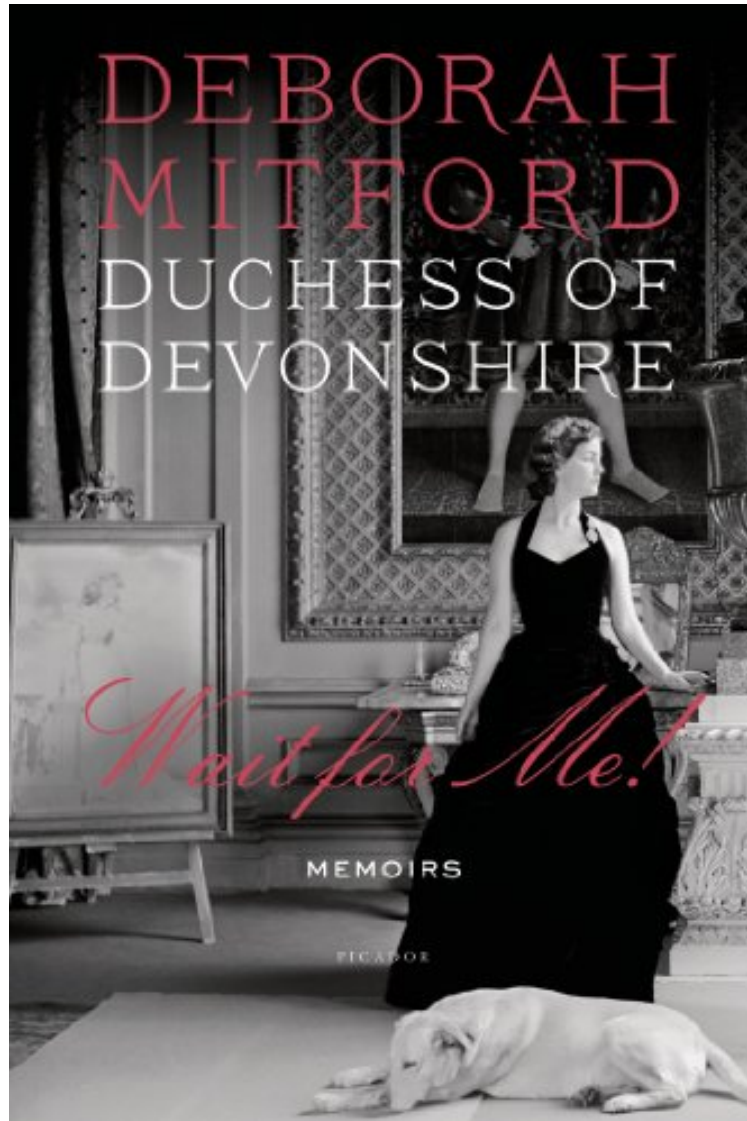


[Free pdf] Wait for Me!: Memoirs

Wait for Me!: Memoirs

Deborah Mitford

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Deborah Mitford : Wait for Me!: Memoirs before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wait for Me!: Memoirs:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. "Both" her lives..By Jill Meyer Deborah ("Debo") Devonshire, the youngest, and only surviving, of the famous Mitford sisters, has written an autobiography that combines "both" her lives. Born in 1920 as the youngest Redesdale child (and, boringly, the sixth of six daughters), Deborah Devonshire has lived an active 90 years, filled with famous family and friends. The Mitford sisters, famous from the 1930's on for

their political beliefs (both Left and Right) and their writing, also had a brother, Tom, who was killed in Burma in 1945. In 1941 she married Andrew Devonshire, younger son of the heir to Chatsworth, one of England's great estates. After the death of Andrew's brother - who had married Kathleen Kennedy - in 1944, Andrew became heir to the Devonshire fortune. After his father died, Andrew and Deborah, had to sell off parts of the estate - paintings and furniture - to pay off the onerous British death duties. Together they developed Chatsworth into a tourist magnet that saved it from the auction block. They had three children who lived and another three who died at birth. Andrew died in 2004; Deborah lives on. So - "two" lives. Deborah does an excellent job in writing about both parts, not skipping the less attractive parts of life with such eccentric creatures as her parents and sisters. I think she was more honest - open, maybe - about her family of birth than her marital one. In other sources, I've read that her husband wasn't faithful - she does talk about his alcoholism - and from her "couched" writing, it would seem that his relationships with their three children were not close. In addition to their family life, Deborah writes about their "public life", with their postings abroad and the friends and acquaintances they made and the duties they performed. Hers was an interesting, long life and well-written about. I sometimes wish, though, that I could have read a little more "between the lines".

