply accurately utilized to kinds of pain, so much rather an ache. An very personal, actual spiritualism looks a routine topic in Gowdy's work. Louise sees wisps of white mild in her peripheral vision, which she calls angels, although she additionally jokes that it can simply be a retinal disorder. in the direction of the top of this booklet my emotional responses had actual manifestation. now not

within the method humans frequently use the observe "visceral". now not a wrenching pain. i suppose a feeling of tenderness, and heat, based on my sternum. additionally flashes of popularity observed through shivers. I have in mind deja vu being pointed out as a typical mystical event in a textual content I learn for my philosophy course, years ago. i am intrigued by means of that, by means of what I examine particularly concrete, corporeal mystical experiences. it isn't important if they're real however it issues that they are real. And then I cried and cried and cried, until eventually lengthy after the final page, lengthy after lighting fixtures out. i have never cried over a e-book in an extended time. It wasn't miserable -- sad, often, yet now not depressing. I cried due to its accuracy. there's something painful approximately being known. On my variation there's this excerpt at the again cover. prior to interpreting the e-book I cherished it, however it potential less out of context. i feel it is helping to at the very least understand at this element Louise isn't really with Abel. simply because it's totally a lot written as a novel, now not a string of news or a fictional essay or a prose poem or anything that would seem to be a novel, it is very unlikely to discover a consultant sample, yet this can offer you a feeling of the way the characters feel. >As i am speaking, I think preserving my hand a couple of inches above a boulder. it is twilight, summer, starting to be cool. The boulder provides off the warmth of the day. My love for Abel is just like the warmth among the boulder and the falling night. That feeling, or that place.

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