

Great romantic reads

With Valentine's Day around the corner, there are few better ways to get your "romance injection" than through books, in print or digital form. To help get you started, area libraries and bookstores kindly recommend some titles — both fiction and non-fiction — of books fashioned in a romantic vein. They're listed here in no particular order; and because the next best thing to enjoying a book is to turn someone else onto it, this writer couldn't resist adding some of her favorites to the mix.

What's not here

The wildly popular, more formulaic romances, by authors like Victoria Holt, Georgette Heyer, Nora Roberts and many others, are a huge topic best reserved for another day. Two things are always present in them: the story focuses on the relationship and romantic love between two people and always has a happy ending or at least the expectation of one.

Also not included here are the great romantic classics of authors like Jane Austen, Daphne du Maurier, the Brontë sisters, and the like — proof certainly that there are plenty of literary romances out there. However, it's doubtful that most readers don't already know about these authors' works.

Fiction

"Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life" by Scott O'Malley: "The first in a six-book graphic novel series about love lost and won. (It's) centrally based around music (and/or) games, with a 'Comedy of Errors' feel. It shows how Scott learns about things far beyond himself with the help of a young woman named Ramona and her exes." —*Lindsay Johnson, Astoria Librarian*

"Little Paris Bookshop" by Nina George: Calling himself a "literary apothecary," Monsieur Perdu (which means "lost" in French) operates a floating bookstore from a barge on the Seine in Paris, where he prescribes novels to heal customers' troubles in

life. Still suffering from his own heartbreak, it seems "the only one he can't heal through literature is himself."

"A Long Fatal Love Chase" by Louisa May Alcott: "(The heroine) Rosamond Vivian, brought up on a remote island by an indifferent grandfather, swears she'd sell her soul to Satan for a year of freedom. When Philip Tempest enters her life, she is ripe for the

plucking, but is soon caught up in a web of intrigue, cruelty and deceit stretching back far into the past." —*Publisher's Weekly*

"One Plus One" by Jojo Moyes: "One Plus One equals one fine novel. With its ensemble cast of skillfully crafted characters — from single-mom Jess Thomas to tortured goth teen Nicky and gifted sister Tazie to Ed Nicholls, technology millionaire — each person's story flows on its own, yet they all meld together into an uncommonly good story about family, trust and love." —*Donna Chavez on Booklist*

"The Rosie Project" by Graeme Simsion: "In his bestselling debut novel, 'The Rosie Project,' Simsion introduced the delightfully original character of Don Tillman, an Australian geneticist with Asperger's syndrome who sets out to find the perfect wife by using the scientific method." —*People Magazine*

"The Plum Tree" by Eilen Marie Wiseman: "Told from the perspective of a young, non-Jewish German woman living through the deprivations of WWII and the rising fear of the Nazis ... (this book) follows a family torn by feelings of patriotism ... and the growing Nazi terror. (Wiseman) weaves a story of intrigue, terror and love from a perspective not often seen in Holocaust novels." —*Jewish Book World*

"The Wind is not a River" by Brian Payton: "(A) gripping tale of survival and an epic love story in which a husband and wife — separated by the only battle

of World War II to take place on American soil — fight to reunite in Alaska's starkly beautiful Aleutian Islands." —*Amazon.com*