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A must for Anglophiles

By Patricia If you have any interest in British life - the aristocracy, royalty, the famous Mitford sisters - you should not miss this book. It seems like everybody is in it (the royal family, the Kennedy's, Hitler...). As Debo (Deborah), the youngest of the six Mitford sisters, the author gives us a firsthand view of the family dynamics, her difficult father, the two sisters who befriend Hitler (Unity and Diana), the one who was a Communist (Jessica - "Decca"), the one who was a famous writer of fiction based on the family (Nancy), and the only boy, Tom, who died heroically in the war. She starts from their childhood (which is an interesting insight into a unique family's life) and then their growing up and going into completely opposite ways. The tragedies of the sisters who flirted with Nazism, the tragedies of the lives of the Kennedy's with whom they intermarried are fascinating. Actually, the family knew the Kennedy's all along but when Debo married the second son of the Duke of Devonshire, she was pulled more closely to the Kennedy family. Her husband's older brother married Kathleen Kennedy, Jack Kennedy's older sister. But both the older son and Kathleen were killed, thus making Deborah's husband heir to the dukedom. The family stayed close to the Kennedy's - sitting front row at both his inauguration and his funeral. The star of the story is the house - Chatsworth House - look it up on the internet, just amazing. Because of the British death tax of 80% it took two decades of selling off things to pay the taxes. No one these days can afford to keep up such a house (65 full time staff, 35,000 acres, hundreds of rooms) so it was donated to a trust and then the trust tries to become self-supporting by opening the house to the public and also selling the fruits and crafts of the estate. The family lives on in the house by renting from the trust. A great deal of the story is how she tackled restoring the house on an austere budget (Britain took decades to recover from WWII). She was an amazing woman. Everyone comes to stay in the house - the royal family, the Kennedy's, famous authors and celebrities - and she gives us some of the scoop on them. My only criticism of the book is that she is on every blessed committee in Britain, and the itemized lists of committees, the wonderful people on them, all the wonderful people helping with the house, can be pretty tedious. It is something like an acceptance speech at the Oscars, but much longer! But then in the midst of all this, she suddenly turns poignant and tells of intense personal things like the deaths of her three premature babies, her sisters' tragedies, her husband's alcoholism - all with tact and compassion. Of particular interest to Americans is when she comments on the differences on such things as how we handle big celebrations, etc. I loved reading it on the Kindle but the lack of photos is a big loss. Fortunately, the internet makes up for it. If you are an Anglophile, don't miss this book.

25 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Duchess and Entrepreneur

By rctnyc Yes, the Duchess is one of the famous Mitford sisters; and true, her autobiography is the account, not merely of her childhood, but the royalty, political leaders, and artists that she has known. Yet this book is the story, not of a privileged aristocrat, but rather a highly intelligent, incredibly resourceful woman with a great head for business, who has turned the debt-ridden family estate into a small conglomerate of "cottage" (and "castle") industries that has not merely generated sufficient income to keep that estate alive, but has been in the vanguard of the environmental and "local agriculture" movements. In addition, she's a decorator and the author of several best-selling books. What a talent! Indeed, what the Duchess's story proves is that talent will out, even among the very privileged. Deborah Mitford is the British (non-profit) Martha Stewart, and I mean that as a compliment. Instead of merely sitting home and entertaining -- which she did, apparently brilliantly -- she looked outward, working as an unpaid "volunteer" who, among other achievements, restored a centuries-old home and estate to its former glory, opened hotels, ran restaurants, marketed numerous foods and handmade products, including lawn furniture, and developed educational programs that taught city children and adults about the methods of healthy farming and animal raising. She's even got a flock of egg-producing chickens, and is selling the eggs. I found myself smiling each time the Duchess matter-of-factly described another new venture, thinking "You go, Debo!" In addition, she is keenly aware of the need for strong family and community ties; her employees stay with her forever, and she encourages them to develop their talents and skills. If we had more innovators and entrepreneurs like the Duchess of Devonshire, we'd be in much better shape, economically and socially. This Duchess knows how to pinch a penny and make a buck. Definitely worth the price, even for those who are bored with the Mitfords; this Mitford has made a difference.

