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A Restricted Country



Synopsis

A proud working class woman, an "out" lesbian long before the Rainbow revolution, Joan Nestle has stood at the forefront of American freedom struggles from the McCarthy era to the present day. Available for the first time in years, this revised classic collection of personal essays offers an intimate account of the lesbian, feminist, and civil rights movements. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Joan Nestle's work embodies a very large vision." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a powerful book about Nestle's journey being a lesbian in a "restricted country." It includes a number of vignettes capturing the feel and flair of what it meant to suffer growing up with so much history of oppression. In the introduction Nestle comments, "sex is everywhere in 'A Restricted Country.'" That is true! The reason for this is Nestle's belief that "sex and politics are inseparable." Nestle has uncanny way of combining tender moments with police raids, of sometimes separating lesbians and feminists, of linking lesbians, whores, and nuns. These are all sex and politics, politics and sex. I loved the energy present in the writing. There is always a sort of pushing forward and asking the next question. I almost felt that Nestle was almost too vulnerable at times in the details she reveals about her sexual experiences, but then I realized her courage and confidence in being

able to. I realized the vulnerability was on my side, not hers. That's exactly why I needed to read her book. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is willing to create a bigger picture of what it means to be a woman, lesbian or not.

Joan Nestle's book *A Restricted Country* was a required reading for my women's studies college class. Although I picked up the book reluctantly because I thought I could not relate to a writer who is a lesbian feminist activist, I was surprised after only a few pages by how engrossed I was by Joan Nestle's life. From her recollection of being a Jew, raised by a single mother, and being a lesbian, Nestle grabbed my attention through her stories. By describing life's difficulties, the book draws the reader into segments of Joan Nestle's life where she fought against oppression and dedicated her life to helping others. Joan Nestle demonstrated herself as a survivor through her personal testimony. Stories and episodes described in the book help the reader relate to difficulties of being a feminist in the 1950's and 1960's. I recommend this book to all women regardless of their social status or sexual orientation. The book helps the reader understand the importance of staying true to who you are.

The one word I would use to describe this book is raw. Joan Nestle really does not hold anything back in her writing and really captures the reader in showing how hard it was being not only a lesbian but a lesbian activist during this freedom struggle. She describes events with so much passion it really draws you in. She also holds back nothing in describing her lesbian sexual experiences and can really expose so much to a reader who is very unfamiliar with a lesbian identity. The book also includes personal photographs of Joan Nestle during this time period which makes her stories and life ventures all the more real.

A truly fantastic read for anyone studying LGBTQ history.

This is an awesome book.

I haven't read a Joan Nestle book before I picked up, "*A Restricted Country*." She writes engaging first hand accounts of her entire life as it spanned from early childhood to her present days. She lived during trying times, and fought against the pressures of the world to control who she was. There is something to say about discovering who we are, and why we are unique. Self discovery is lost in a lot of biographies which focus on the political and bitterness of the conforming pain. However Joan

highlights these in a way that seems more human; she talks about where she was and what she was doing when something happened. When we think about 9/11 we might recall ourselves in a place or undertaking some task, that otherwise would have gone unremarkable. This marks patterns of growth in her personality as well as her style in her writing. To put yourself in her shoes as a child, and then a few pages later be walking around the city as a teenager comes with great flow and ease. The mistake I make as a reader is when a work sets me back and I fall out of the narrative. I like feeling engaged and part of the story, so pages disappear, and suddenly the last few pages of the book are passing and I can't recall where the rest went. With this story I flew through the pages, they seemed real, and left little bias on me as a reader. She covers the scenarios really well and I recommend others to pick up the book and change your outlook. The message of sex; as taboo as it is, definitely has its place in the world. Joan Nestle leaves no leaf in that category uncovered.

Joan Nestle's "A Restricted Country" is an excellent display of the struggles of a young woman torn between society's demands to conform to traditional female roles and being true to herself. Nestle shares the story of her life, throughout which she has been the subject of discrimination, whether it be from her religion or because of her homosexuality. Despite the way society treated Nestle, Nestle remained positive and strong and did not let anything or anyone bring her down. Nestle gives a vivid display of the hatred she and other lesbians had to endure. She discusses the different rules and restrictions governing lesbians at bars, how authority figures beat these women, and how despite all of these horrible actions taken towards her and others, they remained strong and continued to live their lives the way they felt it should be. I think that this book is inspiring and motivational. It is easy to lose sight of who we are when we are being told to be something else constantly by society, our families and friends, the media and so on. Nestle is an amazing woman for not changing who she is to please society, her family and so on. She is a strong woman who had to endure a lot but despite all that she has gone through, Nestle remained strong in the end and is a figure of inspiration for all women.

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