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Singled Out: How Two Million British Women Survived Without Men After the First World War

Virginia Nicholson

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SINGLED OUT



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Virginia Nicholson : Singled Out: How Two Million British Women Survived Without Men After the First World War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Singled Out: How Two Million British Women Survived Without Men After the First World War:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. How WWI changed women's roles in BritainBy Editing_GalA really interesting look at the "Surplus Women" of WWI women who never married because warfare claimed (by death, shell shock, or grievous injury) the men who would have been their husbands. Nicholson covers the social discrimination and economic privation that many of these women initially suffered. After showing how working-class women were trapped in those conditions, often for a lifetime, she spends the remainder of the book demonstrating how this unplanned state of "spinsterhood" actually opened up women's roles within the middle and upper classes and permanently changed Britain's social, political, and economic milieus. Reproductions of original photos and era-specific cartoons, excerpts from memoirs and diaries, and an extensive section on notes and sources all add to the book's appeal.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Childless, but still the mothers of our societyBy CustomerI'm biased in favor of this book because of the enormous impact of the women described in this book, including my own cousin, Mary Grieve. Few people realize that, despite losing lovers, male friends, brothers, partners, these women reached into everyone's lives and shaped their futures, either directly or indirectly. For those of my generation (the baby boomers), particularly if you were from the UK, as I was, these women's accomplishments shaped the society in which I grew up. As a result, they are all "my mother" in many ways.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great topic, struggles with layoutBy MJCI was very interested in the topic and enjoyed the stories and history that was shared. I struggled a bit with the format of how it was written. Half way through the book I started to lose interest. It felt like each chapter spend a great deal of time reminding you of past characters and events then it did it introducing new ideas and topics.

Almost three-quarters of a million British soldiers lost their lives during the First World War, and many more were incapacitated by their wounds, leaving behind a generation of women who, raised to see marriage as "the crown and joy of woman's life," suddenly discovered that they were left without an escort to life's great feast. Drawing upon a wealth of moving memoirs, *Singled Out* tells the inspiring stories of these women: the student weeping for a lost world as the Armistice bells pealed, the socialite who dedicated her life to resurrecting the ancient past after her soldier love was killed, the Bradford mill girl whose campaign to better the lot of the "War spinsters" was to make her a public figure--and many others who, deprived of their traditional roles, reinvented themselves into something better. Tracing their fates, Nicholson shows that these women did indeed harbor secret sadness, and many of them yearned for the comforts forever denied them--physical intimacy, the closeness of a loving relationship, and children. Some just endured, but others challenged the conventions, fought the system, and found fulfillment outside of marriage. From the mill-girl turned activist to the debutante turned archeologist, from the first woman stockbroker to the "business girls" and the Miss Jean Brodies, this book memorializes a generation of young women who were forced, by four of the bloodiest years in human history, to stop depending on men for their income, their identity, and their future happiness. Indeed, *Singled Out* pays homage to this remarkable generation of women who, changed by war, in turn would change society.

This is a ground-breaking book, richly nuanced with titbits of information, insight and understanding * The Daily Mail * Remarkably perceptive and well-researched ... Virginia Nicholson has produced another extraordinarily interesting work, sensitive, intelligent and well-written * The Sunday Telegraph * This in an inspiring book, lovingly researched, well-written and humane... the period is beautifully caught * The Economist * Brave, humane and honest * The Observer * Remarkably perceptive and well-researched ... Virginia Nicholson has produced another extraordinarily interesting work, sensitive, intelligent and well-written * The Sunday Telegraph * About the Author Virginia Nicholson studied at Cambridge University and lived in France and Italy, then worked as a documentary researcher for BBC Television. Her books include the acclaimed social history *Among the Bohemians--Experiments in Living 1900-1939*. As a granddaughter of Vanessa Bell, grandniece of Virginia Woolf, and daughter of Quentin Bell, she garners major media attention with Bloomsbury aficionados.