

Forever in your debt

Thank you Radclyffe Hall, Harvey Milk and Lucille Hart

BY ADRIENNE ELLIS

My eyes were filled with tears, my sight was blurred. The words on the page doubled, and I was so filled with rage that I finally had to put the book down to slow my tears. Then I came upon the book "God we believe; we have told you we believe...we

•youth

have not denied you. Then stand up and defend us. Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence!"

With that desperate plea still in my heart, my eyes still overflowing, I ran downstairs to my girlfriend, and sobbed and sobbed. She just held me, already having read the book, understanding my pain.

The book I'm talking about is *Well Of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall. The book may be fiction, but so relevant to what many people have gone through in the past.

For those of you who haven't read this book, I highly recommend it. To help your understanding of what I'm about to say, let me give you a summary of the plot. A girl named Stephen, raised in the early 1900's, realizes she is a lesbian. Throughout the book she is

treated like a beast, ignored, and very lonely. It is something all gay people can relate to in one way or another. No matter how much pain I feel for Stephen, or how much I empathize with her fear, I can understand only a small portion of her experience.

I could understand the loss of a lover, or maybe falling in love with a malicious person, but I've never lost my parents because I'm gay. When I came out I had loads of literature and community groups to back me up and support me in my loneliness. So many of the people before me didn't.

After I finished *Well of Loneliness*, I realized something very important. Older gay people suffered many losses and abuses. Why? For me, for all of the young gay people of today, so we could feel proud, and further accept our gayness.

The people who had been at Stonewall, all the people beaten, all the people who were alone for so long. Because of their strength and persistence, my coming out process was less traumatic.

I just want to say that I've never been more thankful, more appreciative than I am toward you out there, who fought for me.

I hope that we, the future adult gay community will be as strong as the ones that came before us.

I'm forever in your debt. Thank you Radclyffe Hall, thank you Harvey Milk, and thank you Lucille Hart. You gave me something I will never forget.

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