



Significant Sisters: The Grassroots of Active Feminism, 1839-1939 (A Galaxy book)

Margaret Forster

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Significant Sisters: The Grassroots of Active Feminism, 1839-1939 (A Galaxy book) Margaret Forster *Significant Sisters*, a brilliant new study of the roots of feminism, portrays eight women's rights advocates of the 19th and early 20th centuries: Caroline Norton, Elizabeth Blackwell, Florence Nightingale, Emily Davies, Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Sanger, and Emma Goldman. Determined, foresightful leaders, the pioneers of contemporary feminism, these women fought unprecedented battles for women's rights in eight separate spheres of activity--law, the professions, employment, education, sexual morality, politics, birth control, and ideology.

Margaret Forster's portraits bring these women vividly to life. Drawing on letters, diaries, unpublished papers, and autobiographies, Forster describes the life circumstances, radicalizing experiences, and activities of these feminist forebears, and notes the many parallels in their lives.

In the process, she tells us much about the feminism of the 19th century, which was not so much a movement as a phenomenon that occurred simultaneously in many different fields. These nineteenth-century leaders, many of them avowedly non-feminist, reacted not to an ideology but to their own experiences of prejudice or limited opportunity.

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