



On Loving Women

Diane Obomsawin , Helge Dascher (Translation)

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"On Loving Women is in turns wistful, sexy, goofy, bittersweet, frank, and adorable. Diane Obomsawin's deceptively simple lifework and straightforward writing style capture the breathless sweetness of holding another girl's hand for the first time, and the happy, lusty intimacy of a virginity-ending, drunken threesome. Delightful."—Ellen Forney, author of *Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me*

Intimate vignettes of women coming out

On Loving Women is a new collection of stories about coming out, first love, and sexual identity by the animator Diane Obomsawin. With this work, Obomsawin brings her gaze to bear on subjects closer to home—her friends' and lovers' personal accounts of realizing they're gay or first finding love with another woman. Each story is a master class in reaching the emotional truth of a situation with the simplest means possible. Her stripped-down pages use the bare minimum of linework to expressively reveal heartbreak, joy, irritation, and fear.

On Loving Women focuses primarily on adolescence—crushes on high school teachers, awkwardness on first dates—but also addresses much deeper-seated difficulties of being out: fears of rejection and of not being who others want one to be. Within these pages, Obomsawin has forged a poignant, powerful narrative that speaks to the difficulties of coming out and the joys of being loved.

On Loving Women Details

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From Reader Review On Loving Women for online ebook

CaseyTheCanadianLesbrarian says

On Loving Women by Québécois animator, graphic artist, and painter Diane Obomsawin is another really awesome book that I'm not sure I would have heard about if it hadn't been sent to me to review! So I am super happy to be able to share it with you all. On Loving Women is a pretty quick read, and seemingly simple. It's a collection of comics about coming-out—specifically, Obomsawin's friends and lovers. It's originally in French, and was translated by Helge Dascher. While this book is simple, I'd like to unpack this simplicity a little bit and see what we can come up with.

The stories are brief, and at first, I was finding it a bit hard to differentiate between stories—the linguistic style changes a bit, but the graphic one doesn't. Maybe it's because I read it so fast—because it's graphic, and pictures are so much faster to digest than words. But I also think that plain and simple I read it quickly because it's really good and I didn't want to put it down! I'm also just not as attuned to visual art, so there may have been differences I just wasn't picking up on. In the end, though, it was kind of clever that the stories bled together, as a group of friends' coming-out stories tend to do over the years of telling and re-telling them....

See the rest of my review on my website: <http://caseythecanadianlesbrarian.wor...>

Kokeshi says

Really interesting and even, at times, touching. Unfortunately it was too disjointed for me to really get in to it.

Sam Quixote says

On Loving Women is a collection of short comics about Diane Obomsawin's friends describing how and when they discovered they were lesbians and what the experience was like for them. Obomsawin's style is very matter-of-fact, presenting the stories very simply both narratively and visually often in a black and white six panel grid with characters drawn with animal heads (perhaps to symbolise their different backgrounds but also could be just whimsy on the author's part).

Because of this presentation style, there's no judgement on the many ways that lead the women to being comfortable with their sexuality. The stories show some women realising very early on that they're gay and embracing it fully, while others go into denial and try to be like other girls and be with boys, though nearly all experiment with identity, swapping out girly clothes for boyish ones, choosing more masculine activities over feminine, even trying different kinds of drugs and lifestyles.

The overall effect is a short book that reveals the complications of figuring out your sexual identity in a society geared toward the traditional male/female dichotomy. The lack of a strong authorial voice kept me

from fully engaging with the book and the stories are more-or-less similar after a while, but I can appreciate the positives in having comics like this out there for young girls coming of age and looking for reassurance that they're not the first lesbians to go through a confusing adolescence.

It's a fine comic if you like LGBT books but if you're not into that genre I'd recommend Obomsawin's first comic, *Kaspar*, for a better read. It also explores identity using the real life case of Kaspar Hauser, the mysterious story of a 19th century German lad who claimed to have grown up in a totally isolated cell alone and was bizarrely assassinated aged 21.

Anthoferjea says

Read it immediately. These stories are one of the most humanizing portraits of lesbian life out there, helpfully illustrated with the funniest anthropomorphized cute animals you can imagine. It brought me back to high school and college and being awkward and my experience is about as different from that of these women in rural/urban Canada in the 80s/90s as I can imagine.

Allie says

On Loving Women is a comic (in both senses) collection of queer lady stories, compiled and illustrated by Diane Obomsawin. Her style is really fun and simple, but so charming and fitting to the subject. These stories are full of funny and awkward adolescent angst, but not in an overwrought YA lit way. All the women came of age in the 60s through *maybe* the 80s, so more than a few of the stories are really touching because of how much things have changed since then. As a collection, it's really strong. Mostly they're about the electricity of first physical contact and how hard you want someone to notice you and weird formative experiences and missteps along the way to wherever you're going.

