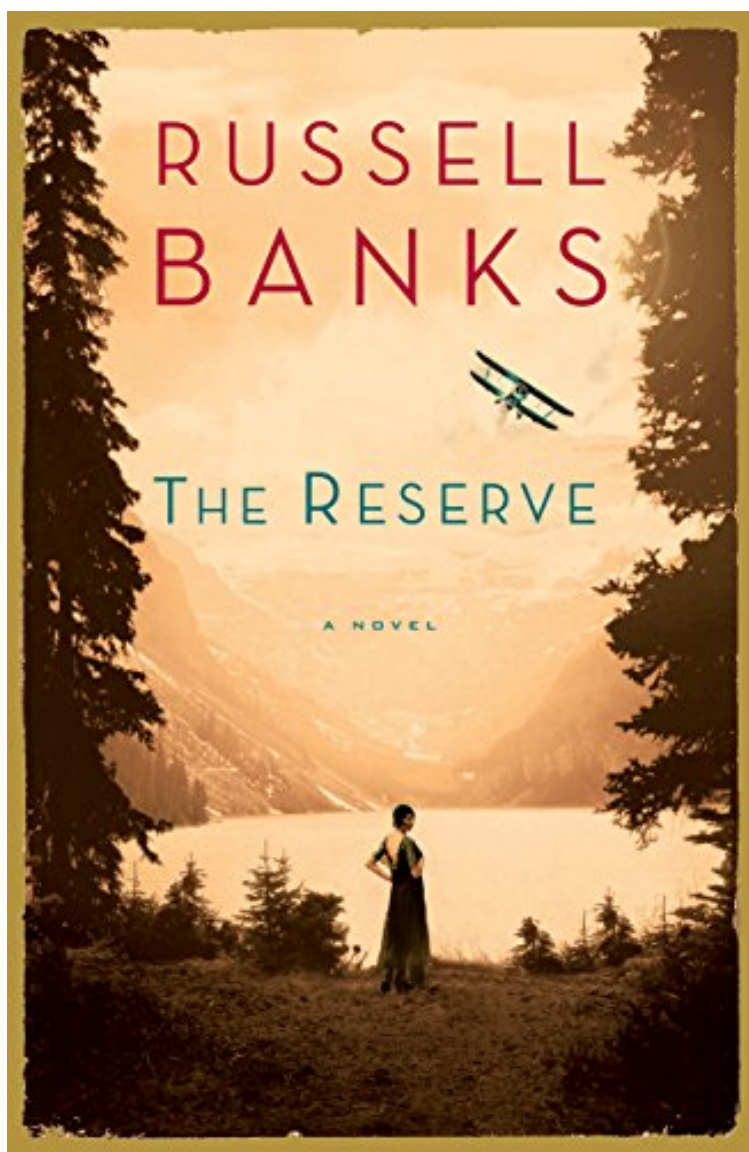


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# The Reserve: A Novel



*Par Russell Banks*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurPart love story, part murder mystery, set on the cusp of the Second World War, Russell Banks's sharp-witted and deeply engaging new novel raises dangerous questions about class, politics, art, love, and madnessand explores what happens when two powerful personalities, trapped at opposite ends of a social divide, begin to break the rules.Twenty-nine-year-old Vanessa Cole is a wild, stunningly beautiful heiress, the adopted only child of a highly regarded New York brain surgeon and his socialite wife. Twice married, Vanessa has been scandalously linked to any number of rich and famous men. But on the night of July 4, 1936, at her parents' country home in a remote Adirondack Mountain enclave known as The Reserve, two events coincide to permanently alter the course of Vanessa's callow life: her father dies suddenly of a

heart attack, and a mysteriously seductive local artist, Jordan Groves, blithely lands his Waco biplane in the pristine waters of the forbidden Upper Lake. . . . Jordan's reputation has preceded him; he is internationally known as much for his exploits and conquests as for his paintings themselves, and, here in the midst of the Great Depression, his leftist loyalties seem suspiciously undercut by his wealth and elite clientele. But for all

his worldly swagger, Jordan is as staggered by Vanessa's beauty and charm as she is by his defiant independence. He falls easy prey to her electrifying personality, but it is not long before he discovers that the heiress carries a dark, deeply scarring family secret. Emotionally unstable from the start, and further unhinged by her father's unexpected death, Vanessa begins to spin wildly out of control, manipulating and destroying the lives of all who cross her path. Moving from the secluded beauty of the Adirondack wilderness to the skies above war-torn Spain and Fascist Germany, *The Reserve* is a clever, incisive, and passionately romantic novel of suspense that adds a new dimension to this acclaimed author's extraordinary repertoire. Extrait When finally no one was watching her anymore, the beautiful young woman extracted herself from her parents and their friends and left the living room. She passed through the screened porch and crossed the deck and barefoot walked softly over the pine needles in front of the sprawling log building downhill toward the sheared ledges along the edge of the lake. She knew that shortly the others would notice, not that Vanessa had left her father's party, but that the light in the room had suddenly faded, and though it was still late afternoon and not yet dusk, they would see that the sun, because of the looming proximity of the Great Range, was about to slip behind the mountains. The Second Tamarack Lake was deep and long and narrow, like a Norwegian fiord, scraped by glaciers out of the north- and south-running Great Range of steep, granitic mountains, and the view from the eastern shore of the Second Lake at this hour in high summer was famous. Most of the group would take their freshened drinks in hand and, following Vanessa, would stroll from the living room down to the shore to watch the brassy edges of the clouds turn to molten gold, and then, turning their backs to the sky and lake, to compliment the way the pine and spruce woods on the slopes behind the camp shifted in the dwindling alpenglow from blue-green to rose and from rose to lavender, as if merely observing the phenomenon helped cause it. After a few moments, when the alpenglow had faded, they would turn again and gaze at the lake and admire in silence the smooth surface of the water shimmering in metallic light reflected off the burnished clouds. And then at last they would notice Vanessa Cole standing alone on one of the tipped ledges that slipped into the water just beyond the gravelly beach.

