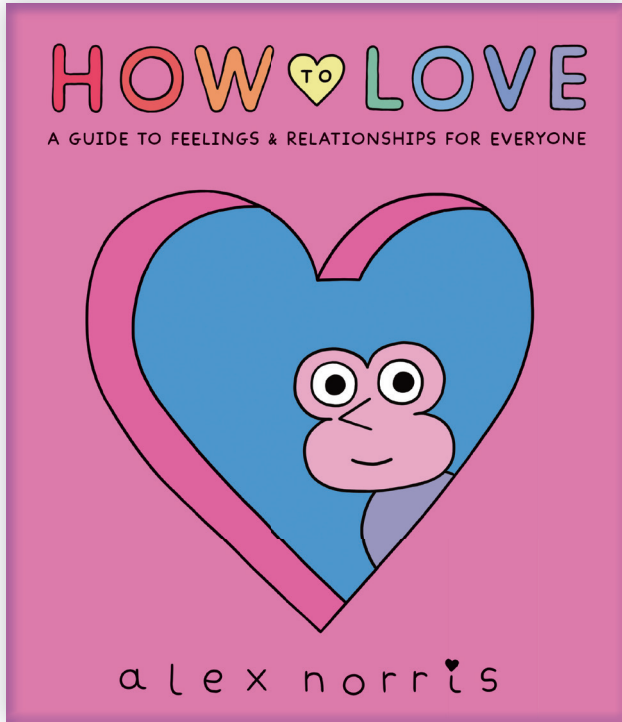




# HOW LOVE

A GUIDE TO FEELINGS & RELATIONSHIPS FOR EVERYONE

Alex Norris

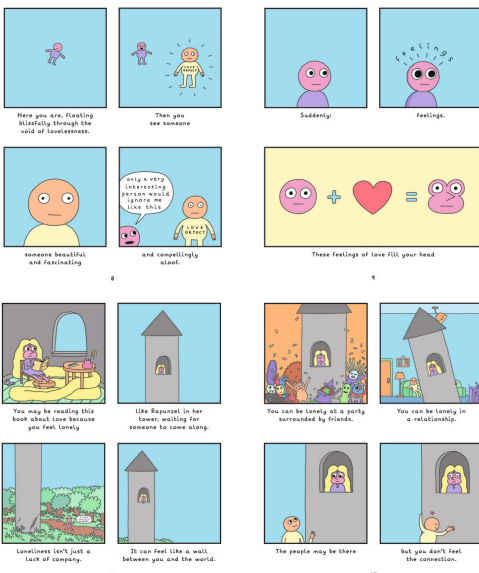


**A guide to dating, relationships, and identity—from a wildly popular web comic artist.**

Isn't it wonderful when love strikes? We connect with someone beautiful and interesting and suddenly—*feelings*. But what to do when that first crush levels you? When sparks fly and then fizzle? Or when love just . . . hurts? Aimed at both young people who are just starting out in their love lives and those with more experience seeking a fresh perspective, *How to Love* is a funny, wise, and unique full-color guide to relationships of all shapes and sizes by a popular web comic creator. Chatty and confessional, humorous and heartfelt, and inclusive of all genders and sexualities, this graphic handbook pairs a classic Q&A format with Alex Norris's bright, accessible, and unmistakably clever meta comic style. Certain to resonate with teens and adults, this one-of-a-kind guide offers valuable insights on everything from first love to self-love and love ever after.

**Alex Norris** is a queer Welsh artist and the award-winning creator of popular web series, including the viral *Webcomic Name*, *Dorris McComics*, and *Hello World!* They live in the UK.

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Age 14 and up • 224 pages





## A Note from Alex Norris

Hello! I am Alex Norris. I am best known for creating the web comic *Webcomic Name*, an award-winning series of three-panel comics that always end with “oh no.” I have been making them since 2016. *How to Love* also began as a web comic in 2014, for Webtoon, a Korean web comic platform that has amassed a huge international YA readership. I was one of their first English-language creators. It has been lovely to go back to this older work and adapt it into something bigger and better at a time when many young people are questioning the established norms of relationships, gender, sexuality, and how to lead a fulfilling life.

I wanted to explore the way love, usually portrayed as so positive and universal, can make us feel confused, awkward, and alien (especially as teenagers). The main character is the Lover, a generic character representing the reader. The main object of the Lover’s affections is the Beloved, who, despite revealing very little about themselves, becomes an alluring and enthralling love interest in the eyes of the Lover. Both characters are of no particular gender, in the way that only cartoon characters can be.

Each chapter of the book is a different question: mostly common questions that teenagers have when navigating their first experiences with love, but also some questions they might not think to ask and yet definitely need the answers to.

Despite *answering* questions, the main aim of the book is to encourage the reader to keep *asking* questions, to stop taking for granted the structures and norms they see depicted in most mainstream popular culture.

The Lover often feels trapped by the pressure to be more “normal” in order to deserve love and the expectation that happiness comes when you follow the rules properly. However, the Lover is extremely weird and either unable to follow those norms or unhappy despite doing so. I want to challenge assumptions about love we often take for granted, such as monogamy, heteronormativity, and the binary of lover/friend, as well as misconceptions about asexuality, aromanticism, and gender and sexual identity. I am a queer person, so this book is from a queer perspective, and its themes will resonate with queer or questioning readers. But I think that interrogating gender roles and normativity will be beneficial to any reader. My advice also applies to straight, monogamous, and more traditional relationships, but encourages the reader to think of them as a decision they are making for themselves rather than what is necessary to make them happy.

I am very proud of this book. I would have loved a book like this as a teenager—one that is rebellious and challenges norms, but also gives clear and empathetic advice on fundamental topics. It is also packed with ideas and jokes; I wanted to make something denser and more rereadable than many graphic books that you can blast through in a single sitting. I hope this book presents fresh visual metaphors and ways of representing love, a subject plagued with clichés and tired tropes. It is the culmination of more than ten years of making comics. I hope readers will make a deep connection with it, and in doing so have a deeper connection with their own identities and love lives.

Alex Norris 