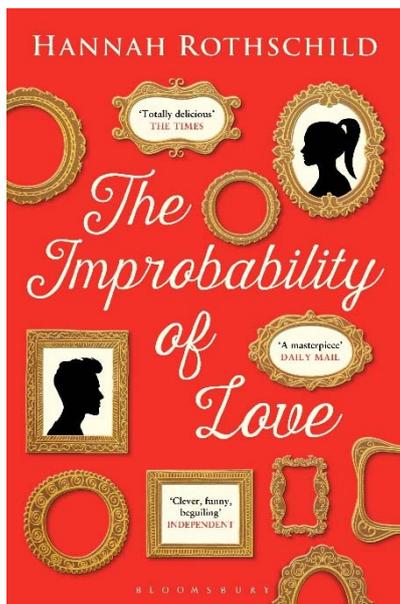


**\*\* LONGLISTED FOR THE BAILEYS WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION 2016 \*\***

*The Improbability of Love* is a romp, a joy, and an inspired feast of clever delights. Reading this book is like a raid on a high-end pastry shop – you marvel at the expertise and cunning of the creations, while never wanting the deliciousness to end' **Elizabeth Gilbert**



Perfect for readers of *The Rosie Project*, *One Day* and fans of Jojo Moyes

# *The Improbability of Love*

## **Hannah Rothschild**

**Bloomsbury Paperbacks / 1 April 2016 / £8.99**

When lovelorn Annie McDee stumbles across a dirty painting in a junk shop while looking for a present for an unsuitable man, she has no idea what she has discovered. Soon she finds herself drawn unwillingly into the tumultuous London art world, populated by exiled Russian oligarchs, avaricious Sheikas, desperate auctioneers and unscrupulous dealers, all scheming to get their hands on her painting – a lost eighteenth-century masterpiece called 'The Improbability of Love'. Delving into the painting's past, Annie will uncover not just an illustrious list of former owners, but some of the darkest secrets of European history – and in doing so she might just learn to open up to the possibility of falling in love again.

Irreverent, witty and sharply sweet, *The Improbability of Love* explores the confusion and turmoil of life and the complexities of love, loss and hurt – revealing the lows to which human nature can stoop and the heights to which the soul can soar.

'Every page is a joy. It's funny, sad, profound. The writing dances. It has panache. It's beautifully structured. It wears its scholarship with a balletic lightness and grace that shadows the Rococo painting at its heart. Its many and varied characters are an exquisite joy. Her range and emotional grasp is wonderful. What more can I say?

It's my Book of the Year **Barbara Trapido**

'A deliciously wicked satire ... It's exquisitely written, shimmering with eye-catching detail, whether describing works of art or the dishes on display at an extravagant banquet. Beneath all that, there's a serious debate about the value we put on things – whether it's art or relationships – and the prices we're prepared to pay. A masterpiece' **Daily Mail**

Hannah Rothschild is a writer and film director. Her documentary feature films have appeared on the BBC and HBO and at international film festivals. She has written film scripts for Ridley Scott and Working Title, and articles for *Vanity Fair*, the *New York Times*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue* and others. Her first book, *The Baroness*, was published in 2012 and has been translated into six languages. She is the Chair of the National Gallery, a trustee of the Tate Gallery and Waddesdon Manor, and a Vice President of the Hay Literary Festival. *The Improbability of Love*, her first novel, was a BBC Radio 2 Book Club pick and one of the *Guardian's* Best Books of 2015. She lives in London.

[hannahrothschild.com](http://hannahrothschild.com) / [@RothschildHan](https://twitter.com/RothschildHan)

### **PRAISE FOR THE IMPROBABILITY OF LOVE**

'Novel of the week ... It all adds up to an ingenious meditation on the true value of art – timely indeed at a moment when paintings and sculpture seem to have become just another currency' **Mail on Sunday**

'Impishly wicked, ruthlessly frank, touchingly percipient and sometimes laugh aloud funny to boot. Hannah Rothschild captures the contradiction between art as money and art as the soul of humanity really well' **The Times**

'Accomplished debut novel ... so pleasurable I've read it twice, and will read it again ... Beguiling' **Sunday Herald**

'A timely reflection on art's true value' **Observer**

'This frothy confection works on many levels, combining a touching love story with an exciting whodunit set in a hazardous, thrilling world. The story unfolds slowly at first, building up the tension until towards the end the chapters shorten and the pace quickens with staccato satire worthy of the pen of Evelyn Waugh. A real crowd pleaser' **Daily Express**

'Part of the novel's charm is that its characters, rich or poor, are all a mixture of frailties. Like a Rococo painting, this clever, funny, beguiling and wholly humane romance is a treat worthy of its subject' **Independent**

'Very funny and wonderfully acerbic. Though this novel goes into the darkest of dark places, the overall tone is totally delicious; conspicuous consumption on this scale hasn't been seen since the Eighties' **The Times**

'The plot of a page-turner ... A waspish satire of the art world' **Sunday Times**

'Absorbing ... Rothschild cleverly has the painting itself tell part of the story and beautifully marshals a wealth of historical detail ... There is a thought-provoking tale underneath about the true meaning of ownership' **Metro**

'A richly satisfying caper that probes the true value of art' **Mail on Sunday**

'Hugely entertaining ... Brilliant satire on the highest echelons of the art market' **Guardian, Best Reads of 2015**

'A fast-paced imbroglia of skulduggery, dirty dealing, even murder' **Lynn Barber, Sunday Times**

'A frolicsome art-world caper whose extravagant personalities tear boisterously through manicured worlds ... Her erudition — about restoration, authentication, art history in general — comes through on page after page ... Ms. Rothschild makes an impassioned case for art — as a companion to the lonely, as a restorative to those in pain — and leaves us with the unambiguous impression that it speaks with equal power to angels and demons' **New York Times**

'A witty romp that gently pokes fun at the pretentiousness of arty types' **Good Housekeeping**

'Both the satire of the art world and a romance ... Mischievous, fun and on the money' **Tatler**

'A bittersweet and highly enjoyable satire' **Woman & Home**

'Part detective story, part romance ... An excellent and very funny debut' **The Lady**

'If you did not know much about the passion and power behind the doors of the great auction houses and art dealers, you will by the end of this enchanting tale ... Part well-crafted mystery, part thriller, part love story, Rothschild's *The Improbability of Love* takes its readers on a wonderful journey into a rarefied' **Jewish Chronicle**

'An exhilarating and very witty read about London's new super-rich and the madness of the art world' **Plum Sykes, author of Bergdorf Blondes and The Debutant Divorcée**

'Mischievous, acute, rollicking and Dickensian without being sprawling' **Rachel Johnson, author of Notting Hill**

'Satirical, provocative and exceedingly humorous, this novel has fun with today's art world ... Rothschild delights us with glimpses of London life — as louche, chic and freakish as early Evelyn Waugh' **John Richardson, author of A Life of Picasso**