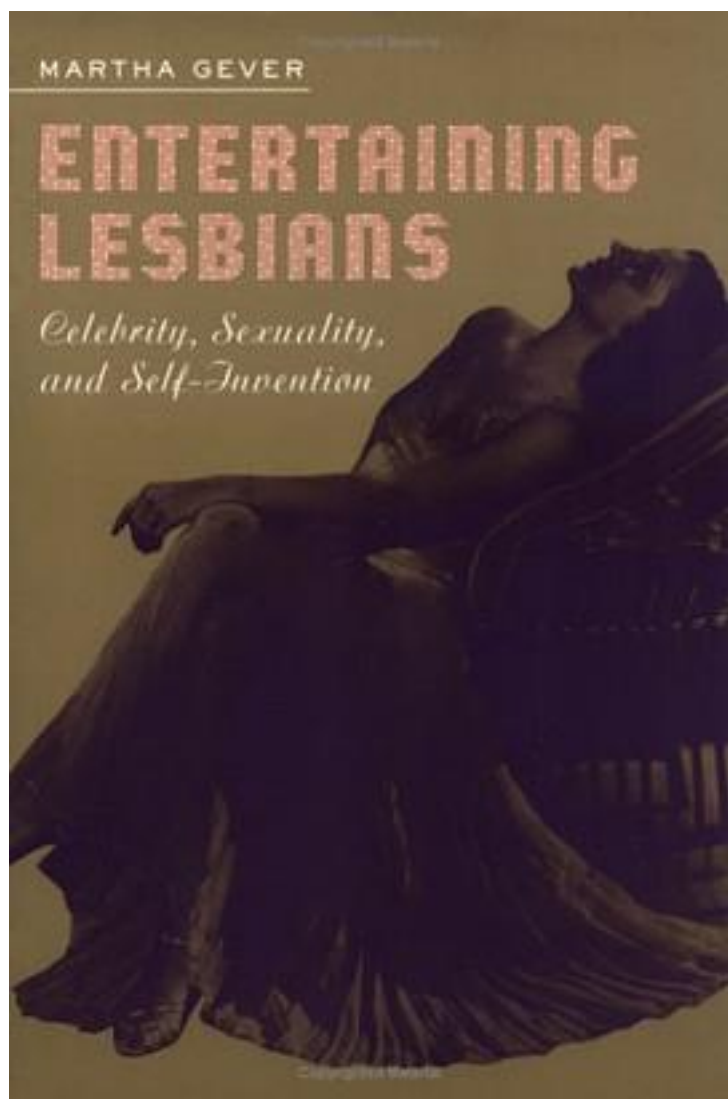


Entertaining Lesbians



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Before Rosie and k.d. lang, lesbians were seen only obliquely on the screen-as shadowy spinsters with twisted desires. Times have changed and today's famous lesbians are popular icons. Entertaining Lesbians charts the rise of lesbian celebrity, asking whether such exposure is good for lesbians or hurts their cause. Stars from Ellen DeGeneres to Melissa Etheridge to Chastity Bono send a message that being out is now acceptable, but have they created new stereotypes along the way? Tackling both sides of the issue, Gever traces the history of lesbians in public life over the last century to explore the paradoxes inherent in gay celebrity. Visibility, she contends, has always been the key weapon in the gay and lesbian movement's arsenal: To be out is to be represented. But lesbian celebrities like Newt Gingrich's sister Candace also demonstrate the risk of backlash and the burden of media scrutiny. Despite the pitfalls, Gever shows how stars like Martina Navratilova have created powerful models for the next generation with careful image management. Original and provocative, Entertaining Lesbians takes a groundbreaking look at the peril and promise of being not just out of the closet, but out in the public eye.

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