



Leon and Louise

By Alex Capus

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Summer 1918. The First World War is drawing to a close when Léon Le Gall, a French teenager from Cherbourg who has dropped out of school and left home, falls in love with Louise Janvier. Both are severely wounded by German artillery fire, are separated, and believe each other to be dead. Briefly reunited two decades later, the two lovers are torn apart again by Louise's refusal to destroy Léon's marriage and by the German invasion of France. In occupied Paris during the Second World War, where Léon struggles against the abhorrent tasks imposed upon him by the SS, and the wilds of Africa, where Louise confronts the hardships of her primitive environment, they battle the vicissitudes of history and the passage of time for the survival of their love.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

A century before the Internet and online dating, young men and women met the way they do in the opening scenes of Capus' engaging tale set in the French village of Saint-Luc-sur-Marne during World War I. Léon Le Gall is smitten with comely Louise Janvier the moment he sees her riding her rickety bicycle through town. The two begin spending their days together and are soon inseparable. A short time later, they're caught in artillery fire. Each presumes the other is dead. Ten years later, Léon is living in Paris, a devoted husband with a four-year-old child. Louise, however, is never far from his mind. When he catches a glimpse of her at the train station, a conflict of conscience ensues. Should he stay faithful to his wife and family or follow his heart? He's tempted to do the latter, as his marriage has grown stale, and his job is driving him mad. Against the brutal backdrop of war, Capus renders a powerful tale of love lost and found. --Allison Block

Review

'A beautiful love story.' 'It's a great love story told with great humour... along the lines of The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, Atonement and The Postmistress.' 'Swiss author Capus is an apt storyteller... On its surface, this is a story about enduring love. But it is also about the way that power can be abused... and the daily sacrifices people make to preserve what they hold most dear.' 'Capus' leads are riveting, credible creations -- he sensible and correct, she feisty and headstrong. We root for them, especially when war takes over and threatens to sunder them for good... This love-conquers-all tale could easily have been trite and saccharine, but instead Capus' fusion of gripping drama and believable characters renders Leon and Louise both powerful and poignant.' '[G]em of a novel...' '[W]insome bonbon of a novel in which "The End" feels like an unexpected and unfairly realistic awakening.' 'A perfectly plotted love story, which never becomes over saccharine.'

About the Author

Alex Capus is a French-Swiss novelist who writes in German. His works of fiction and non-fiction that have been translated into English include *Sailing by Starlight* (2008), *A Matter of Time* (2009), *Leon and Louise* (2012) and *Skidoo* (2014).

Users Review

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Sandra Gregory:

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Darren Billups:

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