

200 years after Beethoven wrote a passionate love letter to a woman whose name he omitted, here is the life story of Josephine Countess von Brunsvik, the only woman whom the composer ever loved: There were at least 15 more love letters to her. She was his "Only Beloved", his "Everything", his "Angel". He vowed to remain forever faithful and devoted to her – and he did. Their love was "made in Heaven" – however, there was to be no fulfillment in this life, no happy end.

Josephine's fate was an extremely tragic one: Starting off as a promising pianist (with Beethoven's help), the rich and beautiful young Countess was coveted and admired by Viennese High Society. She was married against her will; her husband died suddenly and she had to look after four little children... Her affection for the composer left her torn between love and duty – the classic romantic conflict between the pursuit of individual happiness and the obligations imposed by the rigid class structure of the morbid Austro-Hungarian Empire.

German-born New Zealand author John E Klapproth narrates with empathy and erudition the major biographical details of Josephine's "Journey from Heaven to Hell" and her relationship to Beethoven, showing how their love, though doomed, was ultimately the major motivating force that inspired and enabled the composer to create, despite increasing deafness and isolation, the most beautiful and lyrical music of all times.

With new translations of all quoted German sources, this is a meticulously investigated treatise, based on the latest pertinent scholarly research. The in some places still popular conjecture by the American author Solomon that Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved" might have been a brief acquaintance called Antonie Brentano is exposed and discredited, as it is based on flawed interpretations and many erroneous translations.



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