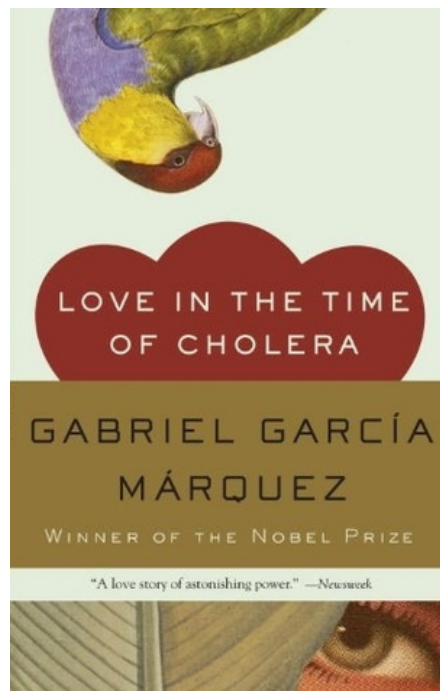




Love in the Time of Cholera

Gabriel García Márquez , Edith Grossman (Translator)

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In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his business career he whiles away the years in 622 affairs--yet he reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. Fifty years, nine months, and four days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again.

Love in the Time of Cholera Details

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Author : Gabriel García Márquez , Edith Grossman (Translator)

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From Reader Review Love in the Time of Cholera for online ebook

Jaidee says

5 "masculine, organic, decaying...." stars.

8th Favorite Read of 2016

Do not make the mistake that this book is about love.

This book is about much more common vices.

Vices that masquerade for love.

Jealousy, obsession, desire, pity and vengeance.

Perpetually selfish penises promising but only perjuring voluminous misunderstood vaginas.

Men using women that use men.

The demise of the body, civilization, disease, poverty, stolen riches, subservience, slavery.

Sexual abuse in the guise of parental guidance.

Smothering overindulgent mothers psychologically killing sons and maiming daughters.

Beauty and comfort for the very few. Shades of skin as important as class and wealth.

Narcissism, poetry and empty years of mindless despair.

Rot, sickeningly sweet perfumes, theft and unknown history.

Oh no, do not misunderstand -this book is not about love. Anything but.

Madeline says

LET ME EXPLAIN, GUYS.

Okay. I like Marquez. I think his writing is beautiful, his settings are evocative and masterfully portrayed, and yes, his books are pretty romantic, and I always enjoy magical realism (this one could have used more of that last bit, though). The last twenty pages of the book even managed to suck me into the romance of the story, and I found myself finally really invested in this love story instead of being vaguely creeped out (we'll get there). Look, I even found a really nice passage to quote:

"It was as if they had leapt over the arduous calvary of conjugal life and gone straight to the heart of love. They were together in silence like an old married couple wary of life, beyond the pitfalls of passion, beyond the brutal mockery of hope and the phantoms of disillusion: beyond love. For they had lived together long enough to know that love was always love, anytime and anyplace, but it was more solid the closer it came to

death."

See? That's fucking beautiful, and even if I didn't like the story itself, I still liked the writing. So call off the dogs, Marquez apologists, and let's get to the ranting portion of the review.

Fair warning to all who proceed past this point: I am preparing to don my Feminist Rage hat and shout about rape culture. Those who plan to leave mean comments calling me an idiot or telling me that I misunderstood the book, remember that you were warned. BEWARE, FOR HERE BE DRAGONS AND ANGRY FEMINISTS.

Here's something I learned about myself while reading this: I have absolutely no patience for books about obsession disguised as love. I hated it in *Twilight*, I hated it in *Wuthering Heights*, I hated it in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and I hated it here. It would be one thing, I decided, if Fermina Daza felt as passionately about Florentino Ariza as he felt about her. *But she didn't love him*. For her, their romance was a brief fling in her teens, and she stopped loving him when she returned from her trip. She continued not loving him, until he wears her down (after writing her letters constantly despite her explicitly telling him to fuck off out of her life) and she basically shrugs her shoulders and says, fine, might as well.

The lesson men can take from this book is that if a woman says "no" (as Fermina frequently and clearly says to Florentino), she really means, "make me change my mind." NOPE. NOPE NOPE NOPE. THIS PHILOSOPHY IS NOT OKAY AND IT IS WHY RAPE CULTURE EXISTS. NO MEANS FUCKING NO, EVERYBODY. IF A WOMAN TELLS YOU TO LEAVE HER ALONE, YOU LEAVE HER THE FUCK ALONE. IT IS NOT ROMANTIC TO OBSESS ABOUT HER FOR FIFTY YEARS, IT IS CREEPY.

