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# DH Lawrence's Novel, Lady Chatterley's Lover, on Netflix is Sensual and Seductive

By: [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#) Edited By: [Bohni Bandyopadhyay](#) [News18.com](#) Last Updated: DECEMBER 12, 2022, 13:35 IST Chennai, India



Lady Chatterley's Lover, about a torrid sexual affair between an upper class woman and a gamekeeper, has been adapted into a film by Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre.

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Lady Chatterley's Lover is the last novel by DH Lawrence, which was first published privately in 1928.

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**L**ady Chatterley's Lover, the last novel of British author DH Lawrence, created a storm. A torrid sexual affair between an upper class woman and a gamekeeper from the lower rungs of society, the novel, grippingly narrated, had explicit references to sexual act and the four letter word that were all taboo in 1928, when the book was privately published in Italy.

A year later, it appeared in France, but it was only in 1960 that it was available in the United Kingdom, though in an expurgated version. But that year, in a watershed trial against Penguin Books, the publisher won the case, and they quickly sold a whopping three million copies. Although it was banned in The US, Canada, Australia, Japan and [India](#) for obscenity, a few hundred copies were smuggled into our country.

In school then, I got hold of a copy not exactly for Lawrence's great piece of prose, but to satisfy my curiosity about what the book could possibly contain. Of course, I was shocked, and those passages elaborately and boldly discussed the most intimate parts of a physical relationship between a man and woman. Today, the book will hardly produce any such reaction; the four letter word had become so common that even a relatively conservative [Bollywood](#) uses it so freely.

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Today, Lawrence’s book will seem like a child’s fable in comparison to rappers singing about “wet-a\*\* p\*\*\*y”, Ana de Armas performing oral sex in Blonde and the risqué scenes in Fifty Shades of Grey. But one must admit, that it was not sexual explicitness alone that got the novel banned; what was more troubling then in those days was the question of adultery (a married woman and a married man falling in love) that some of the conservative countries found hard to accept. A book on that? Oh, no, they said.

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The story of Lady Chatterley’s Lover was reportedly inspired by Lawrence’s own unhappy married life. He also used Nottinghamshire, where he grew up, to set the narrative. Some critics aver that the fling of Lady Ottoline Morrell with a young stonemason, who came to work in her garden, also played a part in the way Lady Chatterley’s Lover was conceived and written.



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French director (well, it had to be French) Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre has adapted the story and erotica to a film — now on Netflix. There is, for instance, a completely nude romp by Lady Chatterley and her gamekeeper lover in the rain. We have had one something like that in Humjoli, but Leena Chandavarkar in a wet sari dancing in the rain with Jeetendra would seem like kindergarten stuff today – and really pale in comparison.

Clermont-Tonnerre – we must give it to her – has used arousal to the hilt. Emma Corrin (last seen in Season Four of The Crown) plays Lady Constance Reid, while Jack O’Connell is her husband’s gamekeeper, Oliver Mellors. In the book, he is rough and brutish, but the Netflix movie softens him. He is gentle and considerate and caring. He reads James Joyce, and is aware of female orgasm, and unlike Lawrence, who would not even dream of it, Jack goes down on his lover. The pleasure is all her’s. So, the director is one up on Lawrence.

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Those who would have read the the printed version would know how the story progresses. Constance’s husband, Sir Clifford Chatterley, is meanness personified, his paralysis waist down (after getting wounded in World War I) adding to his frustration. He slave drives his workers at his coal mine, paying them horribly low wages. Since he is handicapped, he asks his wife to sleep with another man just to produce an heir to his vast empire, the Wragby Estate.

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But when Constance finally slips under the sheets with Oliver and gets pregnant, Clifford is fuming, because she has had an affair with a lowly man, his servant. However, Clifford’s nurse, Mrs Barton (Joely Richardson), helps the adulterous couple. It is she who gets the last word, transforming tragedy into something alluringly romantic: “She gave up everything for him: title, wealth, her position in the world.”

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In the final word, this retelling isn’t strictly about the sex, although Clermont-Tonnerre holds no illusions that she’s making a blue movie — an outdated word for a pornographic work. Whether by coincidence or design, she embraces colour throughout, with DP Benoît Delhomme filtering everything such that Wragby (which is quite lovely, if you ignore the smokestacks above Clifford’s coal mine) looks constantly overcast and the lovers’ skin has an almost zombie-like pallor.

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Yet, the film does not fight shy of showing the skin “letting audiences appreciate the characters’ blue bodies in all sorts of erotic poses, entwined beneath that great blue sky, or else writhing beside the bluest flowers you ever did see. Connie’s bold red and yellow dresses stand out nicely against all that azure, and the costumes are really quite remarkable overall, especially during the warmer stretch where the already pregnant lady sneaks away to Venice to fake an affair,” says one writer. Indeed.

The Netflix adaptation is pleasant viewing, with some brilliant acting by especially Corrin, who is radiantly superb, almost divine. A good watch, and highly recommended.

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