



XO, OX: A Love Story

Adam Rex , Scott Campbell (Illustrations) , Andrew Arnold (Design)

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The hilarious tale of love between a hapless ox and a fabulous gazelle, told in correspondence.

"Dear Gazelle,

For some time now I have wanted to write a letter to say how much I admire you. You are so graceful and fine. Even when you are running from tigers you are like a ballerina who is running away from tigers.

I think that what I'm trying to say is that I love you.

XO,
OX"

And so begins an epic, if initially unrequited, love affair between a graceful gazelle and a clumsy, hapless ox. Romance will never be the same.

Adam Rex's hilarious, sweet, and at times heartbreakingly romantic letters between a hopelessly romantic ox and a conceited, beautiful gazelle are paired perfectly with Scott Campbell's joyful illustrations to bring you a romance for the ages.

XO, OX: A Love Story Details

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Author : Adam Rex , Scott Campbell (Illustrations) , Andrew Arnold (Design)

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From Reader Review XO, OX: A Love Story for online ebook

Theresa says

Truly bizarre for a kids' picture book, but the illustrations are pretty good I guess. Described this to my coworker as negging for kids, and I stand by it.

KC says

What a way to start the day. This clever, humorous, and truthful yet somewhat heartbreak tale is told in corespondents between a hapless ox and a conceited gazelle. Truthful and endearing. Love the illustrations. Take the time to read the bit about the author and illustrator in the back. It's hilarious!!!

Kazia says

Wow NOPE. This started out cute but turned promptly into a story about stalking and harassment. It absolutely is not a love story. Such a disappointment.

Carmen says

I'm not sure how I feel about this book. Oh, wait, yes, I am: it's filth.

Lured in by the inundation of positive reviews for this: cute, funny, romantic etc. I was really looking forward to reading this, only to be punched in the face by some disgusting rhetoric.

Let's review:

Ox admires Gazelle, who is... an actress? A model? Definitely a famous lady famous for being beautiful.

Dear Gazelle,

For some time now I have wanted to write you a letter to say how much I admire you. You are so graceful and fine. Even when you are running from tigers you are like a ballerina who is running from tigers.

I think that what I am trying to say is that I love you.

*XO,
OX*

She writes him two form letters. He keeps writing and writing her, not accepting her disinterest. She gets increasingly and increasingly frustrated with him, but eventually caves and they end up in a relationship.

THE END

- 1.) You 'love' her? You've never even met her. You just think she's attractive physically. Fuck that shit.
- 2.) Not taking 'no' for an answer will wear down women and eventually they will see what a great guy you are and love you. GREAT PLAN! Not creepy at all. Don't ever accept 'no' from a woman who doesn't want to date you.
- 3.) Normal, average, smelly men who are creeps and/or stalkers deserve beautiful model wives because... because... I'm drawing a blank here. I would say "They are good people" but that isn't true. Just look at this book or at any sitcom ever where a lazy, uncaring, ungrateful, man-child has a beautiful model wife who adores him and coddles him even though he's not even a particularly good man with a good heart.
- 4.) Gotta bring women down to their PLACE! Put them in their place. That model/actress thinks she's SO great, doesn't she?!?! And sure, she's pretty, but she's not perfect! And she'll come to LOVE and APPRECIATE a man who points out her flaws to her and brings her down a notch! Fuck women with high self-esteem, they are stuck-up bitches who need to be reminded of their place in the world!
- 5.) Women who are actresses and models are stuck-up bitches. Actually, all beautiful women are stuck up and spend literally all day doing nothing but looking in mirrors. That's ALL Gazelle is pictured doing before Ox comes into her life. She just stares into a mirror constantly. After they are a couple, she is pictured listening to music, feeding birds, playing guitar, and painting.
- 6.) Gazelle is beautiful, rich, stuck-up, and vain. Ox is plain, poorer, stupid, and constantly optimistic. These are caricatures, not characters.
- 7.) You should want, need, think you're in love with and relentlessly pursue beautiful women - even when they have NO redeeming values or interesting traits, or even a personality SOLELY because they are beautiful. That's all you need in a woman and all that is worth anything in a female. A personality-less, completely uninteresting and dull gorgeous woman is a worthwhile lifemate. (Ugh, this is a terrible message. Please teach your children that a shining personality is going to serve them much better in choosing a lifemate than looks!)

Tl;dr - Poison for the minds of your children. There's nothing sweet about this.

Peter Monn says

This book is fantastic! In fact I made an entire video about it called How to Deal With Crazy Fans on my YouTube channel <http://youtube.com/pemovision>

Samantha says

Nope. When a woman says no, don't continue to harass her.

Maybe kids won't think of it that way, but it creeped me out to an insane degree. I don't know what this book

was trying to accomplish? Maybe my personal experiences have just totally ruined the "romance" thing it was trying to do?

Will not use or recommend.