And OF COURSE Florentino still fucks anything that moves while claiming to be in love with Fermina, because he is a man and that's just how it works. Which leads me to my next ranting point: this book romanticizes rape.

(you can still get out, guys - it's only going to get worse from here)

First there was the intensely unsettling way Florentino loses his virginity: while traveling on a ship, a woman drags him into her cabin and forces him to have sex with her. Then Florentino falls in love with her. Because of course he does. I was willing to chalk this scene up to the common misconception that men cannot be sexually assaulted because men are horny dogs who are always up for sex no matter what - fine, whatever, I'll let it go. But then later, a minor female character describes the time she got raped, and I'm going to let you guys read this while I do yoga breaths in the corner and count to ten slowly:

"When she was still very young, a strong, able man whose face she never saw took her by surprise, threw her down on the jetty, ripped her clothes off, and made instantaneous and frenetic love to her. Lying there on the rocks, her body covered with cuts and bruises, she had wanted that man to stay forever so she could die of love in his arms."

...

Once more with feeling: NOPE.

AND THEN, as the creepy pedophilic cherry on top of this rape sundae, Florentino's last affair is with a child. When he is in his sixties. The best part is that he doesn't even use the classic pedophile's defense of "yes, she's young, but she ACTS like a grown woman!" No, Florentino sees that this child is going to be smoking hot when she grows up, and decides that he can't wait that long. Then this passage happens:

"She was still a child in every sense of the word, with braces on her teeth and the scrapes of elementary school on her knees, but he saw right away the kind of woman she was soon going to be, and he cultivated her during a slow year of Saturdays at the circus, Sundays in the park with ice cream, childish late afternoons, and he won her confidence, he won her affection, he led her by the hand, with the gentle astuteness of a kind grandfather, toward his secret slaughterhouse."

The hero of *Love in the Time of Cholera*, ladies and gentlemen. Let's give him a round of applause.

If anyone wants to join me in the corner, I will be staying here for the rest of the week.

Henry Avila says

In an unstated city (Cartagena, in an unnamed country, Colombia), was born an illegitimate son by a rich father, and a poor peasant woman, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The married man never confirmed publicly this, dying young ... The struggling mother tried very hard to survive, Transito Ariza gave her only name to her child, she had, Florentino Ariza. The bright lad grew up rather aimless and lazy, nothing was important, or interested him, the mother supported them selling notions in her shop, a rented home. Then he saw a girl, the most beautiful in the world to him, Fermina Dada, daughter of a man with money, and a dubious reputation, (he was secretly a former mule driver) involved in shady dealings, in the mountains, who desires that Fermina marry into a rich, distinguished family, bringing respectability to him too. But Mr. Ariza is so in love, nobody in history is more so, that he literally becomes severely sick, his distraught mother , thinks he's going to die... She nurses him back to health and he recovers quickly. Florentino spies on the girl, while she walks with her Aunt Escolastica, the sister of Mr.Dada to school and back. The ladies are not fooled, it scares the teenager and excites also. Sitting on a bench across the street from her house, in the tiny park pretending to read poetry , but always watching. A rather small, unattractive boy in reality he is. Her chaperon doesn't do the job she was told to , the aunt is a romantic and encourages the young couple. Helping them get letters from one to the other, in hidden places along their path. His passionate full of love, hers mundane. After a few years, of correspondence the father finds out, sends his sister packing and threatens to kill Florentino at a tense meal, in a restaurant. Still the young man is not frightened by the revolver, so enchanted by his "goddess," to be. The best physician and dynamic celebrity, Juvenal Urbino in town, treats Fermina for a minor illness and unexpectedly returns. The suspicious girl feels uncomfortable and believes he is here on a nonprofessional visit, and is right. The thrilled father encourages the romance, this is why he came here. The doctor comes from a wealthy and prominent family. A sophisticated healer, who studied medicine in Europe, loves Paris and wants to clean up the dirty, putrid, disgusting city of its filth, modernize and make livable . And prevent cholera epidemics from devastating his cherished home town of Cartagena, again. The heartbroken Florentino is crushed, how can he stop this! Asks his unofficial Uncle Leo (the brother of his late father), who runs the prosperous riverboat company R.C.C., to give him a job. Determined to rise and make something of himself, to be worthy of Fermina and her suppose love. The Magdalena River flows near his native port city, to the wide Caribbean Sea and business is good, he'll climb up fast... but gets sick on his first trip up the scenic, perilous, river . However nothing can stop the longing Florentino, has in his heart, (this feeling will never cease) he must have his beloved ...

