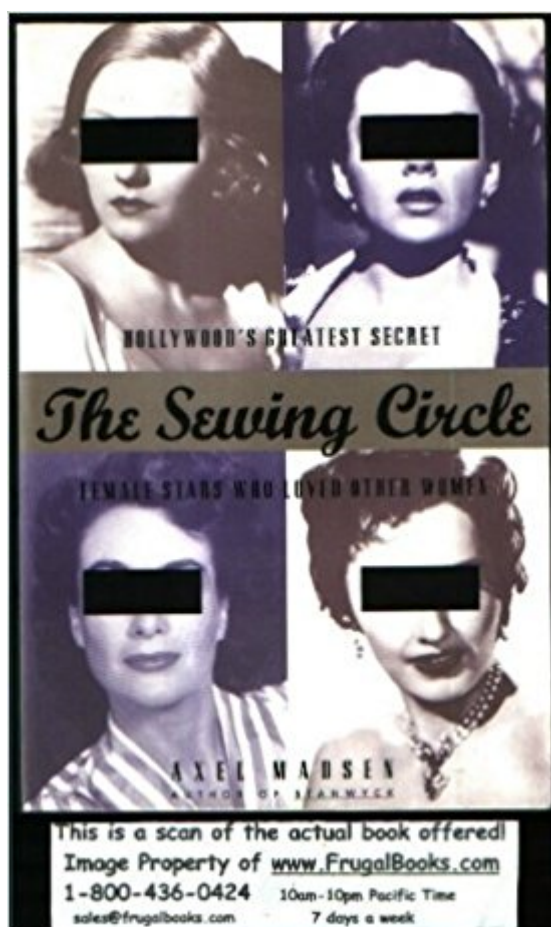


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The Sewing Circle: Hollywood's Greatest Secret: Female Stars Who Loved Other Women



Synopsis

Documents the double life of "The Sewing Circle," a group of lesbians and bisexuals that included such famous figures as Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, Tallulah Bankhead, Joan Crawford, Myrna Loy and Agnes Moorehead. By the author of Stanwyck.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a highly readable book, and the author has way with words when she describes feminists of 1920s Hollywood who were redefining sexuality and relationships. This work is based on earlier publications about Hollywood lesbians, and many paragraphs and sentences look awfully similar to "The Girls: Sappho Goes to Hollywood" by Diana McLellan, which was published in 2013. It appears that this book may have been a source for many stories described by Ms. McLellan. For a quick read, I would recommend this book over McLellan's, because the latter runs to about 506 pages! Some of the most interesting stories is probably about the ravishing ladies of golden era; Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich and Tallulah Bankhead. They were all bisexuals but had strong leanings towards women. The greatest "conqueror" of sewing circle was probably poet and playwright Mercedes De Acosta who had numerous gorgeous ladies in her count, from Europe to California. Her affairs with some of the well-known ladies like; Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Alla Nazimova, Eva Le Gallienne, Ona Munson, Natacha Rambova, Lilyan Tashman and many more "good-time Charlene(s)." Sexuality was another role for many women, and for vanity and fear of discovery some of them had lavender marriages with gay men so that they could form secret

alliances. Women like Tallulah Bankhead and Patsy Kelly made no secrets of their Sapphic tendencies; in fact Bankhead was very vocal about her gender orientation. Isadora Duncan is another bisexual and a longtime lover of Mercedes de Acosta who openly expressed her joy in lesbian relationship. She wrote sensual lesbian poems about Mercedes before her untimely death in Paris in an auto accident at the age of 50. Once she waved a red scarf and bared her breast on stage in Boston, proclaiming, "This is red! So am I." Alla Nazimova was famous for organizing gay orgies at the famous "Garden of Allah," a high-priced apartment complex on Sunset strip in Los Angeles. She threw caution to the wind and spent her fortune lavishly to produce her movie, "Salome" that featured an all gay cast. Diana Wynyard, one of the first English ladies to become a member of the sewing circle, enjoyed the warmth of ladies hugs in sunny California. There were rumors that Barbara Stanwyck tried to seduce her future rival, Bette Davis when they were filming Edna Ferber's 1932 movie "So Big." Tallulah Bankhead's wild flossy beauty attracted some of the most interesting lesbians of 1920s that included Katharine Cornell, Laurette Taylor, Sybil Thorndike, Beatrice Lillie, and Harlem's Gladys Bentley, a three pound black Mae West, to put it mildly, donned in tuxedo and known to have married a woman in New Jersey in a civil ceremony in 1920s! Libby Holman is another lady who had passionate affairs with Du Pont heiress Louisa Carpenter and later married tobacco heir Zachary Smith Reynolds. Holman was charged with murder when her husband was found shot, but later the charges were dropped. She established a foundation for civil rights movement to the memory of her deceased son. Dr. Martin Luther King was the first to receive the grants to travel to India to study Mahatma Gandhi's path of non-violence and civil disobedience. Paramount's costume designer Edith Head and her gay husband Fox director Wiard "Bill" Ihnen pursued their homo sexuality for decades. Joan Crawford and Barbara Stanwyck had failed marriages and gave them time to seek comfort in the tender arms of gorgeous females. Sexless Linda and Cole Porter apparently helped his career and the couple's homosexuality. Jill Esmond struggled to accept her lesbian orientation, but remained married to actor Lawrence Olivier for years. Their marriage was never consummated. Katherine Hepburn, Janet Gaynor, Lili Damita, and Agnes Moorhead were daisy chains of deceit. Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester; Vincente Minnelli and Judy Garland were also lavender couples. Alla Nazimova's marriage with actor Charles Bryant; Mercedes De Acosta with Abram Poole; Lilyan Tashman with Edmond Lowe, and Rudolph Valentino with Jean Acker and later with Natacha Rambova are well-known examples of lavender marriages. The book is filled with lot of interesting stories, and I recommend to anyone interested in the history of Hollywood and the movies (and theater) of golden era.

Great book, featuring little-known facts about a variety of Hollywood actresses. Loved reading this so much, I bought a second copy when my first got left behind!

Great book on Hollywood's feminist history.

Thanks!

The information in this book is pretty accurate. I do a lot of autobiographical and biographical reading, and there is an exceptional amount of overlap from this book to my other books. Personally, I believe, EVERYONE should read this book. Knowledge is power! All children, especially LGBTQ youth, should read this book. It would have meant the world to me to have had this book to read as a teenager.

I was disappointed. I expected a better read. It was not that informative. Not worth the money. Big disappointed. Not good at all.

This was a good insight into a hidden Hollywood world!! I'm sure if you like Hollywood trivia this will add to a hidden world.

Wonderful book on the private life of the true movie stars. I mainly bought it for the private life of Barbara Stanwyck.

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