



## Kinds of Love

*May Sarton (Contributor)*

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Christina Chapman and her husband Cornelius, both past seventy, are "summer people"—people who come to rural New England for the summer months and go home to the city when the cold weather comes. This year, however, Christina and Cornelius have decided to stay on.

May Sarton's Willard is a small town in the rocky hills of New Hampshire, a place that attracts "the untameable, the wild, the gentle." As Sarton takes us into the lives of the people who live there, we encounter a rich tapestry of characters and relationships. In the center are the deep, prickly friendship between Christina, an old Bostonian, and Ellen, the daughter of a farmer, and the unfolding process by which Christina and her husband "come into their own" in their marriage and become winter people at last.

## **Kinds of Love Details**

Date : Published February 17th 1994 by W. W. Norton Company (first published December 31st 1970)

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Author : May Sarton (Contributor)

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## **From Reader Review Kinds of Love for online ebook**

### **Lynne says**

As a small country town prepares to celebrate it's bicentennial the relationships within the community are examined. I loved the gently meandering style of this novel, the rich wisdom of the author's keen observations of human nature and the wonderful evocation of the landscape.

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### **Mary Narkiewicz says**

book about New England lives. one of her best novels.

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### **Jo says**

This was an interesting story - with interesting characters and a rich setting. I liked the way the country of Willard was also a character in this story. As I was reading, I could "feel" the geography of this place and it was easy to care for the characters.

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### **Mary-Ann says**

Recommended by a Macalester College prof, I chose this book, because coming-of-age stories just no longer interest me--I must be getting old :-). Better to read about a couple who are over seventy-years-old and still learning about their world! I'm betting May Sarton's book, published in 1970, is one that was read by popular novelists Jan Karon and Barbara Kingsolver--I see so many similarities among the three women in what they choose to write about and in their reflective writing styles. The book's setting, a fictitious New Hampshire burg named Willard, is small-town America at its best.

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### **Jennifer says**

The relationship with nature, aging, and the lack of freedom both wealth and poverty bring are deftly woven into this lovely novel. Lovely turn of phrases and exploration of interior thoughts and feelings. This was originally published when I was a babe in arms. It is astounding to think how dramatically lives have changed in the interim. I think. Does the level of poverty described by Sarton still exist in New England in the same way?

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### **Jameswaldo says**

I kept hoping something would happen in this book to justify the sober, thoughtful exposition of its elderly

narrator. Such a laid back, careful, understated yet prolix analysis of various minor details! Now and then an "event" of some moment interrupts the gentle day-to-day progress of a backwoods New England village, but even these small excitements are dwarfed by the prosy consideration of a deep thinker. Thoughts of class distinctions, of sublimated sex, of frustration and vengeance all simmer gently in a goopy stew of careful good old home-cooked niceness. Ugh! Can't believe I read the whole thing! Why did this book show up in my house? Wish I could unread it.

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## **Joy H. says**

Added 10/12/15.

I read this book sometime in the 1990's. It was first published in 1970. I have just now come across the quotes which I copied from the book. They are done in my own longhand writing and there are almost 14 pages of these notes!

The author, May Sarton, had a sharp mind. She had an ability to express so much deep wisdom about life in beautiful prose. I'm amazed as I re-read my notes! Such wisdom! For example, below is a quote from page 32:

=====  
"So it is being together that matters, not any longer what we may say or not say."  
=====

That thought is so deep and so true and it is expressed in such a simple way.

May Sarton was indeed a philosopher; she had a deep grasp of what it means to be a human being, with all our varied experiences and their effects on our psyches.

I'm so glad I saved these notes.

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## **Charlotte says**

I found this book in Volume 1 of the 1971 Reader's Digest Condensed Books, which I had stored for many years in my basement. Since I had enjoyed other books by May Sarton, I decided to keep this volume until I had read *Kinds of Love*. I was nearly halfway through when I discovered a note I had written in the margin. This note told me I had read the book for the first time about 25 years ago.