Charlotte May says

DNF at page 218.

This is tough for me to admit. I hate not finishing books but I cannot carry on with this any longer when I am

not enjoying it and I have so many other books I could be reading instead.

The writing is tedious. Focused on a man rejected when he was young and his infatuation with this woman for years afterwards. He sleeps with numerous other women, as we are shown in detail. His first love marries another, but he still cannot move on.

His obsession borders on the creepy, he never really knew her that well in the beginning anyway let alone to call it true love.

I'm fed up, so I'm giving up. No rating.

Riku Sayuj says

This review is now also available at **The Bombay Literary Magazine (TBLM)**: [The Infinite Capacity for Illusion](#)

The words I am about to express:

They now have their own crowned goddess.

THE INFINITE CAPACITY FOR ILLUSION

Whither The Magic?

One Hundred Years of Solitude is one of my favorite novels. Which is why, when I started reading *Love in the Time of Cholera*, one of the things I noticed immediately was the lack of the subtle brand of magic that I had so enjoyed. I missed it and was on the lookout for it. I wanted it badly and went around every corner with the expectation of a cheerful reunion. But it was not to be.

As Pynchon says: *the “reality” of love and the possibility of its ultimate extinction become Love’s “indispensable driving forces,” whereas magic in all its guises and forms becomes peripheralized or “at least more thoughtfully deployed in the service of an expanded vision, matured, darker than before but no less clement”.*

Why this marginalization of the extraordinary? Why this deliberate move towards realism? Why no Magic?

I kept asking myself this as I read, and beyond. Was I to understand that it is because *Love* in itself is Magic? That was too cheesy, even for Márquez who never shies from telling me a cheesy sub-story if it needs to be told.

Or is it because *Love in the Time of Cholera* is to be seen as the product of a more experienced author, who no longer needs the resources of magic realism and hyperbole to surprise the reader?

One thing was sure, *Love in the Time of Cholera* is not only about Love, even when it pervades every page. Indeed, it covers, through its characters’ wide amorous and business interests, an entire era and all the social

classes, spanning over fifty years of Latin American life, from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the first two or three of the twentieth.

Love in the Time of Cholera, while on a much smaller scale than *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, deals with the Colombian civil wars of this period and the violence left in its wake. Márquez however wants these historical and political concerns to be passed largely unnoticed by the reader. While *One Hundred Years of Solitude* disguises the political themes through the uses of myth, fantasy, hyperbole, and magic realism, *Love in the Time of Cholera* disguises them through its depiction of an eternal, sometimes exasperating, almost unrealistic love affair, one which flouts the conventions of every love story the reader might have come across.

Love in the Time of Cholera is often quite bleak due to this veering towards stark Realism, to this occasional historical invasion of the narrative. Much of this realism arises from Death and Decay - the central themes of the novel. However, Márquez does not completely give up on Idealism either. In fact he is neither an Idealistic or a Realistic author - he is just a supremely eloquent voice speaking from the vantage-point of his own old age and wisdom.

To me, *Love in the Time of Cholera* is a magnificently gloomy novel though Márquez's masterful sorcery masks it well, with his verbal cascades of descriptions and his narrative's seductiveness.

Márquez's novels are almost invariably gloomy. They are apocalyptic. They are decadence distilled.

Then why the popularity? Why do we love them? Why are we uplifted? Is it because of Márquez's enthusiastic exuberance?

I think it is because of the Quixotic Heroism of the people who populate these doomed worlds.

It is this heroism that veils the Apocalyptic forebodings that pack so densely like storm clouds throughout the firmament his novels.

After all, Consider how during the entire time he waits to talk to Fermina again (fifty-one years, nine months, and four days) Florentino Ariza is dauntless and never ever gives up even the slightest sliver of hope. Nothing could shake this man:

"And how long do you think we can keep up this goddamn coming and going?" he asked.

Florentino Ariza had kept his answer ready for fifty-three years, seven months, and eleven days and nights.

"Forever," he said.

