



The Forgotten Island: "A great many women can feel and behave like men. Very few of them can behave like gentlemen."

Radclyffe Hall

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She was born Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall in 1880 to wealthy parents who separated while she was still an infant. Her parents thereafter paid little attention to her. Hall was educated privately, and then at King's College London. Later she travelled to Europe, settling in Dresden, Germany. By now she had inherited a vast fortune from her paternal grandfather and was able to live as she pleased. In Germany, Hall met Mabel Batten and fell in love despite the twenty-three year age difference. Batten gave Hall the nickname 'John' by which she was henceforward known in every circumstance throughout her life except in her work as an author. In 1915, Hall met and, in 1917 moved in with sculptor Una Troubridge, with whom she would remain for the rest of her life. Hall wrote poetry all throughout her twenties and thirties. She had published *Dedicated to Arthur Sullivan* as early as 1894, and five further volumes of collected work (including *'Twixt Earth and Stars* in 1906, *A Sheaf of Verses* in 1908, *Poems of the Past and Present* in 1910 and *Songs of Three Counties and Other Poems* in 1913) were released before she stopped writing poetry and published her first novel in 1924. This was *The Forge*. That same year also saw publication of *The Unlit Lamp*, the first work for which Hall was known as simply Radclyffe Hall. *The Well of Loneliness*, the most important novel of Hall's career, was published in 1928 to immediate sensation and controversy. It is Hall's most direct artistic expression of her own personal sexual orientation. After the controversy of *The Well of Loneliness*, Hall would publish only two more novels: *The Master of the House* in 1932 and *The Sixth Beatitude* in 1936. She also released a collection of short stories – *Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself* in 1934. After years spent travelling in Italy and France and a series of long lasting affairs with other women (of which Troubridge was apparently aware), Hall retired with Troubridge to Rye, a small town in East Sussex. Hall, suffering from tuberculosis, underwent surgeries on her eyes and she thereafter had difficulty reading and writing. On October 7, 1943, Radclyffe Hall died from colon cancer at the age of sixty-three. She is buried in Highgate Cemetery in London near the gravesite of Mabel Batten.

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