

Love Sick



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Here, leading clinical psychologist, Dr Frank Tallis, explores our age-old preoccupation with love and in particular romantic love. Love is rarely described as a wholly pleasant experience and Tallis considers our experiences and descriptions of love and why the combinations of pleasure and pain, ecstasy and despair, rapture and grief have come to characterise what we mean when we speak about falling in love. Obsessive thoughts, erratic mood swings, insomnia, loss of appetite, recurrent and persistent images and impulses (irresistible urges to phone or text), superstitious or ritualistic compulsions (she loves me, she loves me not), inability to concentrate - so much so that it affects your work, delusion, (are his eyes really deep pools of oceanic azure?). Exhibiting just five or six of these symptoms is enough to merit a diagnosis of Major Depressive Episode, according to the recognized medical criteria. Drawing on the writings of poets, philosophers, songwriters, zoologists and scientists Tallis shows how throughout time - and particularly in the West, the metaphor of illness and specifically mental illness has been used to describe the state of being in love. And asks why it is that we continue to search out this kind of love, with the ecstasy seeming to blind us to the agony.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Love Sick 下载链接1](#)

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