The Heart of Darkness: Death & Decay

There is so much I would like to say about this amazing novel. There are so many themes that could be explored. But in this review I will try to focus on the Beginning and the Ending of this intricately structured novel, and try to tease out the the thread that explains the absence of Magic.

The whole novel is too broad a canvas to be explored in a review. For this, I limit myself to the broad themes of Death, Decay & Redemption, and allow the political, ecological, societal and personal aspects of these

themes to play themselves out below the current, so to speak.

The Institutions of Love: Inventing Love

He was aware that he did not love her. He had married her because he liked her haughtiness, her seriousness, her strength, and also because of some vanity on his part, but as she kissed him for the first time he was sure there would be no obstacle to their inventing true love. They did not speak of it that first night, when they spoke of everything until dawn, nor would they ever speak of it. But in the long run, neither of them had made a mistake.

The theme of Juvenal's love story is about the incompatibility of love and social convention, the conflict between desire and social life. It is quite easily the crucial conundrum the novel wants to solve - the 'other' to the novel's essence. **Security, order, happiness - can these when added together in the right proportions provide an equation for Love?**

For the sort of Love that can stop the decay that seems to have beset the entire world? Apparently not. It is not enough.

Through Juvenal's invented Love, Márquez is not simply criticizing the institution of marriage, instead he is criticizing the very illusion that allows this - the illusion that the world and the worldly goods and pleasures can produce Love.

Instead Márquez wants to show that it is Love that can create (or recreate) the world.

Ultimately Love is love of Love itself, not merely the desire for its actual attainment or even the act of its fulfillment. Passion is its own object.

Pitted against such an impossible ideal, all convention or institutionalization obstructs love's ultimate goal, which is to forestall death and decay.

The ultimate goal of Love is to save the world, to create it anew.

Gerontophobia & Ecocide: Destroying Love

So why is this world so much in need of saving?

The cosmic decline in Love seems to be the cause for alarm, the cause for the pervasive decay that invades the world of the novel:

Everything in this novel, from the environment, to the city, to the rebels, to the civil wars, to the people, to the pets are ancient - as if they were part of this earth from the very beginning, but everybody is in the throes of love. And everything ancient is also decaying, sliding slowly towards the final end of death - so is the sadness and the conventional love represented by Juvenal.

But it is not just about the human lives. Márquez writes as much about places as about people. This one is also about the death of a river, of a town, of a society... or murder, rather. Of Nature's Old Age inflicted prematurely by youthful humanity.

This is the ecological sub-theme of the novel - It is the river, finally, the Great *Magdalena* (in Spanish, the “*river of life*”) that highlights this for us. The abundant nature that surrounds the town is caught in a process of irreversible decay. Alligators, manatees, monkeys, and birds disappear from the jungle; toward the end, the riverboats have difficulty finding enough wood for their boilers. While the political urgency of this topic is clear, cosmic decline in *Love in the Time of Cholera* has a different meaning and is linked to the theme of the interruption of love discussed before.

Paralleling the old age of his characters with the decay envisioned by this ecological wasteland (of their own making), **Márquez is pointing out to us the true nature of Decay - of Humans and their self inflicted sufferings bringing the decay of old age upon themselves and upon the whole of nature.**

This is the central tenet of the novel - Love in the Time of Decay.

However, there is more. And Márquez is not afraid to set this counter theme out in the very opening scene itself:

The Sweet Smell of Bitter Almonds

Counter to the dark theme of decay that is to be developed for most of the rest of the plot, early in the novel, an act of brave revolt against this inevitability establishes the counter-current against the steady march of decay.

Jérémiah de Saint-Amour (soon forgotten and never again mentioned) takes this revolutionary step (again drawing our attention the continuous revolution in which the political life of the novel is set) by choosing to die before decay sets in. This act initiates the long debate that runs throughout the novel about Love and its objective - are we to preserve Love at the expense of Life or to preserve Life through Love? By raising this question so early, by calculating his suicide long beforehand, by choosing to end the world than to let it go to rot, to see it rot, Saint-Amour stays alive through the rest of the novel, haunting it.

Being a witness to the decay of love was the most unbearable to Saint-Amour, the Saint of Love?

What we see dramatized at the end of the book, however, is the possibility of genuine passion and romance in old age. There is a clear contrast between Saint-Amour’s suicide and the protracted love life of Florentino Ariza, but it is a contrast that conceals a profound affinity. Saint-Amour kills himself to preserve his body from decay, to fix its image, as it were, through death.

