

[Free] Bookends: Two Women, One Enduring Friendship

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Leona G. Rostenberg

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Leona G. Rostenberg : Bookends: Two Women, One Enduring Friendship before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bookends: Two Women, One Enduring Friendship:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Read both booksBy Joanne JerrellA wonderful book about books and lasting friendships. I also bought their first book. I lent them to a friend -- she didn't return them.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Rare books and an even rarer friendshipBy LyricLovely book about two women pioneers -- two women who entered young adulthood at a time when the majority of women were destined for a life of marriage and children and not working outside the home. Both women were the products of Jewish families of means so it would have been easy for both of them to accommodate to the expected norms of their background and society at that time. Instead -- they chose to pursue education and intellectual pursuits. At the time they became antiquarin book dealers, they entered a field that was "men only." Undeterred by obstacles they forged ahead and became very successful in that field because they were so very good at what they did.This is a lively and lovely look at not only the evolution of women in 20th Century America but also the story of a deep friendship -- of commitment to an ideal and commitment to one another. You'll like having spent time in the company of these two women who in their own quiet way helped to change the way women were viewed in business dominated by men.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two Vital Women, One Unforgettable ReadBy carolinMnWhat a joy this book was for someone who loves books and spirited, vital old women! Had seen them interviewed many years ago and was so impressed that I ordered this book when I stumbled on it. About half of the book provides a clear picture of what it was like to be

young, bright, female and Jewish (albeit privileged) in the first half of the twentieth century and the barriers to be surmounted. The other half is about their profession (rare book collectors and sellers). I learned a lot about that profession, but was also fascinated by their account of several literary mysteries solved (most notably, discovering works not previously attributed to Louisa May Alcott and shedding new light on her life). I will not forget them or their story.

The rare book dealers who delighted readers with the history of their bookselling days in "Old Books, Rare Friends" now offer the other side of their story -- an intimate look at the joys of a relationship that has lasted more than half a century. When their friendship and business partnership began in the 1940s, Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine Stern were pioneers in a man's world. Now approaching their nineties, the duo, who -- among their many discoveries -- unearthed Louisa May Alcott's pseudonymous blood-and-thunder stories, remains a vibrant institution in the rare book trade, even as the Internet changes their field -- and their community -- forever. After publishing "Old Books, Rare Friends," Rostenberg and Stern received a flood of fan mail asking about their personal lives, and they have responded with poignant honesty and the warmth for which they are famous, as they reflect on their lives and their remarkable partnership. "Bookends" recounts their fascinating histories: family backgrounds, business adventures, the men they did not marry, and their approach to the bittersweet trials of aging. More than just a dual memoir, "Bookends" is also a chronicle of the cultural changes of twentieth-century American life and a loving farewell to the golden age of book collecting. Filled with wisdom and humor, this volume is a tribute to Rostenberg and Stern's passion for the written word -- and for life itself. Catching us off guard with their candor, they offer their insights regarding their business, their way of life, and their worldview. Above all, they present the story of a special relationship. At a time when people find it increasingly difficult to connect, here we have the seamless story of a shared life. It is the unique product of an earlier time, yet it is a timeless reflection on the very nature of friendship. Though their fantastic partnership is un-reproducible, the ideal they have established, for the integration of one life so completely with another, contains lessons for all of us. Without husband or children they created a loving home when this was uncharted territory for women. They nurtured a business and life partnership that has lasted more than half a century and has only gotten stronger with time. When the passing years began to claim one's hearing and the other's sight, they became each other's eyes and ears. A meditation on aging and togetherness, this book is also the narrative of two pioneering single, Jewish women making their way in tandem through a world largely organized to keep them in their place. It is a gentle, wise story, told in their inimitable style, sparse, unadorned, and honest. Their affirmations supersede their uncertainties. As they write, "Bookends support books and come in pairs...If the word encapsulates our past, it looks also to the future, and to the books -- lived together, written together -- that will follow." They confront the challenges of aging in a no-nonsense tone, and, in facing them, give us an ideal of enduring human friendship that can't help but touch the heart.

From Publishers Weekly Rostenberg and Stern, rare-book dealers, single Jewish women and lifelong friends, continue the story begun in *Old Books, Rare Friends* with this inspiring, moving chronicle of a friendship and moving personal account of the 20th century. The authors, now nearing their 90s, describe their battles and victories in the changing world. In "The Men We Did Not Marry," the authors list their early boyfriends (lawyers and doctors, an older teacher, a misogynist, a commitment-phobe and so on); Stern ends with, "My six men were six reasons I would never marry.... I was still a single woman in a man's world." Instead, they made a home together in a house "filled with light and love, with warmth and air." The pair witnesses the emergence of a younger clientele less well-versed in classics than the previous generation. They describe their European "book-hunt" in 1947, before postwar rebuilding occurred "we had seen... one of the most cataclysmic of changed worlds" and, at the end of the 20th century, they track industry and broader cultural changes by, for instance, the sale of a rare book for an astonishing \$12,000 on eBay (the authors had made what they thought was a fair bid of \$960). "Bookends is not only the title of this book. It is our very nature. Bookends support books and come in pairs. And that is the life we have led," proclaim the dauntless friends. As they near the end of their long, distinguished and energetic lives, Stern and Rostenberg know that the world as they've known it is also ending. But throughout their story, they remain convinced that, just as their partnership has endured, so will the printed word. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This book responds to those who, after reading the author's *Old Books, Rare Friends* by Rostenberg (New Worlds in Old Books) and Stern (Louisa May Alcott, LJ 9/15/98), wanted to know more about the personal lives of this octogenarian pair of rare-book dealers. Partners in the male-dominated antiquarian book business in New York since 1940, these women chronicle their unique, platonic friendship and business relationship. They detail their early lives, educations, and experiences abroad in alternating chapters, filling in the gaps from their previous memoir. Their important discovery of Louisa May Alcott's pseudonymously written thrillers is only mentioned briefly, the earlier volume having dealt with it in detail. Especially poignant is their account of the changing antiquarian book scene and their attempt to keep up with it, Internet and all. While they acknowledge the constraints age has put on their activities, they celebrate the joy they have found in each other. While approaching their nineties, these women have not lost the writing skills that have enabled them to write some 20 works on books and publishing. Their engaging prose keeps our interest as we learn

about these two rare friends and their passion for books. Recommended for larger public libraries. Nancy R. Ives, SUNY at Geneseo Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist For anyone seduced by Rostenberg and Stern's 1997 memoir *Old Books, Rare Friends* (and that would be pretty much anyone who has any sort of interest in books or friendship or women), this is another intimate chorus in two voices. The pair, who still live and work and write in New York City, provide further glimpses of their rare-books career as well as chapters on their families, their mothers, the "men we did not marry," their dogs, and the bittersweetness of old age. Who would have believed they could remember so much or render it so charmingly? Their scintillating delineation of "Booksellers the New and the Old" will enrapture and amuse, and their fortitude and feistiness in their chosen--and once indubitably male--profession will inspire and delight. And their careful descriptions of New York in the first half of the last century will entrance even those who don't miss lunch at Schrafft's or shopping at B. Altman's. GraceAnne DeCandido Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved