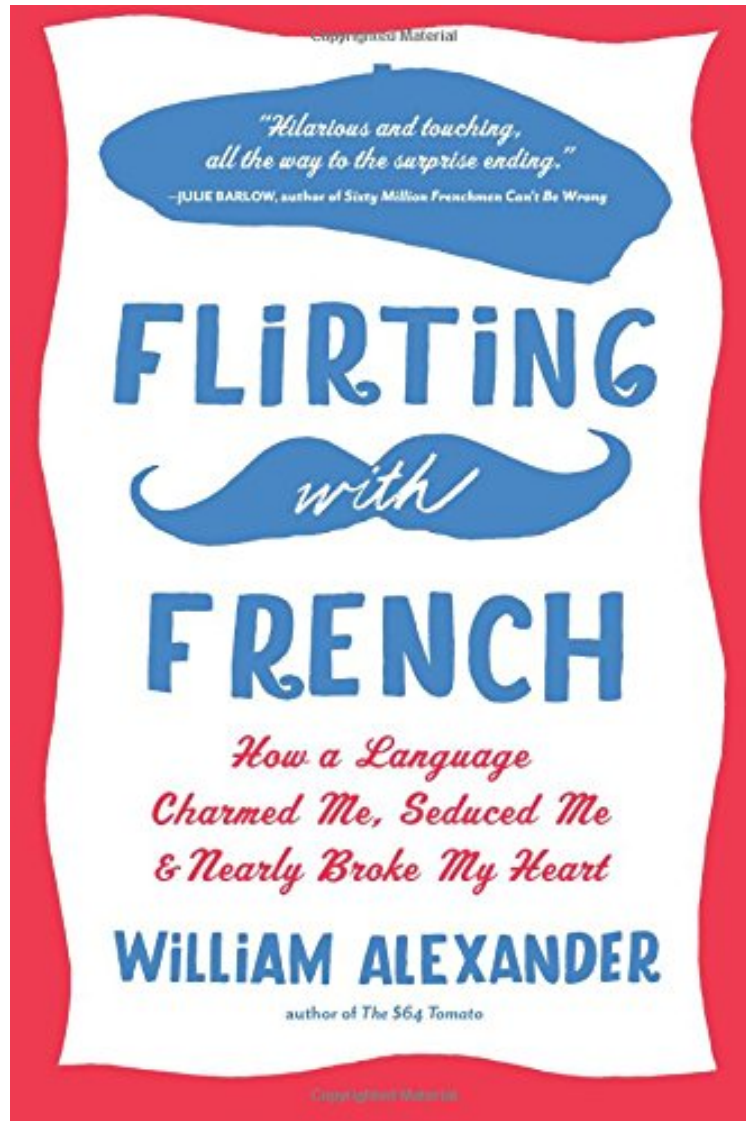


Flirting with French: How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me, and Nearly Broke My Heart

William Alexander

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William Alexander : Flirting with French: How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me, and Nearly Broke My Heart before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flirting with French: How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me, and Nearly Broke My Heart:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. I loved this book so much I think I have waxed ...By S. Roach I loved this book so much I think I have waxed lyrical about it to about 50 of my friends, absolutely insisting they read it.

Having spent 2 years now in Geneva, and learning (trying to) this mad, infuriating, beautiful, complicated, seemingly unattainable language, I can relate so closely to every single observation made by William Alexander. And yes, I really can feel that my brain cells have all had the shock of their lives. Being a 45 year old learner, it has been difficult trying to retain some of the endless grammar rules, but what a pleasure it has been as I have started to string sentences together. We are now moving back to an English speaking country, but no matter what I will continue with my French, because as William says, learning a language truly is the fountain of youth. Thank you for a humorous and entertaining approach to a subject that could be dry and dull. Keep them coming.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is one of the BEST books I've ever read about France and everything French! By Tia This is one of the BEST books I've ever read about France and everything French! Monsieur Alexander (and I say this with the utmost respect because after what he's been through he deserves the title Monsieur) is a brilliant writer. He draws you into the book so that you feel like you are living the experiences with him. Actually, many things he describes I can truly relate to as some of my own experiences. There are some sad and heartfelt moments that want to make you cry. On the flip side, there are some very funny stories he tells that had me in stitches...not literally but laughing so hard it hurt. The title of the book is so appropriate. There are nuances in the book that touch me personally. His wife, Anne, is amazing in understanding the journey of his Francophile life and encouraging him along the way. The sections of the book that she's in are very funny and so relatable. This book is a Must Read. I read it on the flight to France and I will read it again. I recommend it highly!

