

Feeling Fate: A Memoir of Love, Intuition, and Spirit

Joni Sensel

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Spiritual and intuitive, the memoir Feeling Fate covers the signs and epiphanies that linked a woman to her deceased lover.

Joni Sensel's spiritual memoir *Feeling Fate* concerns romantic love, ephemeral connections, and grief.

Following a painful divorce and years of depression, Sensel fell in love in with Tony, whom she met on a scuba diving trip. A series of coincidences persuaded the new couple that they were meant for each other. Sensel's sense of joy was acute. When she had a vision that Tony would die within a few years, she resolved to enjoy their love while it lasted.

The first part of the book is addressed to Tony; Sensel speaks to him directly, absorbing herself in a world of two that excludes the wider audience. The text loses itself in the certainty of Sensel's early feelings for him: "That's partly why I'm revisiting all this with you. I need the reminder, again and again. My heart never doubted the course we had set." The language is precise, but also immersed grief; the passages are conversational, but densely intimate, holding the rest of the world at a distance.

But after this first section, the book pivots and becomes more welcoming. Its vision broadens; Sensel begins to track the coincidences and everyday magic that suggested a connection to Tony in his spiritual afterlife.

A tribute to Sensel's love affair as well as a spiritual exploration, the book navigates the process of mourning in intriguing ways. It is organized with an eye toward creating suspense even when Tony's ending is already in sight. Each chapter and section concludes with a cliffhanger about coming emotions and insights; phrases like "a sense of fragility lurked under the surface" and "It would be a long time before my own ritual did for me what that Catholic Mass was designed for" propel interest. Still, Sensel's process of coming to terms with Tony's loss is long; the book acknowledges this well.

Self-deprecating humor dominates, making Sensel a relatable narrator. Her immediate storytelling combines with the dispensing of pragmatic wisdom, imparting a sense of the complexity of her bereavement. The book indulges in clever linguistic turns and word play, making it lively and upbeat, even though it is handling the painful subject of Sensel's grief.

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MICHELE SHARPE (December 24, 2021)

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