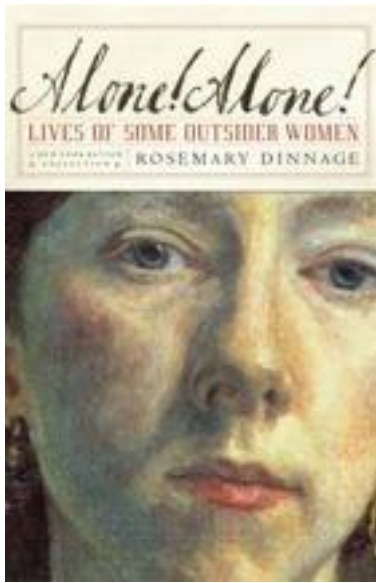


Alone! Alone!



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In the course of over thirty years of writing about psychology, child development, biography, and fiction, Rosemary Dinnage has encountered a variety of outstanding women, all of whom, in one way or another, felt powerfully alone.

Here she brings together her reflections on some of the most memorable of them, including solitaires like the painter Gwen John and the philosopher Simone Weil; muses to partners of genius like Clementine Churchill and Giuseppina Verdi; unstoppable characters like the birth-control advocate Marie Stopes and the children's novelist Enid Blyton; literary survivors like Isak Dinesen and Rebecca West; and, along the way, an assortment of aristocrats, lawbreakers, manic-depressives, transvestites, and storytellers.

Some of these women knew isolation through their dedication to duty, and others

through their immersion in writing, painting, or politics. Some juggled with fantasy worlds in which they could end up stranded. Others learned the fine art of survival, fighting illness, hard childhoods, or a hostile public. All of them, whether trying to construct a life or a work of art—or both—suggest ways in which women can choose, learn, laugh, invent, dare, and of course wholeheartedly love or hate.

These women make up a remarkable gallery of the famous, the infamous, the once famous, and the never famous. In telling their stories, Rosemary Dinnage considers what aloneness may really be, how it begins, how it feels, and, above all, how this crucial experience can teach and illuminate as well as hurt.

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