



Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928

Martha Vicinus

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Intimate Friends explores the fascinating history of the erotic friendships of educated English and American women over the 150-year period leading up to the 1928 publication of Radclyffe Hall's landmark novel, *The Well of Loneliness*. Distinguished scholar Martha Vicinus explores all-female communities, liaisons between younger and older women, the female rake, and even mother-daughter affection. Women, she reveals, drew upon a rich religious vocabulary to describe elusive and complex erotic feelings.

Drawing upon diaries, letters, and other archival sources, Vicinus brings to life a variety of well-known and historically less recognized women, ranging from the predatory Ann Lister (who documented her sexual activities in code); to Mary Benson (the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury); to the coterie of wealthy Anglo-American lesbians living in Paris. In vivid and colorful prose, *Intimate Friends* offers a remarkable picture of women navigating the uncharted territory of same-sex desire.

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