Like *Fun Home* or *My Dirty Dumb Eyes*, I would not recommend reading this on transit.

This also satisfies task 5 of the Book Riot Read Harder Challenge! A book by or about someone that identifies as LGBTQ!

MariNaomi says

I did a graphic/comic review of this book for LA Review of Books. You can see it here:
<http://lareviewofbooks.org/review/kin...>

Dov Zeller says

A slim volume of oral histories about 'coming out of the closet' and queer coming of age. Each person's story is adapted to comic form and illustrated with humans represented as various other animals. See MariNaomi's review for more about that.

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/k...#!>

Some GR reviewers are frustrated with the brevity of the book as well as the individual stories. I enjoyed the quirky and often funny short stories. I would have happily read more, but found the book charming as is.

Most of the scenes take place in Canada (though a bit of traveling here and there) Scenes happen in schools, homes, bars, playgrounds, movie theaters, trains, airplanes, gyms, outside on mopeds, in cars, in bar bathrooms.

the opening story has one of my favorite lines. "My first girlfriend was half horse, half wonder woman." Each story is delightful and moving in its own way and I appreciate the overall tone of wonder and curiosity and joy.

Wonderful to be introduced to so many voices. there is a humor and lightness that is a nice counterbalance to the heartache of so many coming out stories.

Lydia says

A book that features a real Quebecois flavour -- from French Catholic boarding houses to queer bars in Montreal, this book is a quiet triumph and a soft place to fall.

Super sweet, so lovely, it features several different stories from all sorts of different women about their first crushes, first loves, unrequited loves and affairs. I liked it for the same reason that I love a lot of queer anthologies, for the multitude of voices.

It's understated one minute, intense the next, but isn't that queer love in a nutshell?

I will definitely be doing a joint YouTube review of this book and some other lesbian comics I love.

Emilia says

this book made my heart smile so so big

Carla says

So disappointing.

The writing is bland and perfunctory. It didn't get my attention and I often was unable to tell which character was drawn in front of me because the story has no pace and order, women just come and go, sometimes without any explanation of what happened.

I enjoyed 3 stories (Diane's, Charlotte's and Jeanne's), but it was a shame that the author did not provide much more details and emotions. I would like to read more about them.

I would not recommend this book.

Joey Alison Sayers says

2 stars feels low, but it means "it was ok", which it was. The book consists of several stories of women discovering that they like doing it with women, and that's a pretty promising premise. Unfortunately, the stories are short and their plots are jumbled, meaning we never really get to know any of the characters very well. And the simplified art fails to add any distinguishing characteristics to any of the characters - they end up feeling very 2-dimensional. Really wanted to like this, but left feeling pretty disappointed.

Eli says

Nothing special. Didn't like the artwork at all. Just a collection of short stories of different Canadian women-loving-women. Underwhelming, but didn't take too much of my time up.

Deborah says

It took me a while to warm up to this book but by the end* I was cracking up! This book is a collection of 10 stories about first love and sexual identity in women's early lives, as opposed to experiences in established lesbian relationships. Odd drawings and hard to distinguish characters but overall fun AND poignant ("I wanted to be the center of attention...and I wanted nobody to notice me."). I especially liked the classic devil and angel taunting October in her story, and the last page* is a treasure: "It was my first time - that's really cool!" I fell out of bed and said: "Wow! Women Rock!".

Definitely a great book for a varied audience of interested folks.

Larakaa says

cute little collection of stories from women about their first romantic and sex experiences with other women.

David Schaafsma says

Coming out/coming of age stories, adapted for comics by Diane Obomsawin. Sweet, funny, fun, it reminded me of my experience in my late teens of reading *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden. I had been raised in a kind of sheltered environment and--though I was in theater and there were certainly several gay men around--I hadn't had any experience talking to anyone about gay love or sex. I, a shy straight? (okay, cis-gendered!) young man, thought: This young love between these two girls is so sweet, just like between a guy and a girl! I really did think that, reading it, and you would say: What a dope! He's so naive! But it's true, this is what I thought, and that one reading experience stayed with me.

This book is less romantic or sexual (though it is both of those things in places), and more just sweet. Part of

the reason this might feel more inclusive is that it features anthropomorphic animals for characters, with simple linework. There's a kind of warmth to it. The stories and the book are quite short, but still pretty satisfying. I liked them quite a bit!

I read this book because of a Goodreads review by my friend Dov Heller that also imbeds this other review by Marinaomi:

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/k...>
