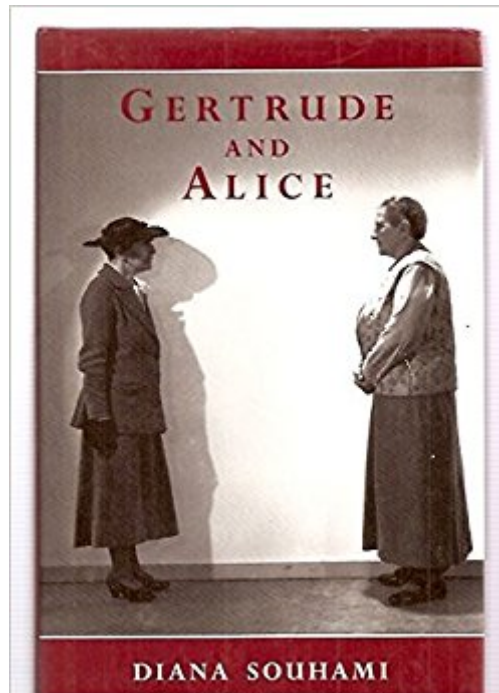




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Gertrude And Alice



Synopsis

Nominated for a Lambda literary award, this incisive biography draws on memoirs, letters, published writings, and other sources to examine the relationship between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Reprint. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

"Twentieth century literature is Gertrude Stein," or at least so thought Gertrude Stein. The sentiment was shared by Alice B. Toklas--her longtime companion--and few others. Stein and Toklas met in 1907 in Paris and famously shared their lives from that day forth, souls in perfect complement--two magnificently eccentric and idiosyncratic women who became a legendary entity. They were photographed by Man Ray and Cecil Beaton, painted and feted by Picasso, and visited by writers such as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Eliot. Theirs is a fascinating story, and they have found a wonderful and oddly sympathetic chronicler in Diana Souhami, whose book *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* met with critical acclaim, and who proves the perfect foil to the "Steins." Her own touch of genius is to barely consider Gertrude's grand oeuvre, sparing the rod to an already spoilt child and freeing her readership from the unpalatable fare she generally served up (by contrast, Alice was a dedicated and talented cook). Literary success came late to Stein: she was 57 when *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was published. After Stein's death in 1946, Toklas became the classic devoted author's widow, until her own death, just short of her 90th birthday. She was buried alongside Stein in Paris's *Père Lachaise* cemetery, though her inscription is on the back of the

tombstone, as ever behind her lover. Souhami's two lives, refreshingly stripped of biographical dead wood, positively crackle with high-powered gossip and bristle with bitchy anecdotes, though her laconic touch is never asleep to touching cadences and wonderful absurdities. As a writer, a "literary cubist" who once tried to give up nouns, Stein is more to be admired than respected. As a life force, a mover and shaker, and as a partner to Toklas, she was massively successful. Their couple's life together was their greatest creation, and it's done justice by the talented Souhami's glorious account. Gertrude and Alice would have hated it. --David Vincent, .co.uk --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This dual biography focuses on the enduring relationship (1907-46) between Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Stein, who rose from obscurity to become an international celebrity, is certainly a fascinating character, noted for her inimitable writing, her collection of both modern art and modern artists (including a young Picasso), and her treatment of Toklas as her "wife." The biography is balanced, providing accounts of Stein's and Toklas's lives before their legendary coupling as well as the latter's solitary years after the death of her companion. The author does not take an especially critical approach but instead offers an anecdotal, readable biography suitable for a wide audience. An excellent selection of photographs is dispersed throughout the text, giving one a sense of familiarity with these remarkable women. For informed readers.- Janice Braun, Oakland, Cal.Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is my favorite biography of Gertrude Stein because it is so sympathetic to her humanity. Diana Souhami takes the reader on a private tour of the life of Gertrude and Alice; I felt like a fly on the parlor wall. I've reread this book a number of times and it never gets old. Love it.