I don't remember finding typos or subject/verb disagreement in other books by this author, but I found one of each in this book. Perhaps those things were a result of the Reader's Digest Condensation, but I think Reader's Digest is generally very good with their editing.

The author is very good with her descriptions of places and people. I felt as if I knew the characters and would recognize them on the street.

The title of the book is appropriate since the author has written about many kinds of love in this book, e.g. love of parents for their children and later their grandchildren, love awakening in a teenage girl, love of neighbors, love of a town and its history, love of hard work, love of nature, rediscovered love of a couple for each other after being married for many years, and a first love that still has sparks after many years have past.

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## **James Lee says**

The mountains of New England are the setting for the mythical village of Willard. The story unfolds around the long, sometimes fierce friendship between Local Ellen and Summer Person Christina. An old, scrabbled place with Locals and Summer People. Sarton created a marvelous place to explore kinds of love.....old, young, confused, transitory and enduring. The novel is full of thought provoking conversations and excerpts from Christina's diary: "What is interesting, after all, is the making of a self, an act of creation like any other, that does imply a certain amount of conscious work." (p. 32) One of Sarton's genius' is how her characters create more conscious relationships both within and between themselves. I appreciated how her work also touched on mild sons of tyrannical fathers (p. 54) and the difference in Men and Women's grief and how they experience feelings (p. 90) Christina's observation on page 121 on how long term relationships do not depend on words as new relationships do was interesting. Christina and Cornelius explore the sadness and the unexpected joys of getting old, while Cathy and Joel experience the sharp intensities and dissatisfactions of nascent youth. It is my first and still my favorite novel by May Sarton. Reading Sarton awakened me to a clearer understanding, and therefore conscious participation in experiencing feelings in relationship. Reading May Sarton opened the door for me to later read and enjoy Jane Austen, Diane Setterfield, and to a lesser degree Margaret Atwood. I understand why Joel was awakened by the puissant silence of the mountains hosting Willard, secret histories that matter and savoring the wild fires of relationship. "The silence opened up, opened up the farthest line of woods, the hills, opened up the sky- it was huge. It seemed to absorb love and grief and parting into some great whole." p. 399

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## **Russell says**

I read this book in one long sitting. I have never or most likely will never pick up a 350 page great novel and read it in one sitting.

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## **Linda DiMeo Lowman says**

I've not read May Sarton before and wasn't sure if I'd like her work. This is a book about place primarily and about the people in that place. After that it's a book about love spanning young love to very old love.

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## **Beverly says**

I enjoyed this book. There is something cozy about being part of a town like the one Sarton creates. It was also interesting to hear Sarton's voice so strongly in a fiction work. I've read most of her journals and she has a distinct, emotional and strong voice. I was sad to see this book end.

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## **Syd says**

This is my least favorite Sarton novel to date. I did appreciate her insight on love and found her belief in the many ways one can love to be very progressive.

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**Patti says**

I read this book many times when I was in my early 20s and identified with the young granddaughter that shows up at the end, although I loved the whole story. Over 30 years later I love book even more and absolutely identify with the elderly friends. This book explores many different types of relationships with dignity and respect. An all time favorite.

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**South Orange Library says**

The setting is a small country village in New Hampshire called Willard. The people of the town are organizing a bicentennial celebration of their town. There's some tension between families with money and others who are dirt poor. Only a few can send their children to college. But there is a stability to their existence, as neighbors help each other survive in times of trouble, and the rich do not have fewer problems than the poor. All kinds of love are called for. One must love the alcoholic, the young man who is severely depressed, and the cantankerous old man who lives alone. Newcomers have a hard time achieving acceptance. It is a challenge for everyone to get through the harsh winters.

I suppose I like the book so much because I grew up in an isolated country (as opposed to city) area in N. Dakota where we had the same sort of brutal winters. We, too, were self-sustaining, living off our land. My mother went to a supermarket about twice a year, for flour and sugar. I don't remember being "needy" at all. I'm sure I wasn't. The author can make a small, unknown corner of the world into a place you'd like to know. One character prays, "Dear God, keep us tough, ornery, and self-reliant enough to live here." AMEN!  
--Lydia

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