Love and decay, then, constitute the double focus of this novel, the former being present in countless ways throughout.

Love in The Time of Cholera: The Post-Apocalyptic Paradise

... his mother was terrified because his condition did not resemble the turmoil of love so much as the devastation of cholera.

Every page of this novel is rammed full of love, beyond the capacity of any reader to fully comprehend. Love is in the air like Malaria; and in the water, like Cholera - its infections are inescapable!

All aspects of love are covered in exquisite detail - from teenage love to old age; from sexual to rapine to platonic; from formal courtship to marital to unconsummated; to unrequited love to the excesses of suicide and adultery; from the mundane normalcy of love to the incestuous abnormalities.

The reader has to consider carefully in the midst of this overwhelming abundance and variety the treatment that Márquez gives to love in this novel. Love in the novel is not the purely romantic love -carefree, easy flowing, spontaneous, and idealized.

Instead, the novel's great affirmation of romance, is in the face not just of a hostile or prosaic world, but of the darker side of romance itself.

It is Operatic, Quixotic & Dionysian Love that is celebrated. **It is Love as the Second Coming!**

Sailing The River of Love: The Voyage of Re-Birth

Youth, Love, Old Age & Death - The Four Unknowns. This should have been the order of Life.

However, in this world of Márquez, the only ages that can hope to be able love/live seem to be the Young and the Old. In between lies the desert - the only time we are allowed to live - when not capable of love. It is a paradox on which the very survival of this fictional universe seems to depend on.

Love and Life cannot coexist then - The solution is to give up the life they know for Love. To take the ultimate leap of faith.

So hoist a yellow flag on the Ship of your Life (Second Fidelity) and sail on the Great Magdalena (in Spanish, the "river of life") in a State of Emergency! Let Love in the Time of Cholera be the entirety of the River of Life. Love should now destroy that earlier Life instead, just as Cholera can squeeze it out. And then be reborn, afresh.

The novel ends with the central characters challenging their entire social world and the very conditions of their existence by their grand romantic gesture, by their final, and what seems like eternal, trip on the Magdalena river. This is the necessary reaction to the decay that is fast on the route to complete extinction, to death.

Love and Cholera will both go extinct otherwise, rooted out by Life.

Love is shown as the redeeming force that saves both humanity, nature, culture and history. It appears as a divine force that defies everything. As if in biblical terms, the novel seems to assert that it is not yet too late to stop the end of humanity and to reach out for grace and happiness.

Most importantly, never allow the Yellow Flag to be questioned. Sustain the ardor. Maintain the symptoms of Cholera/Love. The pestilence is to be maintained at all costs! Only then will the world let you sail on.

Of course, the novel ends with the reader wondering if Fermina and Florentino will ever be able to come ashore and exercise their second chance.

We are left to question this act for ourselves: How do we save the world? By Escape into an Unrealistic Fantasy? Or is love more real? The answer, at least inside Márquez's world is quite clear.

This final triumph is exquisitely multi-layered. Fermina and Florentino will remain isolated from the real contagion of their earlier Life by allowing their Love to be disguised as Cholera.

They are not rejecting the world, they are allowing the world to reject them instead.

The quarantine is really against love, the sickness that society will not, can not tolerate, the sickness that society fear as much as a deadly epidemic, the sickness that the society fears will wipe it out.

Instead it is that very sickness, which is recognized by conventional society as its biggest scourge, that saves the characters from extinction, along with the manatees, the alligators, and the monkeys.

It is Love that saves all in the end - at least we are left to imagine that possibility. Now, in this Post-Apocalyptic Paradise, age is of no consequence; Life has been transmuted and preserved by Love, like Saint-Amour's Love by death.

Life has been reborn in the Second Coming of Love!

Love, in short, will always be in the time of cholera, under the Yellow Flag's protection.

THE INFINITE CAPACITY FOR ILLUSION: The Will to Lyricism

So, now we can come back to the question we started with - of the Absence of Magic.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the apocalypse came in spite of Magic, in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, redemption comes despite its absence!

Unlike the death that starts off *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, here that death, the suicide, is ultimately sublimated into love - and decay is arrested in its unreality!

In fact reality has instead been reinvented in their own terms, where previous reality was rejected outright.

The capacity for illusion is magic enough to save the world, and our souls. This Infinite Capacity for Illusion can bring on the required apocalypse and we can live as if the Kingdom of Heaven/Cholera was already here on earth, under that banner of protection!