Wow, it's been 20 years since Ms. Souhami wrote this book and fortunately it is again in print with this edition which also includes a new introduction by her. The introduction itself is amazing and worth buying another copy of the book even if you already have one. (You can give your other copy to a friend!) This is the best dual-bio of these two ladies (and I've read it both in German and English.) The book makes both of them very real, moving them beyond the literary/lesbian icons that they've become in the last 60+ years. Read this in conjunction with James Mellow's CHARMED CIRCLE (you can still find it online through used book dealers or in many 2nd hand bookstores.) and you'll be hooked both on Gertrude and Alice and the artistic era between the two World Wars!

What a great book. Loved it, and the condition of the book was great. Thank you, just finished reading book.

Oh my goodness .. if you've been 'enamored' of Gertrude & Alice for years & years, or are just discovering them .. this is THE story of their lives together. Grab this book before it goes out of print again !!

Concisely and elegantly writ story of Gertie and Alice, 2 of the ugliest dames who ever catapulted into literary history. The-author skips inane details that many bio-writers focus on -- space filling nonsense. With discretion, she reveals the personalities of the 2 eccentrics and exposes their oft odious behaviour. Today, in the 21stC, it's hard to realize the bygone popularity of Gertie, indeed that she invented herself and disturbed, childlike way of writing. The 2 lesbians are almost bigger than life-size here, along w cameos from Hemingway, Sylvia Beach, Paul Bowles and Cece Beaton. The book is handsomely illustrated and nicely captures a forgotten time.

I am not a scholar and I am not sure that I would have the patience to read Gertrude "dans le texte". Yet I have a dilettant interest in these women of the first half of this century who seemed to have had a strong influence on the Arts and Litterature (Stein/Toklas, Cones, Sitwells...). I picked up this book by chance off the bookselves of my friends -- Liz and Jeff -- a rainy day by the Delaware River. I not only finished it off but enjoyed it tremendously. I found the writting interesting, detailed (what a treat to get so many details of that era) and refreshing by its ease of access. Do read this book -- I am now onto other Stein/Toklas books (most certainly Alice's recipes).

This is a well written small book that explains things. The puzzle unexplained is why Gertrude stayed in an unpleasantly nazi occupied France and paled around with an obnoxious nazi in order to get favors. Its clear that Alice ruled the roost and didn't want to lose Gertrude. The author debunks Gertrude's unbearable stream-of-conscious form of writing rightly putting it in the class of the emperor's new clothes.

I couldn't warm to this book, for two reasons. Firstly, it's the sort of book that reviewers love, because it's about a writer. Correction, it's about Gertrude Stein, who thought she could write, and her amanuensis Alice, who typed up her repetitive compositions. Alice thought Gertrude was a genius, because when she first saw her bells went off inside her head. The same phenomenom

occurred when she met Picasso. Had she realised they were alarm bells she might have saved everybody a lot of trouble. Instead Pablo was encouraged by Gertrude, and Gertrude was encouraged by Alice. Leo Stein, Gertrude's brother, was far more clear-sighted. He had some appreciation of art, and called both their efforts "God-almighty rubbish" and "Cubico futuristic tommy-rotting". If only his judgement had prevailed. Instead Alice encouraged Gertrude to persist in her delusion, despite repeated rejections from prospective publishers whose job it was to make sound commercial judgements. Boiling it all down, this is a book about two ladies who tried hard to make a success of writing, and failed. Not on the face of it promising material, but it could have been redeemed had Diana Souhami written a compelling narrative. Instead of which, one is subjected to a tedious prose, in which irrelevant details are scattered (one lunch attendee is described as having had double-jointed thumbs), but there is an irritating vagueness about the relationships between the principal characters. In fact, the funniest part of the book (and, despite what the reviewers write, a barrel of laughs it ain't) is when Mr Fifiield, of Clifford's Inn, London returned the 147-page manuscript of "Portraits" with a covering letter hoisting Gertrude on her own petard by mimicking her impenetrable prose, but far more wittily than she was capable of herself. If like me you've been misled into purchasing this Tale of Two Mittys, my advice is simply to read and enjoy page 148, it will save an awful lot of time.

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