

The Beauvoir Sisters: An Intimate Look at How Simone and Hélène Influenced Each Other and the World

Claudine Monteil

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Helene de Beauvoir, a painter, grew up in the shadow of her extraordinary older sister, Simone. But the remarkable extent to which their relationship shaped both their lives has been overlooked until now. In this astonishingly intimate biography, the reader learns not only about their close relationship and artistic influence on one another, but also about the jealousy, condescension, and rivalry that plagued them. Monteil details how these two women, despite their myriad political and esthetic differences, came together to help launch the modern women's movement.

Sprinkled with astounding fragments of conversations Monteil witnessed firsthand between Simone, Jean Paul Sartre, Pablo Picasso, and other luminaries, the sisters' story is told by a woman who had the distinct privilege of belonging to their intimate circle of friends and who has been a leading figure in France's women's movement since the 1960s. Spanning the period between World War I and Helen's death in 2001, *The Beauvoir Sisters* is also the story of an era, as Monteil immerses the reader in the artistic and intellectual life of twentieth-century Paris, the effects of the Cold War, and the feminist movement in France and in the United States.



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