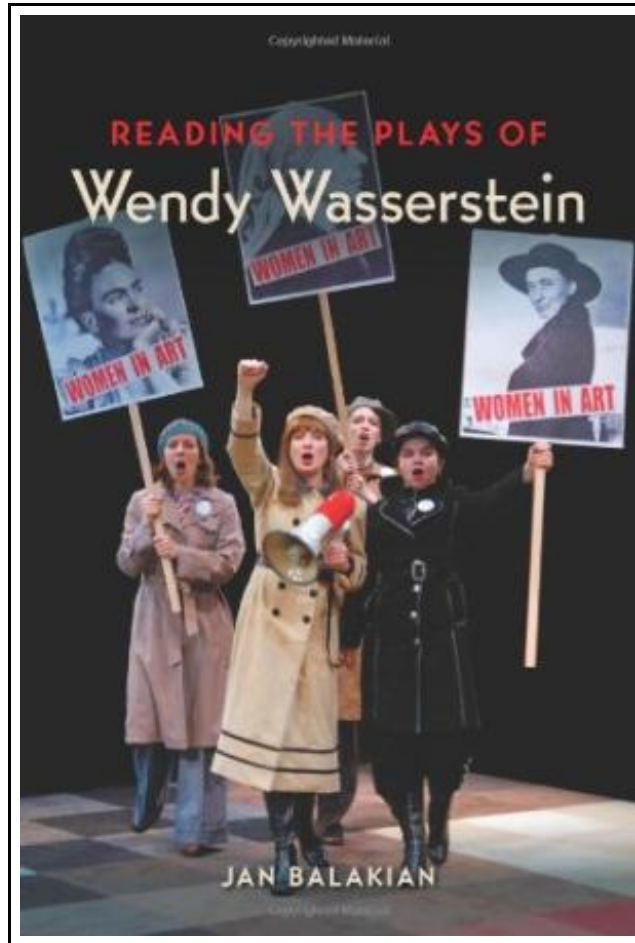


Reading the Plays of Wendy Wasserstein



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Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2010. Book Condition: New. Brand New, Unread Copy in Perfect Condition. A+ Customer Service! Summary: (Applause Books). Playwright Wendy Wasserstein is, above all, a social historian. Her plays balance drama and comedy to address such issues as social class and Jewish-American identity. Most notably, however, Wasserstein's work explores the lives and struggles of women. Although she never wanted to be called a feminist playwright, her plays ask whether women can have both satisfying careers and families, concluding that even well-educated women have not yet achieved parity with men. In *Reading the Plays of Wendy Wasserstein*, author Jan Balakian places Wasserstein's seven major plays in a historical context. Close readings of each play are interwoven with discussion of such topics as the Gilded Age (Old Money), life at a women's college in the early 1970s (Uncommon Women and Others), challenges to liberal assumptions (Third), and the rise and fall of feminism (The Heidi Chronicles, winner of the Pulitzer Prize). Drawing on the recently established Wasserstein archives at Mount Holyoke College, this book delves into primary sources such as commencement speeches and popular songs and features unpublished handwritten pages from the playwright's notebooks. Lending further insight into Wasserstein's concerns are Balakian's own interviews with the playwright herself and conversations with Wasserstein's friends, including playwright Christopher Durang, director Dan Sullivan, and playwright and director Emily Mann. Thoroughly researched, accessible, and rich in detail, *Reading the Plays of Wendy Wasserstein* will provide students, teachers, theatergoers, and other readers with fresh perspective on the work of one of America's great contemporary playwrights.

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