

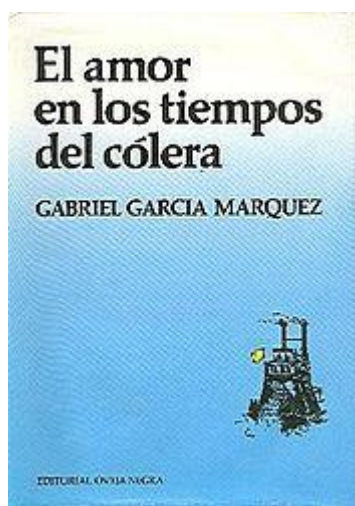
Love in the Time of Cholera

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For the 2007 movie, see [Love in the Time of Cholera \(film\)](#).

Love in the Time of Cholera



1st edition (Colombia)

Author(s)	Gabriel García Márquez
Original title	<i>El amor en los tiempos del cólera</i>
Translator	Edith Grossman
Country	Colombia
Language	Spanish
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	Editorial Oveja Negra (Colombia) Alfred A. Knopf (US)
Publication date	1985
Published in English	1988
Media type	Print (Hardback & Paperback)
Pages	348 pp (First English hardback edition)

Love in the Time of Cholera ([Spanish](#): *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*) is a novel by [Nobel Prize](#) winning [Colombian](#) author [Gabriel García Márquez](#) first published in the [Spanish language](#) during 1985. [Alfred A. Knopf](#) published the [English](#) translation during 1988. An English-language [movie adaptation](#) was released during 2007.

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[\[edit\]](#) Plot summary

The main character of the novel is **Florentino Ariza** and the main female character is **Fermina Daza**. She becomes enamoured with him during their youth but is forced to stop meeting him by her father. Eventually she weds **Juvenal Urbino** at the age of 21 (the "deadline" she had set for herself) because he seemed to offer her security and love. Urbino is a medical doctor devoted to science, modernity, and "order and progress." He is committed to the eradication of cholera and to the promotion of public works. He is a [rational](#) man whose life is organized precisely and who values his importance and reputation in society to the utmost. He is a herald of progress and modernization.^[1]

Urbino's function in the novel is to provide the counterpoint to Florentino Ariza's archaic, boldly romantic love. Urbino proves in the end not to have been an entirely faithful husband, confessing one affair to Fermina many years into their marriage. Though the novel seems to suggest that Urbino's love for Fermina was never as spiritually chaste as Florentino Ariza's was, it also complicates Florentino's devotion by cataloging his many trysts and apparently a few, possibly genuine, loves. By the end of the book, Fermina comes to recognize Ariza's wisdom and maturity and their love is allowed to blossom during their old age. For most of their adult lives, however, their communication is limited to occasional public niceties.

[\[edit\]](#) Other characters

- **Lorenzo Daza** – Fermina Daza's father, a mule driver; he despised Florentino and forced them to stop meeting each other.
- **Jeremiah de Saint-Amour** – The man whose suicide is introduced as the opening to the novel; a [photographer](#) and [chess](#)-player.
- **Aunt Escolástica** – The woman who attempts to aid Fermina in her early romance with Florentino by delivering their letters for them. She is ultimately sent away by Lorenzo Daza for this.
- **Tránsito Ariza** – Florentino's mother.
- **Hildebranda Sánchez** – Fermina's cousin.

- **Miss Barbara Lynch** – The woman with whom Urbino confesses having an affair.
- **Diego Samaritano** – The [captain](#) of the [riverboat](#) on which Fermina and Florentino ride at the end of the novel.
- **Leona Cassiani** - She starts out as the "personal assistant" to Uncle Leo XII at the R.C.C., the company which Florentino eventually controls. At one point, it is revealed that the two share a deep respect, possibly even love, for each other, but will never actually be together. She has a maternal love for him as a result of his "charity" in rescuing her from the streets and giving her a job.
- **América Vicuña** - The fourteen-year-old girl who towards the end of the novel is sent to live with Florentino; he is her guardian while she is in school. They have a sexual relationship, and upon failing her exams and after her rejection by Florentino, she kills herself. Her suicide illustrates the selfish nature of Florentino's love for Fermina.

[\[edit\]](#) Setting

The story occurs mainly in an unnamed port city somewhere near the Caribbean Sea and the Magdalena River. While the city remains unnamed throughout the novel, descriptions of it imply that [Cartagena](#) in [Colombia](#) is intended, where García Márquez lived during his early years. The city is divided into such sections as "The District of the Viceroy" and "The Arcade of the Scribes." The novel encompasses approximately the half century between 1880 and 1930.^[2] The city's "steamy and sleepy streets, rat-infested sewers, old slave quarter, decaying colonial architecture, and multifarious inhabitants" are mentioned variously in the text and mingle amid the lives of the characters.^[3] Locations within the story include:

- The house Fermina shares with her husband, Dr. Juvenal Urbino.
- The "transient hotel" where Florentino Ariza stays for a brief time.
- Ariza's office at the river company.
- The Arcade of the Scribes.
- The Magdalena River.

