



Courtship: A Novel of Life, Love, and the Law

R. L. Sommer

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A decades-long, epic love story, this novel offers hope through choosing love despite religious objections.

R. L. Sommer's *Courtship: A Novel of Life, Love, and the Law* puts a poignant spin on the age-old trope of lovers from different backgrounds. Anne, a garrulous southern belle with Christian roots, and Micah, a quiet, studious Jew, find themselves attracted to each other when they both win scholarships to study in Cambridge, England. The love affair that ensues over the next several decades brings with it triumph and tragedy.

Sommer adeptly describes feelings of romantic relationships in unique ways: "It was the joy of discovery, of being noticed, and of being adored for the right reasons." Anne and Micah do not fall in love, rather they "[come] together, softly and incredibly personal[ly]."

The couple faces religious bigotry from Anne's mother and struggles to be more open-minded than people of previous generations. Anne says to Micah, "[My parents] aren't me! I don't want any part of what they are or do," to which he replies, "You are a product of [your mother], and I love you, so there has to be some good in her."

The motif of choice recurs in profound ways throughout the novel: the lovers' choice to marry, Anne's choice of attitude after a near-fatal accident, which cases Micah takes as a lawyer, and Anne's decision to remarry after Micah's death.

In contrast to the depth and breadth of Micah's romance with Anne, Anne's relationship with Daniel feels rushed and tacked on. The book lacks sufficient foreshadowing about this romance, and it merits only sixty-two pages of a roughly 240-page book. Anne and Daniel's love fails to get the same layered treatment that hers and Micah's does. Anne's partnership with Micah contains so many universal truths and insights about the way affection changes over time; it is a pity that Anne's relationship with Daniel is not as fully explored. The foreshortened second romance, however, should not stop anyone from reading this novel about Anne and Micah's epic love.

JILL ALLEN (Spring 2015)

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