



# **The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights**

*Arlene Stein*

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"By combining the meticulousness of an ethnographer with a writer's commitment to storytelling, Stein has written a book that's surprisingly compelling-or, better, compelling because it's surprising."

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In a book that combines strong on-the-ground research and lucid analysis with a novelist's imaginative sympathy, Arlene Stein sets out to discover why a small town with no apparent queer population became the site of a bitter battle over gay rights.

"A fascinating look at the psychology of fear and persuasion."

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"Every liberal ought to read this. . . . Arlene Stein provides an important depiction of life in a town which became a vortex of national and local issues."

-Tex Sample, *Christian Century*

"What's especially valuable about Stein's book is her detailed look at each individual's take on the meaning of the campaign and her patient exploration of the wide variety of forces shifting the ground of these people's lives."

-E. J. Graff, *American Prospect*

"This book displays interpretive sociology at its best."

-Robert N. Bellah, coauthor of *Habits of the Heart* and *The Good Society*

"In her cogent analysis of just how sickeningly simple it is to create an 'other,' a 'stranger' upon whom blame for our problems may be shifted, Stein has touched to the very heart of the social upheaval in America today."

-Dan Hays, *Salem (Oreg.) Statesman-Journal*

**Arlene Stein** is associate professor of sociology at Rutgers University. She has written for *The Nation*, *The Oregonian*, and *Newsday*, among other publications, and is the author of *Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation* and editor of *Sisters, Sexperts, Queers*.

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