[\[edit\]](#) Major themes



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[\[edit\]](#) Narrative as seduction

Some critics choose to consider *Love in the Time of Cholera* as a sentimental story about the enduring power of true love. Others criticize this opinion as being too simple. García Márquez himself said in an interview, "you have to be careful not to fall into my trap."^[4]

This is manifested by Ariza's excessively romantic attitude toward life, and his [gullibility](#) in trying to retrieve the sunken treasure of a [shipwreck](#). It is also made evident by the fact that society in the story believes that Fermina and Juvenal Urbino are perfectly happy in their marriage, while the reality of the situation is not so ideal. Critic Keith Booker compares Ariza's position to that of Humbert Humbert in [Vladimir Nabokov's](#) *Lolita*, saying that just as Humbert is able to charm the reader into sympathizing with his situation, even though he is

a "pervert, a rapist, and a murderer", Ariza is able to garner the reader's sympathy, even though the reader is reminded repeatedly of his more sinister exploits.^[4]

[\[edit\]](#) Narrative as deconstruction

The novel examines romantic love in myriad forms, both "ideal" and "depraved", and continually forces the reader to question such ready-made characterizations by introducing elements antithetical to these facile judgments.

[\[edit\]](#) Love as an emotional and physical disease

García Márquez's main notion is that [lovesickness](#) is literally an [illness](#), a disease comparable to [cholera](#). Ariza suffers from this just as he might suffer from any malady. At one point, he conflates his physical pain with his amorous pain when he vomits after eating flowers in order to imbibe Fermina's scent. In the final chapter, the Captain's declaration of metaphorical plague is another manifestation of this. The term cholera as it is used in Spanish, [cólera](#), can also denote [human rage and ire](#). (The English adjective [choleric](#) has the same meaning.) It is this second meaning to the title that manifests itself in Ariza's hatred for Urbino's marriage to Fermina, as well as in the social strife and warfare that serves as a backdrop to the entire story.

[\[edit\]](#) Aging and death

Jeremiah Saint-Amour's death inspires Urbino to meditate on his own death, and especially on the infirmities that precede it. It is necessary for Fermina and Florentino to transcend not only the difficulties of love, but also the societal opinion that love is a young person's prerogative (not to mention the physical difficulties of loving physically during old age).

[\[edit\]](#) Film adaptation

[Stone Village Pictures](#) bought the movie rights from the author for US\$3 million, and [Mike Newell](#) was chosen to direct it, with [Ronald Harwood](#) writing the script. Filming started in [Cartagena, Colombia](#), during September 2006.^[5]

The [\\$50 million film](#), the first major foreign production filmed in the scenic walled city in twenty years,^[5] was released on November 16, 2007, by [New Line Cinema](#). On his own initiative, García Márquez convinced singer [Shakira](#), who is from the nearby city of [Barranquilla](#), to provide two songs for the film.

[\[edit\]](#) Publication details

- 1985, Colombia, Spanish edition, Oveja Negra, 1985, hardback [ISBN 958-06-0000-7](#) and paperback [ISBN 958-06-0001-5](#) (first edition)
- 1985, Mexico DF, Spanish edition, Editorial Diana, 1985, paperback [ISBN 968-13-1547-2](#) (first edition: 100,000 copies)
- 1988, USA, Alfred A Knopf [ISBN 0-394-57108-8](#), Pub date 1 January 1988, hardback (Eng trans. first edition)
- 1989, USA, Penguin Books [ISBN 0-14-011990-6](#), Pub date 7 September 1989, paperback

- 2003, USA, Vintage International [ISBN 1-4000-3468-X](#), paperback

[\[edit\]](#) Footnotes

1. [^] [Morana, Mabel](#) (winter, 1990) "Modernity and Marginality in *Love in the Time of Cholera*". *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* **14**:27-43
2. [^] [Simpson, Mona](#) (September 1, 1988) "Love Letters". *London Review of Books* **10**:22-24
3. [^] [Taylor, Anna-Marie](#) (1995). *Reference Guide to World Literature*, 2nd ed.. [St. James Press](#).
4. [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} [Booker, M. Keith](#) (summer, 1993) "The Dangers of Gullible Reading: Narrative as Seduction in García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*". *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* **17**:181-95
5. [^] ^{[a](#)} ^{[b](#)} [A.R. Lakshmanan, Indira](#). "[Love in the Time of Cholera: On location, out on a limb](#)". December 11, 2006. Accessed May 26, 2007.

[\[edit\]](#) External links

- [The Heart's Eternal Vow](#) - *New York Times* Book Review from 1988 by [Thomas Pynchon](#)

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