



# If Love Were All: A Novel

*Judith Henry Wall*

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**If Love Were All: A Novel** Judith Henry Wall

**A novel for anyone who remembers first love -- and who wonders what might have been...**

There is life after death. Or at least that is what one recently widowed woman discovers in this poignant and contemporary novel about old love lost and new love found.

After twenty-seven years of being a devoted wife and mother, Charlotte Haberman suddenly finds herself alone. With the death of her husband after a long, painful struggle with cancer and all three of her children off to college, Charlotte realizes that she is not only alone -- she is free. And she is young enough at forty-seven to want more than memories.

She had loved and admired her husband, Stan, as did almost everyone else in their small Nebraska town where he ran the local newspaper. He was a truly good man, and an especially good father. Now, as Charlotte grieves, she also forces herself to look ahead to a future as a single woman. But her three children are devastated by his loss; they can't imagine life without him, and they can't imagine their mother's life with anyone else. They resist any suggestion that she might eventually date other men, and are horrified when Charlotte announces she is going to sell the family home.

Nervous about the future, but determined not to be buried with her husband, Charlotte remains firm in her resolve to start over again with or without the approval of her children. First however she must banish a memory that will not die: Cory Lee Jones, the boy she loved before Stan. She had known Cory Lee for only one summer, but she remembers it as the most glorious and most passionate summer of her life, never forgotten and perhaps never gotten over. But Cory Lee went to Vietnam, and when he returned to America, he did not come back to Charlotte. Free now to explore the past, she sets out with renewed purpose, both to find him and to put to rest at last any lingering doubts about what might have been.

In the course of her search, Charlotte encounters many obstacles -- the romantic problems of her children (especially Suzanne, the youngest, who recently suffered a miscarriage, and whose hopes for a career as a doctor are put on indefinite hold when she marries), her sister's disintegrating marriage, and her mother's sour disapproval of virtually everything Charlotte says and does. In between, there are her own entanglements -- a brief, bittersweet romance with a younger man who reminds her more than she'd like to admit of Cory Lee, and a genuine, gradual attraction between her and a retired military officer. And finally there is Cory Lee himself, to whom she makes a final pilgrimage in her search for herself, so that at last she can get on with her life.

With a warm, appealing heroine who unflinchingly faces every curve life throws her way, *If Love Were All* will speak to any woman who has ever yearned for a midlife romantic adventure, or daydreamed about her first love.

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