Monsieur Alexander, Votre courage est inspirant et impressionnant. J'admire votre détermination!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and funny but in a poignant way. By SansPeurVJ This is a realistic, but at the same time a tongue-in-cheek, portrayal of a fiftyish adult's travails in trying to master a foreign language which in this case is French. Ah, the seduction of that language! So many victims. So many scarred survivors. It seems that the author attained a relatively limited amount of language skills enhancement, by his own admission, despite going all the way to France for a language immersion type experience. Age apparently is the critical factor. No amount of input seems able to fully surmount that barrier, that is, if I understood the author's analysis correctly, it seems unable to create appropriate neuronal connections in the brain for heavy duty tasks like fluent mastery of a foreign language if one didn't have some degree of fluency rather early on in life. Reading the details of all that is, well, a trifle disheartening. But there is a silver lining of sorts. Namely, that any serious attempt to acquire foreign language skills may increase cognitive skills despite the barrier posed by aging. I am beginning to think that studying a foreign language is about on par with doing crosswords or Sudoku. It can and does help, at least a little, if one wants to stay sharp. But try not to harbor unrealistic expectations. ;)

A delightful and courageous tale and a romping good read. Voila! Mark Greenside, author of *Ill Never Be French (No Matter What I Do)* William Alexander is more than a Francophile. He wants to be French. There's one small obstacle though: he doesn't speak la langue française. In *Flirting with French*, Alexander sets out to conquer the language he loves. But will it love him back? Alexander eats, breathes, and sleeps French (even conjugating in his dreams). He travels to France, where mistranslations send him bicycling off in all sorts of wrong directions, and he nearly drowns in an immersion class in Provence, where, faced with the riddle of masculine breasts, feminine beards, and a turkey cutlet of uncertain gender, he starts to wonder whether he should've taken up golf instead of French. While playing hooky from grammar lessons and memory techniques, Alexander reports on the riotous workings of the Académie française, the four-hundred-year-old institution charged with keeping the language pure; explores the science of human communication, learning why it's harder for fifty-year-olds to learn a second language than it is for five-year-olds; and, frustrated with his progress, explores an IBM research lab, where he trades barbs with a futuristic hand-held translator. Does he succeed in becoming fluent? Readers will be as surprised as Alexander is to discover that, in a fascinating twist, studying French may have had a far greater impact on his life than actually learning to speak it ever would. A blend of passion and neuroscience, this literary love affair offers surprise insights into the human brain and the benefits of learning a second language. Reading William Alexander's book is akin to having an MRI of the soul. Laura Shaine Cunningham, author of *Sleeping Arrangements* Alexander proves that learning a new language is an adventure of its own--with all the unexpected obstacles, surprising breakthroughs and moments of sublime pleasure traveling brings. Julie Barlow, author of *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong*

A charming memoir by a passionate Francophile - Kirkus s At the age of 57, Alexander decided to fulfill his lifelong dream of learning French. His 13-month marathon of language learning included five levels of Rosetta Stone, two Pimsleur audio courses, hundreds of podcasts, 52 TV episodes of French in Action, two immersion classes (one, in France, lasting two weeks), reading dual-language books, watching TV5 Monde, emailing with a French pen pal and Skyping with another. Alexander's love affair with French, he concludes in this wry and warmhearted memoir, has reaped unexpected rewards. Highly readable.. Mr. Alexander presents himself as an apprentice, but the reader quickly discovers he is also a master teacher . . . Mr. Alexander even manages a highly readable gloss of Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory, a feat of intellectual distillation akin to 'Jacques Derrida for Dummies.'"--Wall Street Journal "One of America's funniest writers has done it again...Trs, trs bien!" -- Counterpunch How old is too old to learn something

new? Bon courage, mes amis. As Alexander discovers, French is the least of it when you've reached late middle age...He throws himself into learning to speak French with Grard Depardieu-like gusto in a George Plimpton-like stunt...But he never gives up. He hurls himself at French again and again almost like a cartoon character who, smacking up against a slammed door, slides to the floor in a puddle of humiliation. -- The New York Times Book From the AuthorOne reader told me that *Flirting with French* was *The \$64 Tomato*, but with Frenchman instead of groundhogs. My resident groundhog takes offense, but I hope that my losses at French are the readers' gain -- and laughter. Whether you've failed to learn French or Italian, Spanish or German, if you've ever tried to learn a foreign language, you'll relate to my experiences. I might've learned more French if I'd spent less time delving into such mysteries as why a lamp has a gender; why the French have a dedicated word for "husband" but not for "wife," and where the heck is the hand-held universal language translator that Captain Kirk used 40 years ago, but someone has to answer these questions, so it may as well be moi. I invite you to join me in my quest to become French. Au revoir!

From the Back CoverA delightful and courageous tale and a romping good read. Voila! Mark Greenside, author of *Ill Never Be French (No Matter What I Do)* William Alexander is setting out to master the Art of French Speaking. In this entertaining amble through the French language and its colorful history, through linguistics and brain science, what Alexander discovers while not learning French is its own reward. A blend of passion and neuroscience, this literary love affair offers surprising insights into the human brain and the benefits of learning a second language. Reading William Alexander's book is akin to having an MRI of the soul. Laura Shaine Cunningham, author of *Sleeping Arrangements* Reading *Flirting with French* motivates me to continue courting the language, no matter how often I'm stood up midsentence! Kristen Espinasse, author of *Words in a French Life* Alexander proves that learning a new language is an adventure of its own--with all the unexpected obstacles, surprising breakthroughs, and moments of sublime pleasure that traveling brings. Julie Barlow, author of *Sixty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong* Wry and warmhearted . . . A charming memoir by a passionate Francophile. Kirkus s