



The Summons of Love

Mari Ruti

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We are conditioned to think that love heals wounds, makes us happy, and gives our lives meaning. When the opposite occurs and love causes fracturing, disenchantment, and existential turmoil, we suffer deeply, especially if we feel that love has failed us or that we have failed to experience what others seem so effortlessly to enjoy.

In this eloquently argued, psychologically informed book, Mari Ruti portrays love as a much more complex, multifaceted phenomenon than we tend to appreciate—an experience that helps us encounter the depths of human existence. Love's ruptures are as important as its triumphs, and sometimes love succeeds because it fails. At the heart of Ruti's argument is a meditation on interpersonal ethics that acknowledges the inherent opacity of human interiority and the difficulty of taking responsibility for what we cannot fully understand.

Yet the fact that humans are often irrational in love does not absolve us of ethical accountability. In Ruti's view, we must work harder to map the unconscious patterns motivating our romantic behavior. As opposed to popular spiritual approaches urging us to live fully in the now, Ruti treats the past as a living component of the present. Only when we catch ourselves at those moments when the past speaks in the present can we keep ourselves from hurting the ones we love. Equally important, Ruti emphasizes transcending our individual histories of pain, an act that allows us to face the unconscious demons that dictate our relational choices. Written with substance and compassion, *The Summons of Love* restores the enlivening and transformative possibilities of romance.

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