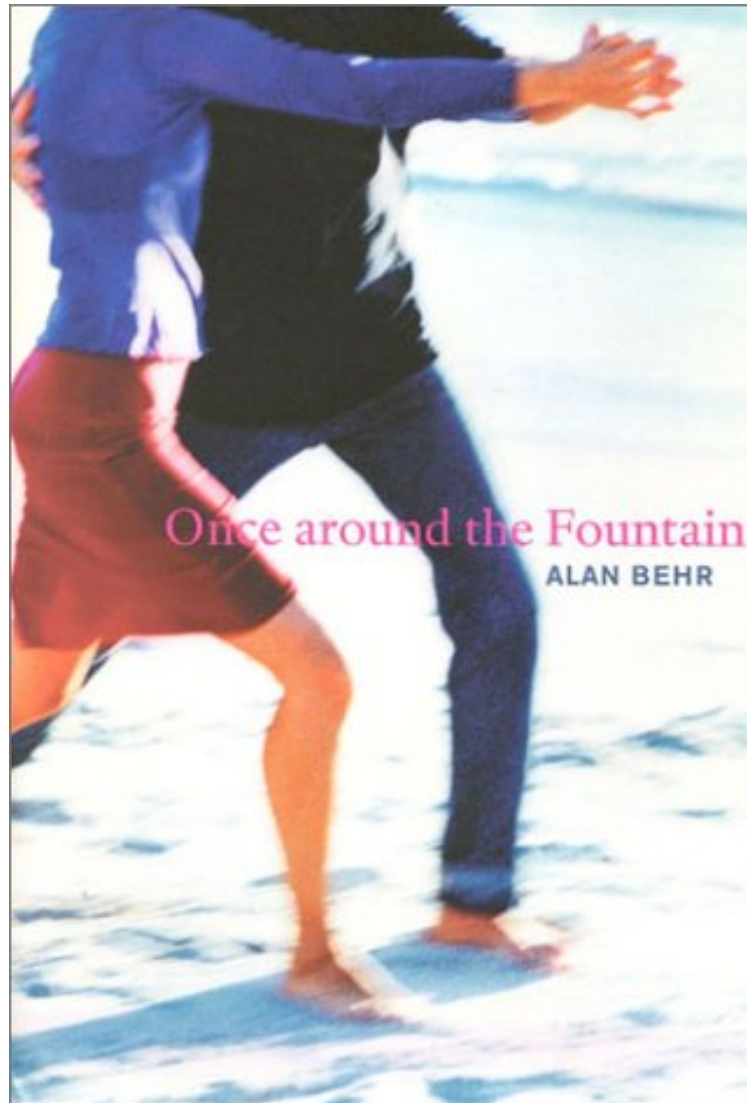


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Once Around the Fountain

Alan Behr

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Alan Behr : Once Around the Fountain before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Once Around the Fountain:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. From table for one to table for two--a traveler finds loveBy Lauren JohnOnce around the fountain book reviewNovember 25, 2001I have always enjoyed travel accounts written by writers in their thirties and forties because at this time in their lives, most writers (at least the good ones) bring just the right amount of own personal baggage along. In other words, if they tell it right, there is an interesting balance of give and take--sometimes the travel writer changes the landscape and sometimes the landscape changes him.As I result, I

