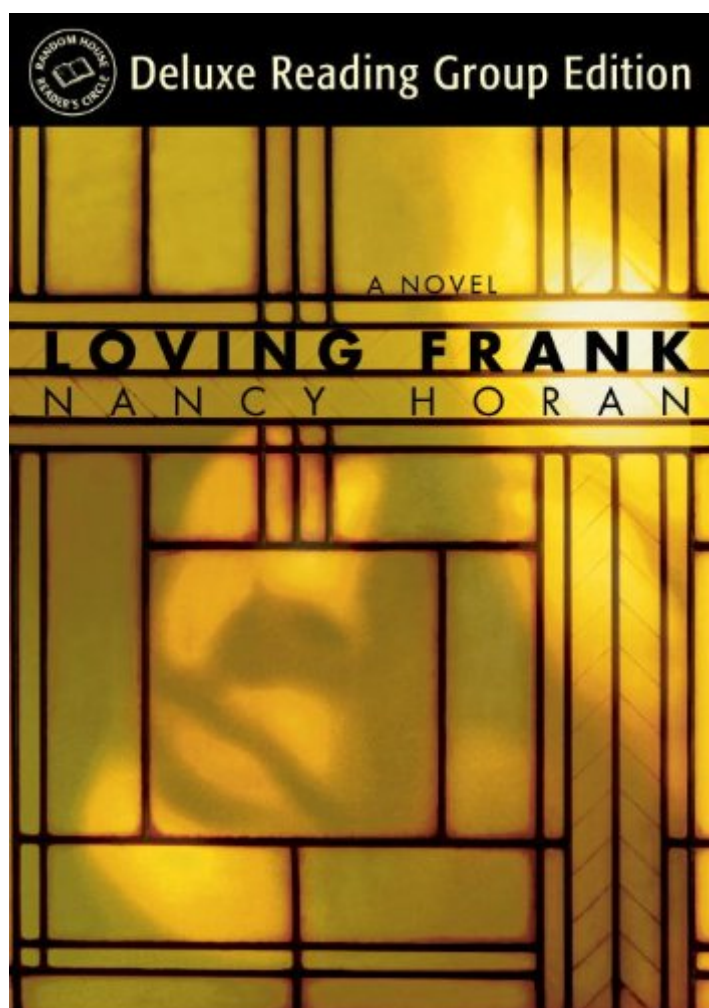




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Loving Frank (Random House Reader's Circle Deluxe Reading Group Edition): A Novel



Synopsis

This new deluxe eBook edition features more than sixty-five additional pages of exclusive, author-approved annotations throughout the text to enrich your reading experience. You can access the eBook annotations with a simple click or tap on your eReader via the convenient links. Access them as you read the novel or as supplemental material after finishing the entire story. There is also Random House Reader's Circle bonus content, which is sure to inspire discussion at book clubs everywhere.

“A transforming drama . . . truly artful fiction.”

•The New York Times

“I have been standing on the side of life, watching it float by. I want to swim in the river. I want to feel the current.”

• So writes Mamah Borthwick Cheney in her diary as she tries to justify her clandestine love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright. Four years earlier, in 1903, Mamah and her husband, Edwin, had commissioned the renowned architect to design a new home for them. During the construction of the house, a powerful attraction developed between Mamah and Frank, and in time the lovers, each married with children, embarked on a course that would shock Chicago society and forever change their lives.

“A beautifully orchestrated rendering of the affair and the inner lives of two love-torn principals. Understated yet dramatic, painstaking and convincing, this is fiction with the heft of truth.”

•Seattle Post-Intelligencer

“In Mamah, Horan creates an unforgettably complex heroine.”

•The Washington Post

“A staggering read, a complex tale of the love affair between two eccentric, intelligent and unforgettable characters. Though it is very much a literary novel, sparks fly off the page.”