Only then can the Magic return.

Seemita says

When glistening drops of dew swivelled across the leaves,
When hazy films of sun lifted their candid veils;
When morning spring walked the aisle of the autumn road,
I saw a face whose reflection, since years, I have behold.

In envious vanity, she swayed her hair,
In rapturous youth, she erred everywhere;
But stoic her nod was to my pure passion
Which sent me blazing waves of heartburn.

Running behind her, became my moral;
Worshipping her being, was a religion;
In those auburn eyes, my heart would lie still
And yet it would flutter, like about to begin.

A feeling so full, like a maniac I would cling,
It reduced to nothingness, every other thing;
Exquisitely wrapped, as beautiful as one can be
Convinced I was, she was born for me.

Alas! Confession lost breath in a wave of condescension;
But my knees found strength even in that repudiation;
For I never lost my heart as per a plan,
For I never sang a song as a sound man.

Delusional, I wandered into many seductive doors;
Recluse, I made love, with artifice galore.
She glided in the sea of my eyes, like a white swan
Even though she fell into another man's arm.

Awareness of her otherness came to my ears
Like a winter breeze, cold enough to bear.
So I let it freeze, a corner of my world
And see it melt again in my ardent words;
The words that I blew like clouds in the light,
The words that I hid in the blanket at night,
The words which stood at the threshold of age,
The words that could soon be a magical adage.

In another world, she continued to sew;
Stitching pieces which kept falling due;
She held her resolve, all through though,
Loyalty was her brightest bow.

Seasons dropped, and soared again
Leaving behind many a spring and rain;
Each saying goodbye never without
Her fragrant memory kissing my mouth.

One fine day, I sampled my hands, and pulled the skin off my face;
They succumbed to my pull; the mirror flagged the twilight of my race.
Hastily I knocked at my heart, placing a trembling hand in thrill;
A lovely cooing filled my senses; the bird of love was singing still.

I stepped on that trail again, there was no time to lose;
The ache within was poised to be smeared in love, profuse.
She had, at last, taken the path that had led her to me;
She had, at last, taken the baton to set her heart free.

The ship which carried her, stood wavering near the dock;
As if even that inanimate was drunk under her lock.
Time had robbed her of some shine and gifted her some fatigue too;

In the folds of her sagging skin but, I finally found I was who.

The twinkle from her eyes aimed for my heart;
And joined it with hers while tearing it apart.
Most of the sailors and the marine men stood chuckling at the sight
Of the passionate embrace of two old people, holding on so tight.
But only few eyes could detect a current so resplendent
That bound the two vagabonds into a promise, to be kept.

MsAprilVincent says

I don't like this book.

I don't like the characters. (This was going to be a list, but then I realized that this is the only reason I have.)

Florentino Ariza is a baby. Seriously, his mom gives him whatever he wants, and she tries to make everything all right for him, and he is very, very ... if he lived today, he would be one of those emo kids with the dyed black hair and the eye liner and the journals full of bad poetry (he does write bad poetry, in the book), all "Nobody gets me," and just a grating, time-sucking, high maintenance type. He rationalizes his behavior in whatever way he can, so he never feels that he is doing anything wrong.

I grew impatient with him fairly quickly; I wanted to wring him by his neck and yell, "GET OVER IT!!!" I have no tolerance for that kind of behavior. Sometime during the Seduction of the 600, it says that Florentino Ariza thought that when a woman said no, she really meant something else (that's a paraphrase). This is another thing I have no tolerance for. So, when he persisted in his attentions to Fermina Daza, even after she'd made her own feelings quite clear (TWICE), and she came around to his way of thinking, it justified his behavior. I don't think he should be rewarded for that. I think he should be kicked to the curb.

Fermina Daza was almost likable; I was almost there with her, but then I realized that there wasn't anything really likable about her. She was efficient and organized, she was well-behaved, and she was boring. Why did men love her? What did she have to offer? I DON'T KNOW.

I did like Juvenal Urbino. Of course he dies in the first chapter.

It seemed to me that the book dragged on FOREVER; I kept looking ahead to the end of a chapter and sighing, "Forty-two more pages." (The chapters are long.) Even though two weeks doesn't seem like a long time, it's a long time for ME to be reading a book, particularly one that isn't a thousand pages long and written in Elizabethan English.