Elizabeth Bernhardt says

The drawings are beautiful! The message is not. If someone tells you they aren't interested, you should listen! If someone insults you unrelentingly, you shouldn't thank them for it! At first I thought I might have been oversensitive, but based on the faces of the parents at my storytime, I wasn't.

Alexandra Calaway says

Ugh, I really, really want to like this but generally agree with all the negative reviewers. This normalizes rape culture. She doesn't mean no, even though she's said it over and over again. Also, can't get over that Gazelle thinks well of herself, so she's a shallow, worthless woman. Um, no. It's fine for Gazelle to think well of herself? Like literally good self-esteem is good for women to have?

UUUUUUGGGGGHHHHHH. No. Two stars for the illustrations? It wanted so badly to be cute.

Allison says

I loved the art and the whole setup was very cute, but oh, this is a story about a guy who won't take no for an answer and badgers the girl into being with him. Yes, Gazelle needed to chill, but she told Ox no and he didn't listen. :(

Baby Bookworm says

This review was originally written for The Baby Bookworm. Visit us for new picture books reviews daily!

Hello, everyone! Today's book is *XO, Ox: A Love Story* by Adam Rex and Scott Campbell, an unconventional "love" story.

Ox loves how beautiful and graceful Gazelle is, so he writes her letter after letter declaring his devotion. Gazelle is conceited and egocentric, however, and treats him dismissively, then insultingly. Still, Ox persists, knowing that she could never love him but-

You know what, I'm going to stop there. This book is disturbing. Like, deeply disturbing. For a book that has "A Love Story," in its title, this is a terrible message for children about what love is.

Ox is blindly persistent in his affection toward Gazelle, someone he claims to love, but has never met

(therefore, he is attracted to her, NOT “in love”), writing her multiple letters despite Gazelle’s insistence that he stop doing so. Gazelle, a stuck-up diva-type character, then insults his looks, hygiene and intelligence (cruelly, I might add). Still, Ox does not leave her alone, inadvertently insulting her, which drives her into a tear-fueled rage. And this makes her... decide she DOES love him?! At least, I think, as the ending is vague and abrupt.

That is a terrifying message to send to children about love. “Don’t respect someone’s wishes when they repeatedly tell you ‘no’” and “If someone treats you like dirt, don’t give up, because they may someday love you,” are two dangerously old-fashioned notions that have no place in a children’s book about “love” published in 2017.

The book has nice illustrations, and JJ is fortunately young enough to not understand the implications of the plot, so take that for what it’s worth. I’m so bummed about this too, because we have adored Rex’s and Campbell’s individual work in the past. But I cannot, in good conscience, recommend that anyone read this to an impressionable child. See you tomorrow, with better tidings I hope.

Be sure to check out The Baby Bookworm for more reviews!

Jillian Heise says

Edited to add: The more I've thought about it, the more damaging I think it is to share this with young children without a discussion about the context around the concerns about consent, so I can't recommend it. Also, the fact that it explicitly says this is a "Love story" in the title is concerning to me. This is certainly not the superficial (Ox doesn't even know her, only her looks), abusive (only after he tells Gazelle what's wrong with her does she start to like him) type of love I'd want to promote to children or teens. I'm more bothered by this story the more I think about it.

Initial thoughts: I'm really torn. Though I can see it as a funny story, I also worry that it promotes stalking a little too much, but that could be me taking it too seriously. However, as much as I find the humor in it, the other part of me that thinks about how we are trying to teach the importance of consent to our youth worries about what message it sends if we find it funny that a girl directly tells a boy to stop writing to her, yet he continues to do so. Am I just overthinking it? I'm not sure.

Courtney says

I rarely give a one star, and maybe I'm being ridiculous here...but Gazelle said no, and Ox wouldn't take no for an answer. I don't like sending that message to children when it comes to relationships, especially love.

Racheal says

This book is some bullshit (pun totally intended).

I'm sure many of the other 1-star reviews amply cover its transgressions, so I'll mostly just say that it is extremely superficial in its version of "love", and it features a dude continually trying to contact and "woo" a woman who very explicitly tells him to leave her alone *multiple* times. It's just another example of the tired

idea that badgering a woman until she gives in is the key to getting an uninterested woman to like you, when in fact it's just super creepy.

Sandy says

This started out with a cross of wacky and cute and then became downright creepy. Like stfu Ox, Lady Gazelle didn't want to talk to you and yet you insisted, wearing her down and making her feel bad in the process. I'll probably be accused of being too serious but idgaf, I don't like the implicit message here that if you like someone and *just keep at it*, the object of your affections will suddenly change their mind and fall for you. That's not real life. Plus the story doesn't even show them interacting face to face so HOW DO THEY EVEN LIKE EACH OTHER AT THE END? It's all based on looks from Ox's point of view and Lady Gazelle is frustrated 95% of the time. I could go on but tbh but the only thing I can honestly say I liked about this picture book were the illustrations. They were really nice to look at, even if the overall story was not.

Meredith says

This is more of a stalker story than a love story. Extra star for the letters to the reader on the back jacket copy.
