

Love in Times of Coronavirus III

A black silhouette of a man and a woman in a romantic embrace. The man is on the right, leaning towards the woman on the left. They are positioned in front of a vibrant, multi-colored background that transitions from blue at the top to green, yellow, and orange at the bottom.

Amour Fou - Crazy love

JULIA SUMMERLAND

“The best book about love during the pandemic set in Luxembourg. Small in size, huge in emotions!” (Jasmine)

Edition **AVRA**

*For my mum who was always by my side.
Love goes beyond death.
Love you mum!*

At the time of coronavirus, Julia Summerland registered on an online dating platform to combat the loneliness she had been experiencing since her long-time boyfriend had left her. In her three books, she writes about her meetings with various men in the shadow of a pandemic. The first book covered events from 2019 until July 2020, the second book covered events up to April 2021 and this the third one begins from then, ending in April/May 2022. How will the story continue? How many lockdowns will there be? Will Julia find love in times of coronavirus?

With the exception of public figures, all the characters depicted in this third book in a series of three are creatures of Julia's imagination and any resemblance to any real person is coincidental.

During all her encounters, Julia followed social distancing and lockdown rules as they were in Luxembourg (except for possibly one kiss...).

With the exception of public figures, all the characters depicted in this book are creatures of Julia's imagination and any resemblance to any real person is coincidental. However, the events around the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, 2021 and 2022 were very real and are described as they happened.

CONTENTS

THE DISAPPEARING BOYFRIEND

SPOILED FOR CHOICE

NEW LOVE, BUT WHICH ONE?

WAITING FOR RED ROSES

SAVING THE PLANET, ONE DUMPSTER AT A TIME

A VERY COVID CHRISTMAS

I CAN DO THIS

NEW DAYS, OLD FRIENDS

Preface by Bernard

So, this is what I gather Julia was thinking, possibly...

When he told me he dives I thought he parachutes from the skies. I looked with admiration at the strong, handsome man, telling me about his experience, and I was very excited when he invited me to go to dive with him. We arranged to meet in Café Magnolia in the city centre and I was there fifteen minutes ahead of time, looking at the sky, watching some fluffy clouds and imagining myself flying like a bird.

A call - "Julia" - awakened me from my dreams. He was dressed up and a big smile was on his face. I followed him expecting that soon we should get into his car and drive to the small local airport known for its sky-diving school. Instead, about five minutes later I found myself in a small alley, facing the back door of Puerblix, the local supermarket. I did not understand why he was planning to buy a few cans of beer entering the supermarket from its back door, after all we were adults and were allowed to purchase beer legally. To my great surprise, rather than walking towards the back door he turned to the corner of the street where a huge supermarket dumpster was standing and told me, "I am going to dive into the dumpster and I would appreciate if you could hold me by my legs so that I won't fall in."

Apparently, as I learned later, there are people who dive into large commercial store's and restaurant's dumpsters and collect leftover food that is in good condition. They claim they are saving the Earth by saving food. As a matter

of fact, 40% of all food is thrown away while there are millions of people suffering from hunger. But inviting a person on a date to join in dumpster diving is a little strange.

When Julia Summerland registered on an online dating platform during the pandemic to combat her loneliness, she did not expect to meet workaholics, alcoholics, mother's darlings, stingy rich, skirt wearing men and so many other 'funny creatures'.

Julia Summerland is a free, modern woman who just tries to 'survive' the rough dating market, where you never know what you are going to get. She captures human beings' peculiar behaviour like no other author. With a lot of attention to details, a little irony and much love for mankind she tells her stories in this third volume of "Love in Times of Coronavirus." Please feel free to share your experience with Julia - she is waiting to hear about your funny experience. Enjoy the journey!

Introduction by Katarina

Seated on my sofa, I had this picture in my mind and was eager to put it into words, as I think it reflects Julia's story.

A myth tells us that in ancient times humans lived in absolute happiness as intertwined, linked pairs – in the figurative sense of Plato's mystical, spherical people. When they were cut in half by the Gods, they were robbed of their other half and dispersed all over the earth and from then on they roamed the earth looking for their beloved other. By dividing these spherical people, the Gods created such a huge, invisible longing inside of each human being to find their other – missing – part by desperately searching for it their entire life on earth, always hoping to achieve their complete happiness. In the interpretation of Plato's concept of the spherical human being, the two wrenched-apart protagonists are portrayed as maimed beings which have need of each other in order to be complete.

It is this mystic and at the same time real, modern and current search for the missing half that Julia describes in her book series 'Love in Times of Coronavirus' in a spectacular human manner, emotionally touching the reader, by always adding a good portion of humour. In Julia's third book, her search for exactly this missing part continues. New exciting encounters, unexpected events and unforeseen turnarounds are there to surprise the reader – a reading experience not to be missed under any circumstances!

Wishing everybody enjoyable dreams!

