



Love's Civil War: Elizabeth Bowen and Charles Ritchie

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National bestseller and a *Globe and Mail* Best Book

The passionate, life-long love affair between two magicians of the written word.

The Anglo-Irish novelist Elizabeth Bowen and the Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie met at a christening in London, England, in 1941; shortly afterward they embarked on a love affair that lasted until her death in 1973. At the time they met, she was married, but Ritchie quickly became her whole life, although she remained committed to the loving but sexually unfulfilling life with her husband. When Ritchie realized that she would never divorce, he eventually married too — wedding his cousin Sylvia in 1948. In a terrible twist of fate, Bowen's husband died just a few years later.

Most of the time the lovers were apart, snatching a few days together when they could. But they wrote constantly to each other, letters in which she poured out her heart to him about their affair, about her money troubles, about friends, politics, and literature, and Ritchie kept every letter she wrote. His own letters to her have not survived, but he wrote candidly about her and his conflicted feelings for her in his diaries, diaries that were heavily edited for the four volumes that have been published. Ritchie died in 1995.

From the Hardcover edition.

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