With her long, narrow back to her parents and their friends, her fingertips raised and barely touching the sides of her slender, pale, uplifted throat, Vanessa, gazing in dark and lonely Nordic thoughtfulness into the whole vast enclosed space between lake and forest and mountain and sky, would seem to be situated at the exact center of the wilderness, its very locus, the only meaningful point of it. For her parents and their friends, for an interesting moment, the drama of the disappearing sun would be Vanessa Cole's. There were nine people at the party, Dr. Cole's 1936 annual Fourth of July celebration at the Second Lake Vanessa and her parents, Carter and Evelyn Cole; Red Ralston and his wife, Adele; Harry and Jennifer Armstrong; and Bunny and Celia Tinsdale. The men had been classmates at Yale, Skull and Bones, class of 1908. Their wives, respectively, had gone to Smith, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, and Mount Holyoke. All four couples had married young and had in their twenties borne their children, and their children, except for Vanessa, had in turn done the same. During the previous decades the men had made a great deal of money buying and selling stocks and bonds and real estate and from the practice of their professions Dr. Cole was an internationally renowned, if somewhat controversial, brain surgeon; Red Ralston, Vanessa's godfather, was a corporate lawyer who specialized in bankruptcies; Harry Armstrong owned a company that manufactured automobile tires; Bunny Tinsdale ran his father's steel company and husbands and wives both were old enough now to have found themselves in the process of inheriting homes and family fortunes from their dying parents. They and their parents and their children and grandchildren had not been much affected by the Great Depression. Every year on the Fourth of July other than during the war years, when Dr. Cole and Bunny Tinsdale were army officers stationed in France the four families gathered together here at Rangeview, the Cole family's Adirondack camp, to drink and fish and hike in rustic splendor and to celebrate their loyalties to one another, to their families, and to their nation. This year, except for Vanessa, all the children and grandchildren were spending the holiday elsewhere on islands, as someone in the group had noticed, Mount Desert Isle, Long Island's North Shore, Martha's Vineyard which had somewhat diminished the occasion in importance and intensity, although no one said as much. They acted as if the absence of their offspring were both desired by them and planned and were not, as it appeared, a changing of the guard. The Coles so far had no grandchildren. Their only child, Vanessa, was adopted and at thirty had been married and divorced twice,

but had remained childless "barren," as she put it. It was nearly silent there by the shore low waves washing the rocks at Vanessa's feet, a soft wind sifting the tall pines behind her and she could hear her thoughts clearly, for they were cold and came to her in words and sentences, rather than feelings, as if she were silently reciting a list or a recipe she'd memorized years ago. She was not happy, Vanessa told herself, not one bit, and she wished that she had stayed in Manhattan. It was always the same here, year after year, her mother and father's annual Fourth of July show, and though it was more her father's show than her mother's, that didn't make it any better. Not for her. Everyone had a show, she believed, and this was not hers, not anymore, if it ever had been, when she heard in the distance a low humming sound, a light, intermittent drone that rose and fell, surged and lapsed back almost into silence and then returned and grew louder. She realized that it was an airplane. She had never before heard or seen an airplane at the Second Lake.

Rangeview was the largest of only a half-dozen rough-hewn log camps, a few of which were elaborately luxurious, located in the forty-thousand-acre privately owned wilderness, the Tamarack Wilderness Reserve.

Vanessa's grandfather Cole had been . . . From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers Weekly Tom Stechschulte's voice is well suited to this novel's myriad layers of time and interlocking characters. Although superficially different-genteel versus rebellious, calm versus wild-the central figures all have an old-fashioned depth. Set in the mid-1930s amid mounting concerns over war, numerous characters have Germanic accents, which Stechschulte reproduces adeptly. He shifts easily from the backwoods drawl of the people who live surrounding the exclusive reserve in the Adirondacks to the haughty upper-class tones of the wealthy who stay there. Similarly, he captures the broad, confident tones of Jordan Groves, the prickly artist who fits neither group, but then moves his voice fluidly to that of the enigmatic heiress, Vanessa Cole, who catches Groves's eye. Stechschulte gives Vanessa's words the right husky, even sultry quality, but more importantly he perfectly expresses her rapidly shifting emotions of inner turmoil and borderline madness.

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