THE DISAPPEARING
BOYFRIEND

May to June 2021

It is when you think that things are all running smoothly that you realise they are not.

When my second book was published at the height of the coronavirus pandemic in Luxembourg, I was confident that I finally had found the right Mister Right with Douglas. Throughout this time and well before I had met him, there were several men in my life as good friends including Alan – my ex, Carl – seriously married, but not seriously enough it turned out, and Jordan – dear Jordan, too old, alas.

One of my friends once told me, “Julia, your expectations are too high, that’s your problem, you will never find a partner.” At the beginning of April 2021, I thought I had finally proved her wrong with Douglas and my crazy online dating days were well and truly over.

*In Luxembourg, coronavirus restrictions were being eased from May 2021 onwards.
Vaccines continued to be rolled out everywhere.*

Douglas

Douglas was so promising.

I had first met him on Meetyourlove, the dating site, the September before. We had shared so much since then but I kept thinking that knowing someone during a lockdown is not the same. What happens when everything opens up again?

With the lockdown measures softened from May 2021 and then later on being completely lifted, I finally got my answer.

I had just returned from a long weekend in Amsterdam when Douglas left together with his buddies for, as he had said, three or four days in Spain. Eventually, they would return after twelve days. It turned out they got drunk every day.

What can you do against a drinking addiction?

Raphael

“You deserve better than a drunk. It is a pity we live so far away, the distance is a real shame. One day, we will meet in person. Now I am going for a 100 km bike ride. I’ll tell you more later.”

Back from his ride, Raphael, whom I had met on Meetyourlove and kept in contact with, messaged me: “102 km, average 31 km/h. Anyway, I have been alone for the last 3 years. Sporty people like us don’t go out or drink alcohol, we stay home and we exercise. You’ll stay alone,

you'll be fine, just like me. Better than being with an alcoholic."

"If you allow me some sort of criticism," he continued, "first, you have this boyfriend of yours who leaves you after many years, then you have this married man who didn't leave his wife, and now you have a nice guy who has a drinking problem. All of this is too fast. You should stay alone for a while. Take it easy! Enjoy being single!"

Alan

I was thinking about all this when Alan, the aforementioned ex-boyfriend of many years called, apparently just to tell me that, "Things are really bad with my girlfriend. She said ugly things to me like I had ruined her entire life."

After telling him of my worries about Douglas, he asked me, "But why do you stay with this alcoholic? In April he was drunk, and now he is gone with his drunken friends for two weeks to get even more drunk. Maybe even have another woman. What do you know? Men are like this. You deserve better."

"One day I will adopt a child."

"You are too old for that. My girlfriend tells me the same thing, she will adopt. She is too old as well. When you were twenty, you wanted to have fun without getting pregnant. Now when it's too late, when you are too old, you want to be pregnant. Women only play with men. They all only played with me. I have to pay for it. I am too good for them."

I hung up.

Gérard

I had also met Gérard on Meetyourlove, in fact on the same day as Douglas. A short while later he had a bad cycling accident and we kept in touch. He was well recovered by now and messaged me some good news.

“I found the right partner four weeks ago. After all the things I have been through I am afraid of trusting somebody, we will see how things go. She is a really nice woman. Last week I invited her for a hike in Müllerthal. She is very intelligent and good looking. I am afraid of another disappointment. But you, you should protect yourself. Alcoholics sometimes get violent. Please talk with Douglas, but only in public. Better play it safe. You never know. Just imagine for a moment having this drunkard in your home. I see this all the time for my work.”

So I decided to ask Jordan if he would be with me as a witness when I talked to Douglas. I could always count on Jordan.

Out and about with Jasmine, Jordan and Peter

Last year's 'Nuit du Sport' - 'Night of Sports' - had been cancelled because of coronavirus. This year it was back as a lively, social, fun event to exercise together and to learn new sports, in an enjoyable atmosphere, with food, drinks, music and many different sports to be explored by the young and the less young.

This year, I got a message from the commune, asking me to present Pilates again, like all the years before. And there we were for the afternoon, Jasmine, Jordan, Peter and me: a run through the forest, a bike ride through the village, beach volleyball in the park and Pilates in the courtyard.

Two days before, an impressive, destructive thunderstorm had hit Luxembourg city, with heavy rain, lightning and flooding. Organisers and participants prayed for pleasant weather and fortunately it stayed dry although a bit chilly at seventeen degrees.

On our way back, we stayed a while on the playground, normally for kids. Well, we are big kids!

Seventeen degrees was not exactly what we expected to be a warm summer day, however we all turned up the next day at the annual 'Open Garden Day'. With lockdown measures being slowly abolished, these outdoor visits were finally allowed again. Jasmine, Jordan, Peter and I were in the labyrinth trying to find our way, with Jordan getting completely lost in it, so that we had to get him out. Otherwise, he would have been still stuck in there today.