OUT TO SCORE

SUMMER SPECIAL

With the country firmly in the grip of World Cup fever, there will be many non-footie-loving ladies just desperate for the whole thing to be over.

But help is at hand with a clutch of top rom-com writers coming to the rescue...

SPARKLING PROSE: Allison Pearson

LIVING LA VIDA LOCA by Belinda Jones (Hodder £6.99): Jones' latest steamy romance follows up-for-it best friends Carmen and Beth on the ultimate escapist reality TV caper. Under the premise of having to learn to tango in Argentina, flamenco in Spain and salsa in Cuba, they find plenty of other distractions in Buenos Aires, Seville and Havana. However, despite the endless gauchos, matadors and dirty dancers, laced with dreamy sunsets and cocktails, Carmen and Beth still struggle to find any sense of meaningful and lasting love. Is Mr Right all they're really after?

THE LOVE VERB by Jane Green (Michael Joseph £16.99): **Yet another stylish but wickedly insightful take on the modern American family and the role love has to play. Callie has the perfect life – a loving husband, two adorable children, a beautiful home and a rewarding job as a portrait photographer. Her younger sister Steffi is much more of a free spirit, but happy with it, while Callie's best friend Lila has just met divorced dad Ed. However, with long divorced parents too, Callie feels she's got the best deal. Then her cancer returns and the meaning of family, friends and love is truly, heart-wrenchingly tested.**

I THINK I LOVE YOU by Allison Pearson (Chatto & Windus £12.99)

This will be this summer's smash hit. Sparkling prose and hilariously sharp period detail add to an ingeniously original plot. It's the 1970s and 13-year-old Petra and her best mate Sharon worship David Cassidy. Little knowing to them, Cassidy's intimate details are being penned by a disgruntled rock journalist called Bill. Fast forward two and half decades and newly broken-hearted Petra has a 13-year-old daughter of her own, while Bill has yet to find his soulmate until fate, in the shape of Petra, intervenes.

GETTING OVER MR RIGHT by Christie Manby (Hodder & Stoughton £6.99): **A study looking at how heartbreak might not be the worst thing that ever happened. Ashleigh meets the man of her dreams in Michael Parker. He's charming, solvent and super sexy, but soon dumps Ashleigh via Facebook. She fights to get him back but, eventually, reality dawns – he was always a jerk. Then a rather lovely man called Jack turns up just around the corner.**

A PERFECT PROPOSAL by Katie Fforde (Century £16.99): Katie – current chair of the Romantic Novelists' Association – spreads her literary wings and switches the love action from rural England to Manhattan and Connecticut. Sophie Apperly has never been taken seriously by her fiercely competitive yet financially stretched family, so she leaps at a chance to visit her best friend in America. Loving the Big Apple, Sophie meets a feisty old dame called Matilda, who just so happens to have a very attractive, but complicated grandson, Luke. Suddenly, the lad can provide the answer to Sophie's family's financial woes, but not without personal cost.