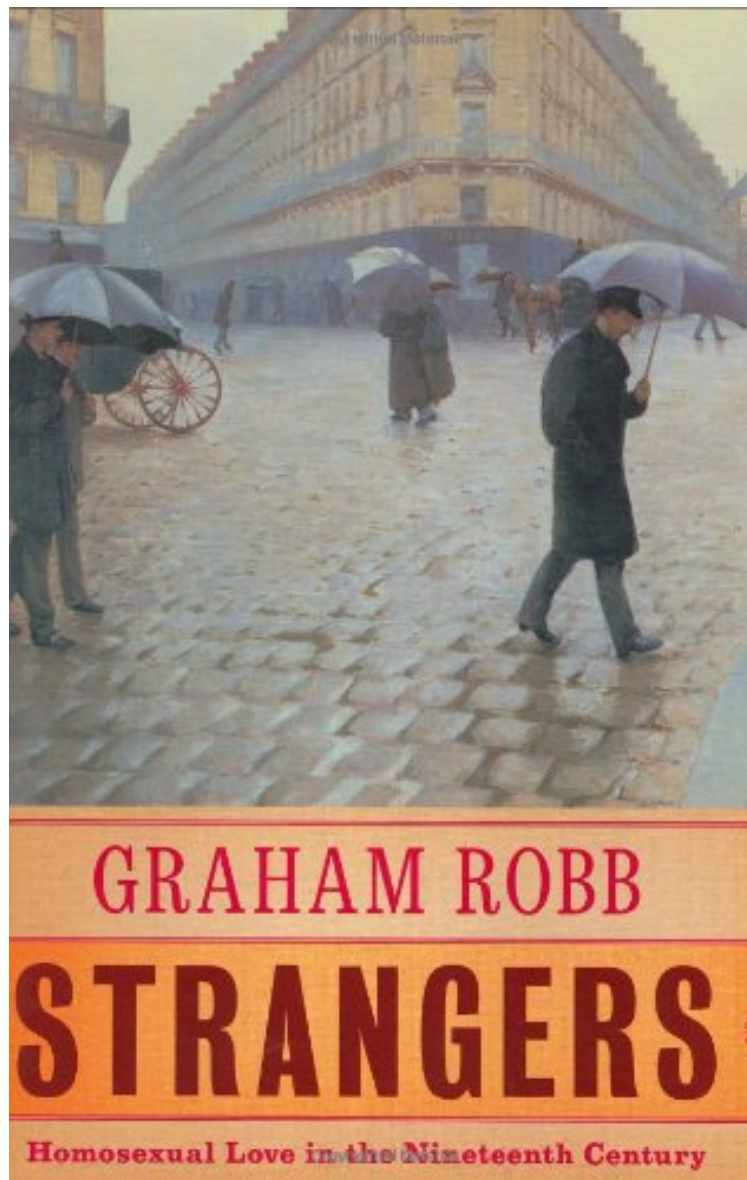


(Read now) Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century

Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century

Graham Robb

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Graham Robb : Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Surprising Look Into the Victorian ClosetBy ProsperoGraham Robb's "Strangers" is an intriguing and unexpected look into the world of homosexuality as it existed from the early 1800s into the mid 20th century. In Robb's narrative the Gay outlaws of the 19th century are portrayed as resourceful

creators of a unique society just below the smooth veneer of Victoriana. This Gay underground was, in many ways, much more liberated than what would follow. Perhaps the most surprising fact to come out of this book regards the relative lack of persecution of Gays during the 19th century in comparison to the rise of persecution which took place during the 20th century. There are a number of heroes in the book: Jeremy Bentham, the English Philosopher who argued for tolerance toward homosexuals; Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the first Gay man to stage a high profile coming out; Magnus Hirschfeld, the German sex-researcher who authored numerous studies and even a film arguing for compassionate treatment of Gays. My own favorite is Edward Carpenter who simply lived the unapologetic life of a Gay man with his partner George Merrill during the same era when Oscar Wilde underwent his own spectacular and tragic outing. For anyone interested in Gay History this book is a must. I do have one caveat. Robb often writes as if his readers will be as familiar with this story and its characters as he is himself. A confusing array of names are thrown at us and I would have enjoyed the book more if he had taken the time to give us more details of these figures from Gay history.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An essential document for LGBT history

By J. P. Arroyo

Well documented study that puts into perspective the situation of sexual deviance in the 19th Century and its evolution toward modern times. More than the actual narration of cases and facts, concepts and analysis are extremely well elaborated to give a much better idea of a time that has been too often reduced to stereotypes.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Much More than Straight History

By Jim Duggins, Ph.D.

Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century, Graham Robb

Graham Robb's book, "Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century," artfully analyzes and presents the major aspects of what has been said of homosexuality in the U.S. and Europe for the Nineteenth Century including influences from patterns from the eighteenth and later developments in the Twentieth Century. Author Robb's account is awesome for his ability to pack so much into fewer than three hundred pages and for his writerly skills as well. Most of all, he demonstrates that history books need not be dull. Of great pleasure, too, is author Robb's wit which he displays, e.g.: "The overall picture, then, is not unremittingly bleak. Nineteenth Century homosexuals lived under a cloud, but it seldom rained. . . . Loveless marriages caused more lasting grief than laws, and still do." Of particular import, too, is Graham Robb's analysis of the importance of laws and tabloid-like publicity depicting arrest and punishment of homosexuals, then variously called uranists, inverters, and pederasts because the publicity acted as a news communication that united homosexuals to understand they were not just maniacal isolates. This is not to suggest that there were not harsh penalties (e.g. hanging and beheading, etc.) of homosexuals, but that the attention brought to lgbt communities, a kind of communications that spread the news about homosexuals, perhaps the only source of information for many isolates.

"Strangers: Homosexual Love in the Nineteenth Century" is a fascinating book, a well-informed discussion of many views of the past of our Twenty-first Century culture. For anyone interested in American Cultural history, this is a must book for your next non-fiction reading.

A fresh examination of this forbidden history shows the profound effects of gay culture on modern life. The nineteenth century was a golden age for those people known variously as sodomites, Uranians, monosexuals, and homosexuals. Long before Stonewall and Gay Pride, there was such a thing as gay culture, and it was recognized throughout Europe and America. Graham Robb, brilliant biographer of Balzac, Hugo, and Rimbaud, examines how homosexuals were treated by society and finds a tale of surprising tolerance. He describes the lives of gay men and women: how they discovered their sexuality and accepted or disguised it; how they came out; how they made contact with like-minded people. He also includes a fascinating investigation of the encrypted homosexuality of such famous nineteenth-century sleuths as Edgar Allan Poe's Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes himself (with glances forward in time to Batman and J. Edgar Hoover). Finally, Strangers addresses crucial questions of gay culture, including the riddle of its relationship to religion: Why were homosexuals created with feelings that the Creator supposedly condemns? This is a landmark work, full of tolerant wisdom, fresh research, and surprises. 16 pages of illustrations.

From Publishers Weekly

With an impressive oeuvre comprising acclaimed biographies of Rimbaud, Balzac and Victor Hugo, Robb returns to spoof the poststructuralist convention that homosexuality, because it was not then categorized or "named," cannot be said to exist prior to 1880; he also argues that homosexual men and women in this period were not automatically persecuted. For Robb, Oscar Wilde's "martyrdom" and similar cases were exceptions to the rule of, if not acceptance, then a grudging knowing. He unpacks now obscure layers of contemporary allusion to show evidence of gay tolerance in many kinds of literary work, from high to low, from Continental, U.S. and U.K. fiction to the most obscure, nearly unreadable pamphlet. And some of the material is decidedly and hilariously antiliterary. "In Weiberbeute by `Luz Frauman' (Budapest, 1901), a frustrated lesbian hypnotizes her girlish stepson into thinking himself a woman. She then induces a phantom pregnancy in him, fosters her own son on him and convinces him he has given birth to a girl." Still, Robb's claim that the eponymous castle in Eekhoud's 1899 novel Escal-Vigor is a "partial anagram of Oscar Wilde" seems true only in the sense that it's also a partial anagram of Gore Vidal. The book ends fittingly on an extended inquiry into the mystery of why so many fictional detectives, beginning with the 19th-century Dupin and Sherlock Holmes, but also the 20th-century Miss Marple and Nero Wolfe, seem to be telling us

today they're gay. This agreeable, provocative romp shows that, at least in some strata of society, their peers already knew. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. A fascinating study of a complex subject, written with humanity, sceptical intelligence and an impressive command of the sources -- Sunday Telegraph [London]A rich and informative study which provides a fascinating picture of homosexual life and literature in the 19th century. (Independent A rich and satisfying narrative...Robb is an ideal guide to the periodunfailingly intelligent, compassionate and discreetly witty. -- Daily Telegraph [London]An excellent, amusing, decent book, which covers an enormous amount of ground in a little space. -- Spectator [London]Robb has produced a work that honours human beings who just happened to be Gay -- Sunday Times [London]About the AuthorEach of Graham Robb's three most recent books have been chosen as New York Times Editor's Choices for best books of the year. He lives in Oxford, England.