A STORY FOR EVERYONE
WHO HAS LOVED AND LOST

The Book of Love

'A beautiful, heart wrenching love story'
SINEAD MORIARTY

'A tender and wise love story'
LIZ NUGENT



FIONNUALA KEARNEY

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The Book of Love: The emotional epic love story of 2018 by the Irish Times bestseller

Аннотация

‘A beautiful, heart wrenching love story’ Sinead Moriarty‘Tender and wise’ Liz Nugent‘Utterly beautiful’ Claudia CarrollOne love. Two people. Twenty Years.From the moment they met, Erin and Dom loved each other too much, too quickly. Everyone said it wouldn’t last. But they knew differently.A wedding present, a notebook, brings them together through the good times and the bad. On the blank pages of their love story, they write down everything they can’t always say – the secrets, the heartbreak, the highs and lows. It’s where they see the best and worst of each other.Falling in love is easy but staying in love is where the story begins…This is the Book of LoveReaders are falling in love with The Book of Love‘My book of the year’ Claire Allan‘You’ll cry. You’ll wonder. I loved it mightily’ Anna McPartlin‘Beautifully written, Kearney skillfully unravels the complexities of an epic love story, with drama and emotion packed into every page’ Carmel Harrington‘Life, loss, love and hope – a story to steal your heart and stir your soul. Gorgeous!’ Miranda Dickinson‘Open this book only if you are prepared to forever leave a piece of your heart between its

pages' Anstey Harris, author of The Truths and Triumphs of Grace Atherton'A gorgeous emotional read that had me in tears…read it to believe in the power of love' Liz Fenwick'An absolutely wonderful story of life, love and loss. A genuine heartfelt book of love' Mel Sherratt'Incredibly moving' Susan Lewis'A book that I will not forget for a very long time. I adored it' Louise Beech

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The Book of Love

Fionnuala Kearney



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Dedication

For Eamonn and Mary and also Jim and Monica who once loved like this.

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PART ONE



1. Dominic

NOW – 3rd June 2017
From *The Book of Love*:
'I love you because you found me.'



I'm wide awake when I shouldn't be. Completely still, I'm sitting bolt upright on the edge of our bed, ears pricked for any hint of her. There's nothing but familiar sounds from the old building echoing in the silence. A fly buzzes around the bedroom window. Through the oak floorboards, from below in the kitchen, the fridge motor whines. The pipes groan in the walls like a quick, expectant heartbeat. Even the house misses Erin.

Standing, I stretch tall, my hands just about touching the ceiling. Then I start my sweep of 44 Valentine's Way, my early walkabout. The children's bedrooms get a mere glance, nothing new there but another fine layer of dust. I head downstairs, my left hand tracing the original, deco style, curved staircase. At the bottom, just to the right in the study, the desk lamp that sits next to a pile of architectural drawings is switched on. A glance past them, to my paper diary, brings a stabbing memory of Erin, months ago, trying to convince me to digitally diarise everything onto my phone. I resisted, laughed, ignored the jibe about my

Jurassic ways and reminded her that it was she who'd dragged me kicking and screaming to the written word in the first place.

Today's date, with a spidery doodle right in the middle of the page also confirms Lydia's birthday party tonight. My sister will have staff, borrowed from the cafés she owns, bearing trays of minuscule canapés and warm prosecco. She'll be floating through our group of friends, and some of hers whom I don't know, with a painted smile firmly in place, pretending everything's fine.

The phone ringing in the hall makes me flinch but I don't move, sensing it will be another hang-up.

'Hi,' Erin says from beyond the doorway. 'We're not home right now. Leave a message.' My voice pitches in, 'If anyone cares, I'm not here either' and she giggles just before the beep and the final click. I walk to the hall – hear her laugh resonate, almost bounce off the walls, and wonder how days without her seem so achingly exhausting. It's always been like that. From that first moment I saw her, and her ridiculous dancing, to the last time we spoke, she has lived in my soul. She just moved in, took up residence. No discussion. No permission. No regrets.

Without realising it, I've approached the mahogany console table, towards the single drawer. The book seems to beckon to me. I imagine flashing lights warning me of the perils ahead, yet the comfort of it in my hand brings familiar relief; the soft nappa leather, like myself, scarred in places. I find myself fanning our handwritten pages. They smell of Erin, a vague whiff of her

peony scent. I raise them to my face and inhale deeply before opening it on her last entry. In the hallway of the home we made together, I pace the tiled black and white floor. The first rays of morning light from the glazed dome in the roof above help me read her words aloud:

12th May 2017

Darling Dom,

Back in August 2004, you took something from here, remember?

Sometimes, usually lying in bed around daybreak, I wonder – no, more than that, I'm quite desperate to know – whether we might have avoided so much heartache if you hadn't.

I mean, what if you'd left that page where it was meant to be? What if those words had been the very words in our book of love that you really needed to say to me back then? Maybe you were honest, reached out, even asked for help. And maybe if I'd read those words of yours at that time, things might have been different? What if I'd been able to see them by holding the next page up to the light and tracing the faint imprint of your pen?

I tried – it only works in the movies.

I know, I know. You call me 'The Queen of What Ifs'. But this is just one of the things that haunts me when I wake too early in those dawn-drenched hours.

You tell me not to be silly, not to dwell on the past. You hold me and tell me everything happens as it's meant to, not exactly 'for a reason', but 'life', you say all the time, 'life unfolds just the

way it should'.

So, that missing page stayed very much missing. Absent. Gone. I never knew what it said, and you've never told me. And life unfolded the way it was meant to and there was heartache – but so much love too. God, there was so much love.

There is still love.

That's what I cling to in those restless hours that follow night.

I remind myself that love endures.

Erin x

I sit down on the first stair. The closed front door opposite seems to taunt me. 'What if she walked in here now?' My whisper is just about audible.

My 'Queen of What Ifs …' I'd hold her, touch the soft skin on her face with my fingertips and tell her that she's right, that it's love that brings meaning to life.

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