I didn't think this was any kind of love story. Like Wuthering Heights, it's more a love-gone-wrong story, or an obsession story; none of the characters really displayed any of the traits that I would associate with love, one which--the chief one, I would say--is selflessness. None of them were willing to put anyone else above themselves, and maybe that's why I didn't particularly care for them, or for this book.

I've written a more in-depth review [here](#).

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Liz says

I feel suspicious about the fact that I didn't fall for this book the way Florentino Ariza fell for Fermina Daza. I am compelled to blame my lack of appreciation on poor reader comprehension rather than GGM'S writing, because only one of us won the nobel prize and I'm pretty sure it wasn't me. However, I'm no idiot either, so I'll at least take the liberty to explain my grievances:

1. As a synesthete, I found Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza's names to be WAY too similar. They look the same; I kept getting them mixed up! I think it was unnecessary to pick the two most F, vowel, R, N and Z laden names ever for use in this one story.
2. The narrator kept making very definitive, bold claims that 3 pages later turned out to be completely untrue. For example (not real quotes) "This particular bed-fellow was the closest thing to love that Florentino Ariza ever experienced apart from Fermina Daza." Turn the page, now talking about a brand new lover, "Now, as it turns out, THIS particular bed-fellow was actually the closest things to love that FA experienced apart from FD." Next chapter, another new lover "Okay, SERIOUSLY, this is the one this time"... etc. Similar broken promises were made about various other topics. Perhaps this was done on purpose to demonstrate the fickle nature of life or love or something like that, but for me all it did was make me yell at the pages, scolding the narrator for being a big liar.
3. Florentino Ariza = mid 70's, Young Girl placed in his "care"= 14. It's just not okay. (P.s. She later kills herself because he ruined her life and stole her innocence, and his only reaction to it is that he has a bout of indigestion while lying in bed with the woman he left her for...what a swell guy). P.s. he also kinda kills another woman...the one on whose stomach he writes with red paint and her husband murders her when he sees it.
4. The whole premise of the book is the waiting...FA is waiting to finally be with FD. And when the wait is over, I don't feel like there's any reward. Nothing between them is all that magical...yeah they have fun on the boat, sure the fun is a little subdued because of their age, etc...but ultimately I don't understand what the point of all that waiting was for when he seems to have just about as much a connection with FD as he had with any of the other 621 ladies over the years. I dunno...as I stated in point #2, the ABSOLUTENESS of this book is what really holds it back for me. He says he absolutely loves FD, better than the rest, into eternity...he says this, but the reality is actually quite different. The ending is the same kind of thing...is that boat really going to sail up and down the river FOREVER? No. It's not. So why cheapen it with the gross exaggeration...just say "until we die" or "until somebody makes us stop"... it doesn't sound as cool but it means more.

In summation, it wasn't a horrible book but there were a few things that made it less than perfect. The writing really redeemed it, however, and made the experience pleasurable overall. An example of this is the detail GGM throws in about Urbino drinking chamomile tea, any then rejecting it, saying that it tastes like windows. Everyone is perplexed, thinking he must be crazy. Then they taste it themselves: Yup. Windows.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

236. El amor en los tiempos del cólera = Love in the time of cholera, Gabriel García Márquez
Love in the Time of Cholera (Spanish: El amor en los tiempos del cólera) is a novel by Nobel prize winner Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez first published in Spanish in 1985. Alfred A. Knopf published an English translation in 1988, and an English-language movie adaptation was released in 2007.

