



Making Whoopee: Words of Love for Lovers of Words

Evan Morris

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"Romance is everything," said Gertrude Stein. And for those of us in love with words, the origins of love words have their own romance. So what is the etymology of the word romance? And for that matter, why is it that a kiss is a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh, and when two lovers woo they still say I love you?

With wry wit and a wealth of word lore, Evan Morris, aka the Word Detective, answers these questions and traces the often surprising origins and evolution of the language of love--from flirtation to happily ever after, with stops along the way to examine betrayal, tryst, adultery, and all the rest of that hanky-panky. Organized alphabetically, sprinkled with quotations from lovers throughout history, Making Whoopee is brimming with entertaining information, from terms of endearment to the terms of the settlement.

Readers will discover that when liaison first appeared in English it was as a cooking term (for egg yolks used to bind ingredients together); originally to flirt meant to snub (hardly the sort of behavior that would lead to a date!); before we had puppy love, the same phenomenon was known as calf love (in both cases the implication being that such affection was destined to fade as the critters grow up); before a hunk was an attractive man, it was slang for a large, slow, and stupid man; way back when, chaperone was the hood worn by a noblewoman, and only later did it take on the metaphorical meaning of one who "shelters" a young woman from the world; Milton was the first to use the term love-lorn; and concupiscence is just a fancy way of saying the hots.

Making Whoopee is a token of affection guaranteed to make even the most cynical suitor or skeptical sweetheart swoon.

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