A NEW YORK TIMES EDITORS' CHOICE Deborah Mitford, Duchess of Devonshire, is the youngest of the famously witty brood that includes the writers Jessica and Nancy. *Wait for Me!* chronicles her remarkable life, from an eccentric but happy childhood roaming the Oxfordshire countryside, to tea with her sister Unity and Adolf Hitler in 1937, to her marriage to Andrew Cavendish, the second son of the Duke of Devonshire. Written with intense warmth, charm, and perception, *Wait for Me!* is a unique portrait of an age of tumult, splendor, and change. "Touching . . . moving . . . [and] compelling as a portrait of a vanishing world" (The Wall Street Journal).

From Publishers Weekly In this sparkling memoir, the Duchess (*The Pursuit of Laughter*) writes about her famously eccentric family and the upper reaches of the British aristocracy with whom she has mingled during her long life (she'll turn 91 in March). She was related to Winston Churchill's wife, Clementine, and to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. In 1938, she met her future husband, Andrew Cavendish, and socialized with the Kennedy's. As their guest, she attended JFK's inauguration, and then his funeral, and writes movingly of both events. When her husband inherited his title, she became the mistress of Chatsworth; the Devonshire family estate dated back to the time of Henry VIII and contained fabulous treasures, including original Rembrandt paintings, and Mitford helped manage a variety of enterprises connected with it. In the '60s, Andrew served as a Minister of State and the couple travelled widely. A staunch conservative herself, her family's politics tended to be more extreme. Her parents sympathized with Nazi Germany, her sister Unity, a close companion of Hitler, attempted suicide at the start of hostilities, and sister Diana, wife of British fascist Oswald Mosley, was jailed. Full of absorbing anecdotes, Mitford's wonderfully-written tale of a tumultuous era is fascinating. Norman Parkinson's iconic 1952 photo of the Duchess adorns the cover. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. Charming, captivating, and at times wickedly funny. *Wait for Me!* was the refrain of young Debo', the baby of the family. Now ninety, she has caught up beautifully. Time A national treasure. Sarah Lyall, *The New York Times* *Wait for Me!* . . . teem[s] with memories of love, war, betrayal, heartbreak, housekeeping, and frolic . . . tantalizing . . . riveting. Liesl Schillinger, *The New York Times* Book Admirably done, cannily blending disclosure and reticence in a charming book that kept me riveted. Miranda Seymour, *The Guardian* (London) [Debo] is in possession of what I can only describe as a uniquely Mitford-esque sensibility: loving but unsentimental . . . able to find the ridiculous in almost anything. Rachel Cooke, *The Observer* (London) More entertaining than anything I could say about it. P. J. Kavanagh on *COUNTING MY CHICKENS* . . . , *The Spectator* Nobody with an interest in the past century could fail to be interested in the gossip, which extends to just about everyone of interest. Matthew Bell on *HOME TO ROOST*, *The Independent* on Sunday Behind the wit and quips, there is something else stronger and more rigorous. She goes to the ballet at Covent Garden with the Queen Mother and notices that throughout the entire performance, the Queen Mother's back never once touched the chair.' That is how the Duchess is too--never a slouch, never a saggy moment, even in grief alert, attentive, observant. Adam Nicolson on *HOME TO ROOST*, *The Spectator* One of the great twentieth-century correspondences . . . Bursting with wit and conviviality. James Purdon on *IN TEARING HASTE*, *The Observer* (London) Beguiling . . . Hugely enjoyable . . . What these letters so wonderfully demonstrate is an unflinching appetite for life. Anne Chisholm on *IN TEARING HASTE*, *The Spectator* Funny, loving, sparkly, snarky, heartbreaking, chilling, gossipy, wise. Amanda Lovell on *THE MITFORDS*, *O, The Oprah Magazine* About the Author Deborah Vivien Freeman-Mitford Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, was brought up in Oxfordshire, England. In 1950 her husband, Andrew, the 11th Duke of Devonshire, inherited extensive estates in Yorkshire and Ireland as well as Chatsworth, the family seat in Derbyshire, and Deborah became chatelaine of one of England's great houses. She is the author of *Counting My Chickens* and *Home to Roost*, among other books, and her letters have been collected in *The Mitfords: Letters Between Six Sisters* and *In Tearing Haste: The Correspondence of the Duchess of Devonshire and Patrick Leigh Fermor*. Following her husband's death in 2004, she moved to a village on the Chatsworth estate.