



## The Pursuit of Love & Love in a Cold Climate: Two Novels

By Nancy Mitford

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Few aristocratic English families of the twentieth century enjoyed the glamorous notoriety of the infamous Mitford sisters. Nancy Mitford's most famous novels, **The Pursuit of Love** and **Love in a Cold Climate**, satirize British aristocracy in the twenties and thirties through the amorous adventures of the Radletts, an exuberantly unconventional family closely modelled on Mitford's own.

The Radletts of Alconleigh occupy the heights of genteel eccentricity, from terrifying Lord Alconleigh (who, like Mitford's father, used to hunt his children with bloodhounds when foxes were not available), to his gentle wife, Sadie, their wayward daughter Linda, and the other six lively Radlett children. Mitford's wickedly funny prose follows these characters through misguided marriages and dramatic love affairs, as the shadow of World War II begins to close in on their rapidly vanishing world.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Few aristocratic English families of the 20th century have enjoyed quite the delicious notoriety that the Mitford sisters courted in the years bracketed by two world wars. For a start, two of the girls, Unity and Diana, were Fascists (the former was a friend of Hitler and Goebbels, and the latter married Sir Oswald Mosley, founder of the British Union of Fascists). Two others took the writing route: Jessica ran away from home and became a famous muckraking journalist, and Nancy composed maliciously witty--and transparently autobiographical--novels as well as several biographies. *The Pursuit of Love* (1945), her greatest fictional success, and its companion, *Love in a Cold Climate* (1949), keep closely to the spirit (and details) of their youthful amusements and more grown-up adventures.

Seen through the adoring eyes of Fanny Logan, the self-effacing cousin who records their shenanigans with a wicked sincerity, the Radletts of Alconleigh shine with Gloucestershire glamour: apoplectic Uncle Matthew; Lord Alconleigh (modeled to a fine nuance after Mitford's father, Lord Redesdale, who like Uncle Matthew used to hunt his children with bloodhounds); his kind, rather vague wife, Aunt Sadie; as well as Fanny's favorite cousin Linda and the other six Radlett children. The Radlett daughters and Fanny wait impatiently for life to become interesting. Because of their station, however, nothing but marriage is expected of them, so they hurl themselves at love like crusaders, with varied and always fascinating results. At one point Fanny recounts:

A few minutes only after Linda had left me to go back to London, Christian and the comrades, I had another caller. This time it was Lord Merlin...."This is a bad business," he said, abruptly, and without preamble, though I had not seen him for several years. "I'm just back from Rome, and what do I find--Linda and Christian Talbot. It's an extraordinary thing that I can't ever leave England without Linda getting herself mixed up with some thoroughly undesirable character. This is a disaster--how far has it gone? Can nothing be done?"

*The Pursuit of Love* follows the romantic fortunes of Linda Radlett, while *Love in a Cold Climate* ventures further afield with the story of Polly Hampton's shocking love affair and its unexpectedly funny aftermath. Fanny's inexhaustible narration is a pleasant buffer for Mitford's deft teasing, which dances along just this side of mockery. The author of *U and Non-U*, a famous tongue-in-cheek treatise on the shibboleths of upper-class mores, Mitford often leaves the reader wondering just where she stands in the class wars, and much of her humor arises in the fine distinctions of aristocratic manners and speech. Still, there's an inimitable tart sweetness to these stories of true love and its pallid imitators, making them perfect snapshots of a vanished world. --Barrie Trinkle

#### From the Inside Flap

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wickedly funny prose follows these characters through misguided marriages and dramatic love affairs, as the shadow of World War II begins to close in on their rapidly vanishing world.

#### About the Author

Nancy Mitford (1904-1973) was born in London, the eldest of Lord Redesdale's seven children. By her twenties she was a friend of Evelyn Waugh and his circle and had begun writing novels.

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