The main characters of the novel are Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. Florentino and Fermina fall in love in their youth. A secret relationship blossoms between the two with the help of Fermina's Aunt Escolástica. They exchange several love letters. However, once Fermina's father, Lorenzo Daza, finds out about the two, he forces his daughter to stop seeing Florentino immediately. When she refuses, he and his daughter move in with his deceased wife's family in another city. Regardless of the distance, Fermina and Florentino continue to communicate via telegraph. However, upon her return, Fermina realizes that her relationship with Florentino was nothing but a dream since they are practically strangers; she breaks off her engagement to Florentino and returns all his letters. A young and accomplished national hero, Dr. Juvenal Urbino, meets Fermina and begins to court her. Despite her initial dislike of Urbino, Fermina gives in to her father's persuasion and the security and wealth Urbino offers, and they wed. Urbino is a medical doctor devoted to science, modernity, and "order and progress". He is committed to the eradication of cholera and to the promotion of public works. He is a rational man whose life is organized precisely and who greatly values his importance and reputation in society. He is a herald of progress and modernization. Even after Fermina's engagement and marriage, Florentino swore to stay faithful and wait for her. However, his promiscuity gets the better of him. Even with all the women he is with, he makes sure that Fermina will never find out. Meanwhile, Fermina and Urbino grow old together, going through happy years and unhappy ones and experiencing all the reality of marriage. At an elderly age, Urbino attempts to get his pet parrot out of his mango tree, only to fall off the ladder he was standing on and die. After the funeral, Florentino proclaims his love for Fermina once again and tells her he has stayed faithful to her all these years. Hesitant at first because of the advances he made to a newly made widow, Fermina eventually gives him a second chance. They attempt a life together, having lived two lives separately for over five decades. Urbino's function in the novel is to contrast with Florentino Ariza and his archaic and boldly romantic love. Urbino proves in the end not to have been an entirely faithful husband, confessing one affair to Fermina many years into their marriage. Though the novel seems to suggest that Urbino's love for Fermina was never as spiritually chaste as Florentino Ariza's was, it also complicates Florentino's devotion by cataloging his many trysts as well as a few potentially genuine loves. By the end of the book, Fermina comes to recognize Florentino's wisdom and maturity, and their love is allowed to blossom during their old age.

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Huda Yahya says

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William2.1 says

One of the few writers I have read who can show sex convincingly on the page, so that it reinforces character and extends action, and doesn't become a narrative sinkhole in which entropy prevails.

Depressingly great. One of those books one knows one could never write yet still one wishes -- pointlessly -- that one could do so.

Laden with vivid detail. It moves almost flawlessly, from sequence to sequence with nary a foot put wrong in terms of diction or tone.

Relentless storytelling, like diamonds pouring endlessly from a sack. Enormous reading pleasure. A bit too lachrymose toward the end for my taste, but this is a quibble. On the whole a shattering novel despite it conventional structure.

Warmly recommended.

Samantha Newman says

I previously read "One Hundred Years of Solitude" and I liked it a lot, and I was intrigued by the title "Love in the Time of Cholera" so I thought I'd read it.

Within the first few pages I had the inkling I didn't like it, but sometimes it takes books a little while to get warmed up. Plus, I don't like starting a book and not finishing it, because I know I'll never go back to a book I stopped reading because I didn't like it, and if I stop reading it, I'll never know if I would have liked the rest of it. So I forged ahead and completed the whole book.

First off, the magical realism that made "100 yrs. of Solitude" so gripping was not as prevalent in "Cholera." I actually only saw it a few times in the entire novel, unless it was so well-done that it was just perfectly woven into the book and I didn't notice. I doubt that though...but this was easy to get over; I mean, it's a different book, so it was bound to be, well, different from "100...Solitude."

But I guess my conservative / religious side was riled up by the rest of the book. It portrays everyone as being incredibly sex-oriented. Men, women, everyone. And not "morally" so, if you know what I mean. Everyone sleeps around, while married and while unmarried. And the tone of the book seemed to be saying that that's expected - quite frankly, like the more sex a person has, most of the time with the more people, the more normal and in some ways the more gifted they are. I'm generalizing quite a bit, not getting into the specifics of the story and my reactions to them, however.

Now this book is on Oprah's book club list and she said it's "the greatest love story" she's ever heard. Alright...if a good love story equals someone "waiting" for their true love, where waiting means having sex with everything that moves. And now they're making a movie. The tag says "Florentino, rejected by the beautiful Fermina at a young age, devotes much of his adult life to carnal affairs as a desperate attempt to heal his broken heart." ?? I guess I can see how you can read the book that way. I guess I just don't prefer books where carnal affairs are the center. And I didn't read it that way. It didn't seem to me that the carnal affairs were a desperate attempt to heal his broken heart. They seemed like he just wanted to have sex in the meantime. SOMEWHAT SPOILER ALERT BUT NOT REALLY:::::you cannot declare yourself a virgin just b/c you didn't love the hundreds of people you had sex with before your "one true love."

What bothered me I think was that in the end, I couldn't tell if the novel was condoning a life of promiscuity as long as it leads to one "true" love, or if it was condemning its character's behavior in some ways. I tend to lean towards thinking it wasn't really condemning it though. I probably missed something, I'm sure. Because not being sure what a book was saying is not usually the book's fault.

In some ways it should have been titled "Sex in the Time of Cholera," because the term "love" was used instead of "sex" almost constantly, and obviously, those are two very different things.

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