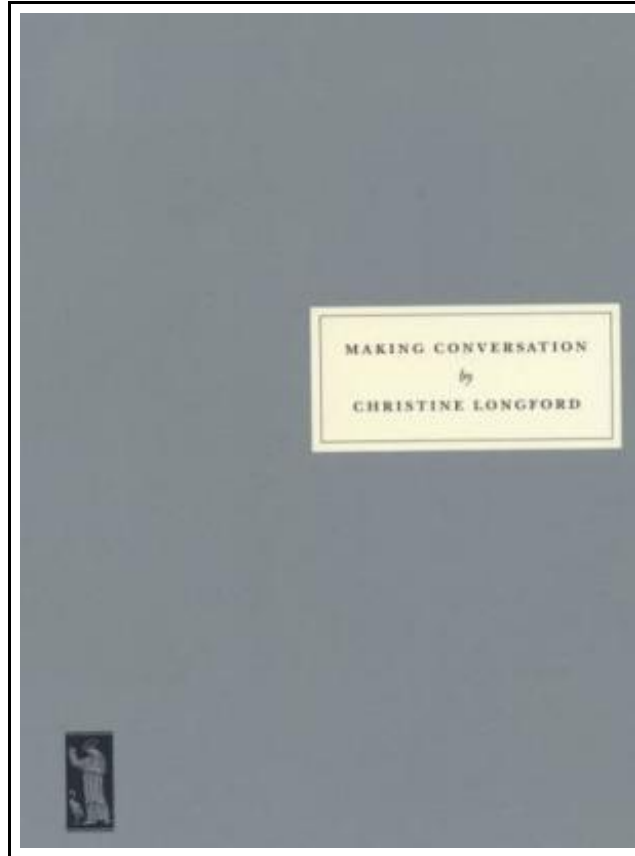


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Reviews

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Persephone Books Ltd. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Making Conversation, Christine Longford, Rachel Billington, Making Conversation (1931) by Christine Longford (1900-80) was first reprinted in 1970 after the novelist Pamela Hansford Johnson reassessed it in the Times Literary Supplement. She wrote: 'This ought to be regarded as an English comic classic, which I suppose, unlike the ravishing Cold Comfort Farm, it is not. I hope time will redress the neglect.' The heroine, Martha, is plain, with curly hair, small eyes which she tries to enlarge in a soulful manner by stretching them in front of the looking glass, and very little chin. She is extremely clever and totally innocent. Her besetting trouble is that she either talks too much, or too little: she can never get right the balance of conversation. 'The genteel school Martha goes to is run by Miss Spencer and Miss Grossmith. Martha doesn't mind them. Indeed, she doesn't really mind anything; she is a most detached girl, letting even their idiotic sarcasms slide off her back. Now Martha,A" said Miss Spencer, what is adultery?A" Martha had not the faintest idea. It is a sin,A" she said, committed by adults,A" putting the accent on the second syllable. That is a parrot's answer.You think you are very clever, Martha, attempting to conceal your ignorance and your lack of thought. The attempt at concealment is not better than a lie. Adultery is self-indulgence. It is the extra lump of sugar in your tea. It is the extra ten minutes in bed in the morning. It is the extra five minutes a girl wastes by dawdling up the High Street and gaping at the shop windows - A" Martha accepts this Chadbandery in the same way as she accepts the constant nagging that she should be keen on netball,...

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