



# Straight: The Surprisingly Short History of Heterosexuality

Hanne Blank

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Like the typewriter and the light bulb, the heterosexual was invented in the 1860s and swiftly transformed Western culture. The idea of "the heterosexual" was unprecedented. After all, men and women had been having sex, marrying, building families, and sometimes even falling in love for millennia without having any special name for their emotions or acts. Yet, within half a century, "heterosexual" had become a byword for "normal," enshrined in law, medicine, psychiatry, and the media as a new gold standard for human experience. With an eclectic scope and fascinating detail, Straight tells the eye-opening story of a complex and often contradictory man-made creation that turns out to be anything but straight or narrow.

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