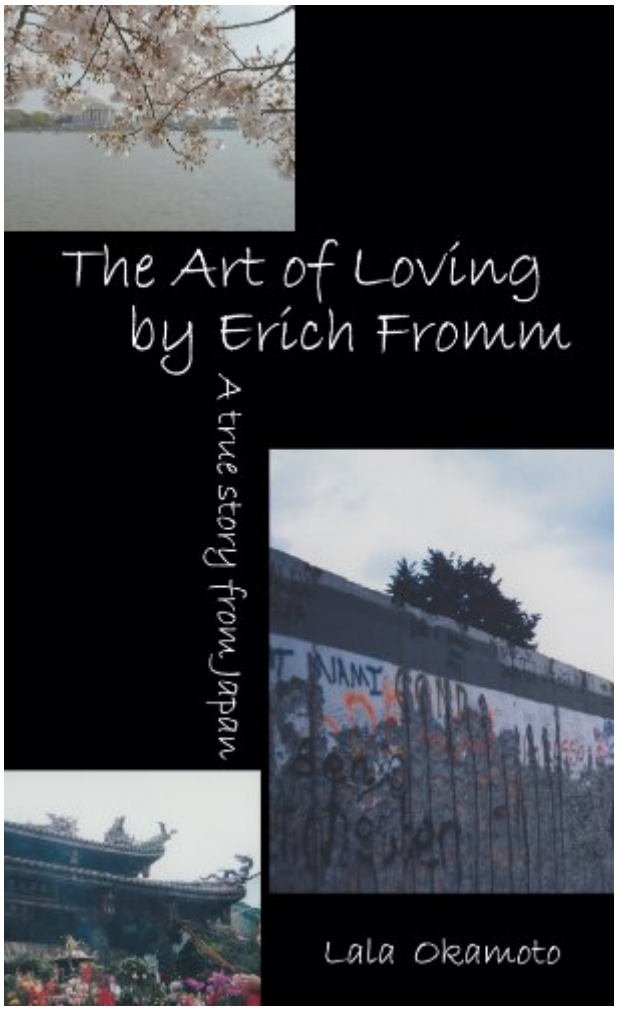
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The Art Of Loving By Erich Fromm



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Synopsis

This novel is a first-person account of a young Japanese woman’s adventures in travel and romance. It tells the story of Lala, painting a lush picture of her journeys to countries like Taiwan, Germany, Thailand, and the United States, and vividly depicting her experiences with the multifaceted people and cultures she encounters along the way. The heart of the story, however, tells of Lala’s doomed affair with the narcissistic and self-indulgent Rolf - a romance that almost destroys her. But it is Lala’s relentless curiosity about the world outside her native borders that ultimately leads her out of the darkness and into the arms of her one true love, an American pen pal she initially knows only as Robert.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having spent much of the last nine years around Japanese people in both Japan and the United States, this book and the author’s experiences came as no surprise. In The Art of Loving, Lala Okamoto, a young Japanese girl interested in if not fascinated by cultures other than her own,

sought out experiences with foreigners through travel abroad and the Internet. The general theme in the book seems to be that the personal relationships we build as individuals, in the long run, will either help or hurt us. The various experiences Lala has throughout the book range from her spending time in California remarking on the differences between the U.S. and Japan, to falling for Peter, a Taiwanese guy she meets while in the U.S., to interacting through email with Robert, a divorced older man in Detroit, to whom Lala eventually sacrifices almost everything to begin a new life with. But the majority of the book is spent detailing her relationship with Rolf, a German man living in Japan.Rolf and Lala become friends in Japan (Lala notes her travel to Germany early on in the book) despite the fact that he has a fiancÃƒÂ©e in Thailand and a child somewhere else. At first, the relationship seems harmless - both people appear lonely in Japan and their conversations become comforting and uplifting to each other. But within a short time the reader can tell that Rolf, like many other men, is merely putting in his time, allowing her to become emotionally attached to him so that he can sleep with her, which he eventually achieves. Lala, not surprisingly, believes that she has fallen in love with him and his hurt by his eventual rejection of her for his other women. But it is around this time that she meets Robert through an online pen-pal site. His warm emails from Detroit give her reason to keep living. Eventually Lala and Robert meet and he leaves his family to move in with her in Washington D.C.My first reaction is that the story of discovering happiness by finding other people willing to listen thousands of miles away is not unique in the Internet age. Yet, unlike most Japanese, Lala brings a refreshing perspective to the typical Japanese mindset because of her vast and varied experiences abroad. And while there are some typos in the book, in addition to some weird English phrasings, there are also some great insights into life, relationships and love. But what happened to Robert and Lala? The book states that Lala currently resides in Tokyo. Did Robert end up breaking Lala's heart too?In short, anyone who has ever dated a Japanese girl or has lived in Japan would probably find this short book interesting. As would anyone interested in Japan in general.

This book contains the memoirs of a Japanese woman looking for a loving relationship. In search of cultural adventures and a change of pace from her life in Japan, Okamoto traveled the world, stopping to study in Berlin and San Francisco. She made close friends amongst other foreign students studying in San Francisco, but when she returned to Japan, she met someone who made her life fall apart. This man, a German, was fascinated with Asian women and preyed upon them, taking them for all he could get without giving anything in return. Although without a hint of remorse, he admitted cheating on his first wife while still married to her, Okamoto didn't pick up on the clues

that this was an evil man. She fell for him, hook, line and sinker, and in this book she recounts the sordid details of their affair, as well as a more positive story that emerged in the aftermath of the romantic disaster.Okamoto's story of what happens when a vulnerable romantically inexperienced Japanese woman meets a Western predator demonstrates how cultures can clash in a particularly nasty way. Any time one moves from a culture where behavior is tightly constrained to a culture where the rules are looser, or constraining in different ways, it can be hard to deduce that any rules are operating at all. Perhaps it was this that caused Okamoto to miss the clues that her new German boyfriend's behavior was unacceptable even by the standards of his own culture. Okamoto includes some interesting observations about American culture based on her time studying in California. She also spent some time living on the East Coast, and found the cultural differences between regions in America remarkable.

This book pictures some of the multiple facets of love through Lala's eyes, but I still feel it lacked a more in depth analysis of the topic. Nonetheless, it is an easy to read story, which is pleasant when you are tired of reading more philosophically intricate topics.

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