

*The Gift*, by Barbara Browning

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*The Gift*, a novel by Barbara Browning, recounts one woman's life set in New York in the modern era, as she encounters and copes with whirlwind romances, admirers, friends and family, and the various cultures and traditions that are present among the globe. The story is told from a first person point of view as Barbara observes the relationships that she sees in the world around her and the connections that both separate and bring us together. Through these observations, she faces the wonder that is love both through personal experiences and those of the individuals in this world.

Due to her strong opinions and well-structured sentences and idea, Browning is able to keep her audience intrigued with the strong tones of love, heartbreak, and intimacy as the reader experiences what it is to be broken and be repaired, which is in part shown through the intense online communication that she carries on with an autistic musician in Germany throughout the novel. Additionally, the reader is able to establish a strong connection with the work and sympathize with Browning due to the form in which the story is written, in which many poems, photographs and excerpts from emails are included, which allow for her personal voice to seep through. Aside from these artifacts, Barbara's participation in certain activities, such as recording ukulele covers at night and sending these recordings to strangers that she meets on the internet, helps the reader comprehend and witness the intimate connections that can be established with those across the world. As a result, the novel presents itself as a detailed work of art that perfectly encompasses the nature of the human race and how we view, understand, and love the world that we live in, as well as how we are all connected, even if in the smallest ways.

Overall, Browning's work depicts life and love at its simplest form through the use of art, dance, performance, and words. It allows the reader to establish a strong connection with these subjects as we observe the results of intimately communicating with strangers that we come across on the internet, whether it be through words or song, and the impact in doing so. While doing so, the novel maintains the importance of love, performance, and the arts, as a means of attempting to establish a connection with those we come across, while maintaining awareness of all the chaos and destruction that occurs in today's world. By the end of the book, Browning proves to be an artist who is fascinated with comprehending the world around her and making it better one step at a time by building bridges with those she encounters. I would recommend this book to anyone who is

willing to view the world through the eyes of an artist and is open to analyzing the world and the chaos that is love and life with the openness of a writer, singer, and photographer.