



The Spinster Book

Myrtle Reed

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Before and beyond *The Law of Attraction*; a classic on the lost art of courtship, and the challenge of relationships. A unique cross between guidebook and entertaining social commentary, *The Spinster Book* gives clever and humorous insights on topics such as courting, handling men and women, love letters, marriage and spinsterhood. A reader might reasonably suspect that a book originally published in 1901 wouldn't be relevant today but the reader would be wrong. Gender quandaries go on forever, men are from Mars, women from Venus, and nothing ever really changes. *The Spinster Book* is something akin to a satirical exploration of men, women, and love - not really in the style of an advisory guide, but closer to natural history. Reed writes of men and women as though she were neither, and merely watching them at an amused distance, and this book is the best evidence of this eternal truth. Although Reed is being tongue-in-cheek throughout, *The Spinster Book* is still fascinating and at times revelatory as a window on society in the early 1900s. "If a man and woman who truly loved each other were cast away upon a desert island, he would tire of her long before she wearied of him. The sequence of attraction and repulsion, the ultimate balance of positive and negative, are familiar electrical phenomena. Is it unreasonable to suppose that the supreme form of attraction is governed by the same law? Strong attractions frequently begin with strong repulsions, sometimes mutual, but more often on the part of the attracting force. A man seldom develops a violent and inexplicable hatred for a woman and later finds that it has unaccountably changed to love. Yet a woman often marries a man she has sincerely hated, and the explanation is simple enough, perhaps, for a woman never hates a man unless he is in some sense her master. Love and hate are kindred passions with a woman and the depth of the one is the possible measure of the other." (cover image courtesy of Linden Laserna)

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