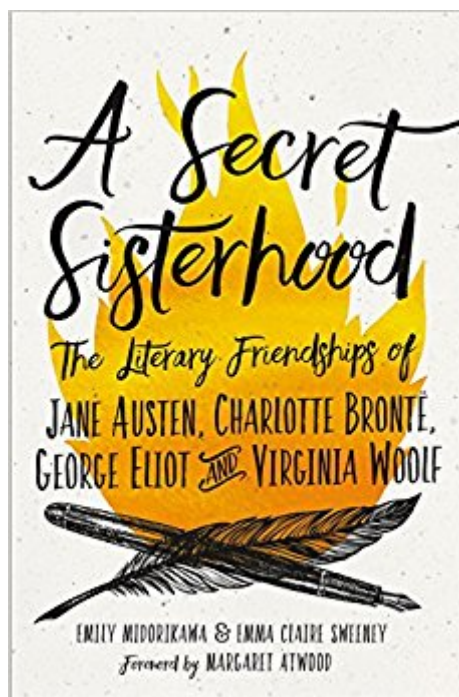




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A Secret Sisterhood: The Literary Friendships Of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, And Virginia Woolf



Synopsis

Male literary friendships are the stuff of legend; think Byron and Shelley, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. But the world's best-loved female authors are usually mythologized as solitary eccentrics or isolated geniuses. Coauthors and real-life friends Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney prove this wrong, thanks to their discovery of a wealth of surprising collaborations: the friendship between Jane Austen and one of the family servants, playwright Anne Sharp; the daring feminist author Mary Taylor, who shaped the work of Charlotte Brontë; the transatlantic friendship of the seemingly aloof George Eliot and Harriet Beecher Stowe; and Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, most often portrayed as bitter foes, but who, in fact, enjoyed a complex friendship fired by an underlying erotic charge. Through letters and diaries that have never been published before, *A Secret Sisterhood* resurrects these forgotten stories of female friendships. They were sometimes scandalous and volatile, sometimes supportive and inspiring, but always "until now" tantalizingly consigned to the shadows.

Book Information

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"Enthralling, illuminating, and a treat for fans of any of the writers who are covered." — "STARRED" Booklist "Rich and revealing...these forgotten friendships, from illicit and scandalous to radical and inspiring, are revelations." — "KIRKUS" "[An] evocative and well-researched ode to female solidarity." — "Publishers Weekly" — "A Secret Sisterhood is a marvel. On the strength of a hunch, two friends embark on a research mission that winds up becoming a vital and necessary contribution to women's history, literary history, and the literature of friendship. Beautifully written, rich with insight and feeling, this book is a must-read for

anyone who knows that behind every great woman stands a great female friend. • • "Kate Bolick, author of *Spinster: Making a Life of One's Own* • In this wise and exhilarating book, Midorikawa and Sweeney, literary friends themselves, delve into the friendships of women writers, learning lessons along the way about making art, making and keeping friends, and the perils and pleasures of literary life. • • "Samantha Ellis, author of *How to Be a Heroine: Or, What I've Learned from Reading Too Much* • A *Secret Sisterhood* offers a clever new perspective on established literary figures. While we may inherit family and circumstances, we get to choose our friends; and those these famous women writers have chosen reveal much that is fresh and fascinating about their lives and their work. • • "Tracy Chevalier, author of *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and editor of *Reader, I Married Him* • In digging up the forgotten friendships chronicled in *A Secret Sisterhood*, Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney have done much service to literary history. . . These four women, however iconic they have now become, were not two-dimensional icons, nor were they plaster angels: they were real people, with all the neediness, anxiety, ardor, and complexity that come with the territory. • • "Margaret Atwood, from the foreword

EMILY MIDORIKAWA's work has been published in the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Independent* on Sunday, and the *Times*. She is a winner of the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize and was a runner-up in the SI Leeds Literary Prize (judged by Margaret Busby) and the Yeovil Literary Prize (judged by Tracy Chevalier). She has a history degree from University College London, and is a graduate of the University of East Anglia's creative writing masters program. She now teaches at New York University's "London. • EMMA CLAIRE SWEENEY's work has been published in the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, and the *Times*. She has won Arts Council and Royal Literary Fund Awards, and her debut novel, *Owl Song at Dawn*, came out to critical acclaim in 2016. Emma holds an English literature degree from the University of Cambridge, a creative writing MA from the University of East Anglia, and her Ph.D. focused on Virginia Woolf. Emma now teaches at New York University's "London. • MARGARET ATWOOD is the author of more than forty books of fiction, poetry, and critical essays. In addition to *The Handmaid's Tale* (now a Hulu series) her novels include *The Blind Assassin* (winner of the Booker Prize), *Alias Grace* (winner of the Giller Prize in Canada and the Premio Mondello in Italy), *The Robber Bride*, *Cat's Eye*, *The Penelopiad*, *The Heart Goes Last*, and *Hag-Seed*, a novel revisitation of Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, for the Hogarth Shakespeare Project. Her latest book of short stories is *Stone Mattress: Nine Tales*. • She is also the author of the graphic novel *Angel Catbird* (with cocreator Johnnie Christmas). • Margaret Atwood lives in Toronto with writer Graeme Gibson. •

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