enjoyed reading the mature but unjaded observations of travel writer/ attorney Alan Behr. He writes about a decade of European travel that begins in his early thirties and ends in his early forties. He begins his travels as a bachelor and there is a sexual "give and take" as he has an affair with a destitute but resourceful young chambermaid in Budapest-- and rejects the advances of a wealthy, less resourceful dowager he meets at a caf in Portofino. Mid-way through his memoirs, he cautiously starts to travel with Julie Hackett, a New York fashion consultant, whom he quickly realizes is "the one." Julie turns out to be an energetic and enthusiastic traveler and the give and take continues, sometimes romantically, and sometimes, literally, as Behr tracks down a pair of white pants that Julie leaves behind in a hotel room. While at first they squabble over driving and navigation, soon Alan and Julie are traveling as a finely tuned pair, even coordinating efforts to save and travel with an unwieldy pineapple left from a hotel gift basket. This book educates as it amuses. Behr, currently a New Yorker by way of New Orleans, is descended from a family forced to flee Germany during World War II. His German roots run so deep, that he holds dual American and German citizenships-- and has the passports to prove it. As a result, he is at his best describing Germany-- and we learn a great deal about German architecture and history, as well as the nature of its people. Behr describes the cathedral of Cologne, which has withstood World War II bombers and an earthquake, writing that it "towers above a city rebuilt on the quick by the lowest bidder, a Gothic thumb in the modernist eye." On a Sunday at dawn at Hamburg's open-air fish market, he sees "bacchant and churchgoers contentedly carried away swaddled fish and tubs filled with houseplants rumored to be Dutch and disease-ridden." This book reminds me of another that I enjoyed-- New Yorker Adam Gopnik's book *Paris to the Moon*-- even though Gopnik stayed in one place and Behr moves around. In both cases, however, these books on European lifestyle and travel are more about people than they are about places and things. Highly recommended! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Travelers tale with Spice By Lina Eve Travelers tales are amongst my favourite reading, so I was delighted to find Alan Behr's dry humored account of his travels in the "chocolate belt" in Europe. As a recent bachelor, and still very cautious of involvement, Behr revisits his old travel haunts, casually giving us the pleasure of some wonderfully crafted writing and the benefit of his extensive research of local history. Despite his family having to flee war torn Europe in the late 30's, Behr feels strongly connected to his German roots and writes affectionately and knowledgeably about the country. I found this particularly interesting as I was born in Germany, but had previously only heard disparaging stories about the country as my family suffered under the Nazi reign. Feeling Behr's connection, added another dimension and opened some doors on my rather narrow view. Some of Behr's sexual dalliances made me wonder in which direction the story was heading, but the tale gains great warmth and depth when Alan meets Julie, the real love interest. Together they go traveling back to Europe and into exploring their emotions. It all makes for compulsive reading! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Perfect bonding By A Customer We are a couple of post peak yuppies who work too much and spend the best moments of our lives travelling. Alan Behr's very insightful observations are well wrought, highly entertaining and even profound. The book also provides legitimate historical information that goes far beyond most tourist guides. But for us, the best aspect of his book is his depiction of the conquest of love and discovery of self through travel in the European settings that we both know so well. The only minor note is that the book could use an index, to navigate more easily from city to city. For anyone who loves Europe, travelling, or just loving his/her partner and trying to figure out the meaning of our voyage in life, this book is a delightful companion.

A humourous, tender memoir about love in motion.

From Publishers Weekly Lawyer and travel writer Alan Behr spent the days he wasn't suited and sitting behind a desk bouncing around Europe, visiting cathedrals and strip clubs, gambling and, against his better judgment, drinking beer for breakfast. It's all well and good, but it gets much better when Behr, back in New York, meets Julie Hackett, and after a false start or two, embarks upon a life of companionship and travel with her. In *Once Around the Fountain* (the title refers to when Behr insists Julie carry her suitcase from his apartment to Lincoln Center's fountain a few blocks away and back to make sure it's light enough) Behr and his new love revisit the old European haunts in a memoir that charts geographic and emotional voyages in refreshing, often humorous prose. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Behr, a travel writer, photographer, and lawyer, takes the reader on a European journey that is as much a romantic memoir as a travelog. Beginning with the painful breakup of one relationship, the story detours through a series of brief encounters and near misses and ends with Behr's marriage to Julie, whom he meets at a dance around a fountain. Along the way, Behr and his friends make merry in Portofino, visit museums in London and Munich, argue with unpleasant waiters and hotel clerks, and even skinny dip in Capri. His well-drawn descriptions of people and interest in them make this book a pleasure to read. The sad and frightened maid in Budapest who is grateful for Behr's company, the death of a wealthy drug-addicted Swiss woman whose child must now be raised by its grandmother, and especially Behr's growing relationship with his future wife make for an intimate look at a man ready to share his life. Although there are a few amusing episodes, the tone is usually somber, perhaps prompted by Julie's serious health problems, with which the book ends. For larger public libraries. (Photographs not seen.) Linda M. Kaufmann, Freel Lib., Massachusetts Coll. of Liberal Arts, North