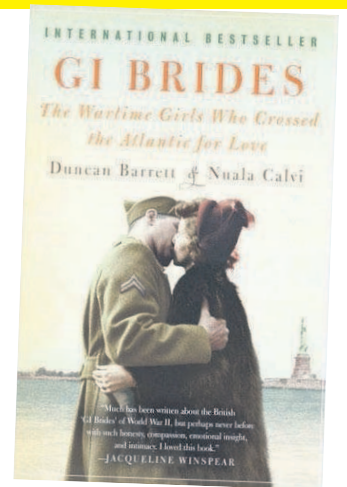
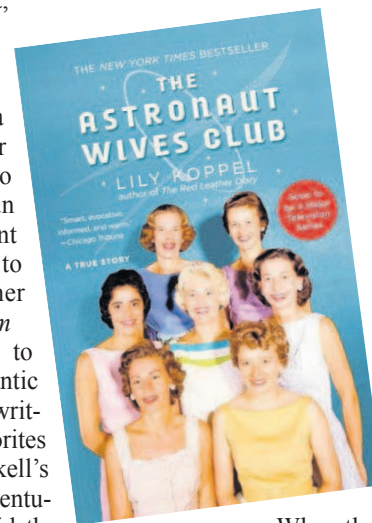
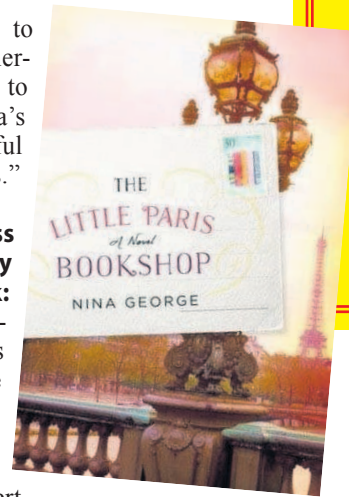
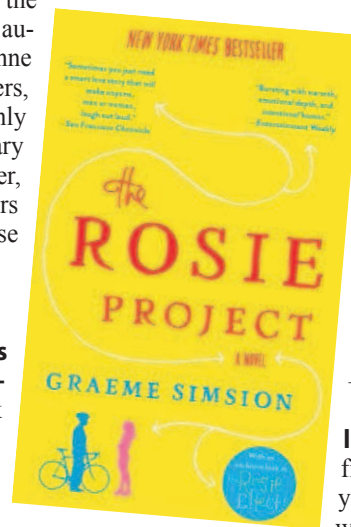
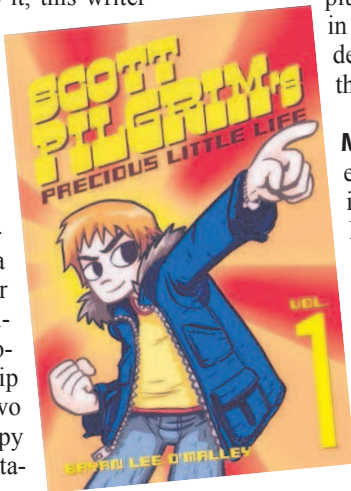
"A Sweetness to the Soul" by Jane Kirkpatrick: "Based on historical characters and events ... the captivating story of young, spirited Oregon pioneer Jane Herbert, who ... finds herself involved in an unusual and touching romance with a dreamer 16 years her senior, struggles to make peace with an emotionally distant mother, and fights to build a family of her own." —*Amazon.com*

When it comes to well-written romantic fiction, a few of this writer's personal favorites include: Mrs. Gaskell's wonderful 19th century novel of love amid the industrial revolution in northern Britain, **"North and South"**; Alison Lurie's exploration of seniors in love in **"Foreign Affairs"**; the young adult novel **"The Sherwood Ring"** by Elizabeth Marie Pope, which includes tasty bits of historical fiction and three ghosts; and **"Pink Slip"** by Rita Ciresi.

Non-fiction

"The Astronaut Wives Club" by Lily Koppe: The wives who smiled bravely as their husbands — America's Mercury 7 astronauts — took off on death-defying missions is the subject here. These women came as close to being royalty as is possible in this country. They enjoyed tea with Jackie Kennedy, graced the cover of *Life* magazine and even set fashion trends. A fascinating and inspiring story.

"GI Brides: the Wartime Girls who Crossed the Atlantic for Love" by Duncan Barrett and Nuala Calvi: In addition



ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED ROMANTIC FICTION

"The Elegance of the Hedgehog" by Muriel Barbery

"The Time Traveler's Wife" by Audrey Miffenegger

"Possession" by A. S. Byatt

"Change of Heart" by Jody Piccolt

"Lakeside Cottage" by Susan Wiggs

"Brooklyn" by Colm Tobin

"Keeping Kate" by Lauren Winder Farnsworth

"The Poldark Saga" by Winston Graham

"War Brides" by Helen Bryan

"Becoming Clementine" by Jennifer Niven

to helping win World War II, American soldiers stationed in the U.K. also won the hearts of more than 70,000 young women from all over their host country.

When the fighting stopped, these brides followed husbands they hardly knew to a new life in the U.S.

Thanks to director Jane Tucker and librarian Lindsay Johnson at the Astoria Public Library; Karla Nelson, owner of Time Enough Books in Ilwaco; Esther Moberg at the Seaside Public Library; and library assistant Katherine White at Ilwaco Timberland Library for their invaluable help.

the arts

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