•Rocky Mountain News

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Customer Reviews

I found this story thoroughly fascinating. It is not a book about architecture but about a very famous married architect that had a torrid affair with a married, fairly wealthy, very educated woman that made headlines in its day 1911-1914 in Chicago. If this happened now, it would be plastered all over the tabloids, internet and TV! It is a story of lust, love, abandonment, travel and living in Europe. It is about the suffragette movement, the European contemporary art movement (Bauhaus). But is a story of 2 very selfish people, self-absorbed with little regard for the families they are leaving behind in their quest for Frank L Wright's success and her "finding herself", could she live with him? like a little trial run. She wouldn't want to leave her comfortable family with 2 young children officially if this romance didn't work out. As exciting as this story is, based upon true events, it was terribly sad to see how many lives were ruined and scarred from their jaunt to Berlin and other European places trying to escape the publicity they were creating. All along they felt they were being tormented and harassed by the press, that they were the victims. This book appears to be well-researched for the actual events of the two main characters even though it is a novel. I will not spoil the ending, but this must have been some scandal in its day especially for anyone in Chicago during that time. I would highly recommend this as a very interesting book, a piece of our architectural history and the precursor to the "women's movement" and "women's liberation" ideals.

This book won the James Fenimore Cooper award for Best Historical Fiction. Of course, it doesn't hurt that the Frank referred to is world famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Many of you are familiar with the clandestine love affair between Wright and Mamah Barthwick Chaney that was much publicized and maligned. I had read a little about it, but not much. Mostly, I was just not interested. I am not a fan of Wright or his architecture. However, Horan writes from the viewpoint of Chaney, not Wright, and artfully brings both the era and the relationship of two people who are married and have children with other spouses into brilliant focus without being tawdry. I learned a lot of interesting things about Wright and Chaney that I will never forget. Both

were immensely talented, complex, and deeply flawed individuals. Horan takes us along on their travels and travails from Chicago to Wisconsin and Japan and explores Chaney's relationship with a famous feminist of the time. This is a literary novel that is easy to follow and delves deeply into the lives of two intelligent, eccentric, and unforgettable characters. I won't spoil it by telling you what happens in the end, but it sent me online to research whether it really happened. I was not prepared for what I found.

Even though this is a novel, this book gave some real insight into Frank Lloyd Wright's character and the tempo of the day. The characters were endearing and frustrating, definitely not one dimensional. It made me want to learn more about the characters and their lives.

Although perhaps not quite up to the level of "The Aviator's Wife," nevertheless, I enjoyed this novel about the woman who upended her life to be with Frank Lloyd Wright in a time when women simply didn't do that sort of thing. It must have been a tricky challenge to make a sympathetic character out of a woman who leaves her children to be with her lover, but Horan manages to pull it off.

Well written and incredibly interesting to look at the lives of these real life characters and the possible motives and realities of their choices in a different era. While the book looks at Mamah Borthwick and Frank Lloyd Wright's lives it brings into focus how something as inspiring as choosing happiness and honesty in our own lives can have such a tremendous and sometimes negative impact on others. It really makes you examine these choices. And it was so interesting to learn about these individuals and look at their lives and society's views during that time and era.

Loving Frank fictionalizes the love affair between Frank Lloyd Wright and his mistress Mamah Cheney, a union that scandalized the world. Mamah is a woman who prizes ideas and personal freedom over convention and subservience, but sadly, she also prizes this above motherhood, and they leave behind their marriages and a tribe of children to go abroad together. This brings scorn upon them from every direction. Whereas Frank is condemned for being merely naughty, she is deemed perverse. The novel paints an accurate portrait of anti-feminist social mores of America, prone to a busy-body, indignant hypocrisy, then as now. Horan does a mainly predictable job with this material. The flaw in this book is the lack of spark! The writing, and the characterizations are dull and insipid. Wright's genius is treated like an encyclopedia subject, the reader has to be told, not

shown; we feel none of his fire. Mamah, is portrayed as his thoughtful and provocative equal, but we have to take it on faith, because she doesn't seem to be more than a foil for his narcissism and excess. Frankly, I was bored.

Frank Lloyd Wright was hailed an innovative genius architecturally. As a human being, Wright was a cad who regularly cheated on his loyal wife. Eventually making off and having a life with the He was an errant father and generally his own greatest fan. The murder occurred while Wright was away. He wasted no time in finding another mistress and building Taliesin a new, eventually marrying again and having children with the new wife. The new wife treated her stepchildren scornfully. Wright continued to keep mistresses. He would continue to think first and foremost of himself. The murder is brutal and seemingly without cause. The servant doused himself in gasoline immediately after the killing and lit himself on fire. He later died of his injuries.

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