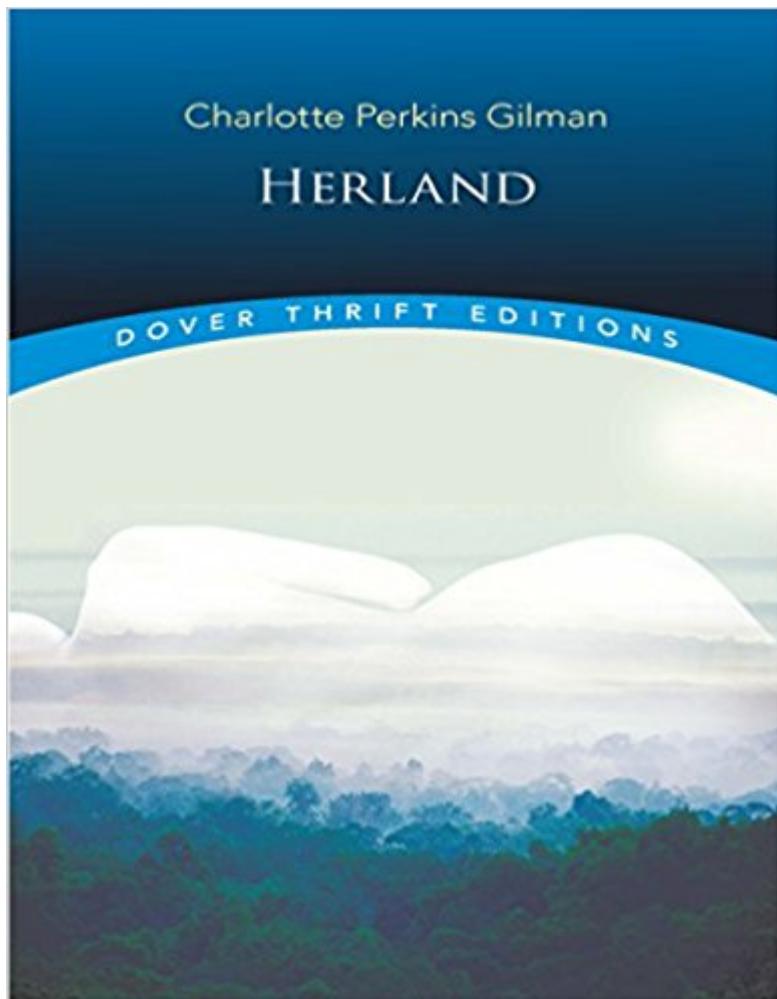


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# Herland (Dover Thrift Editions)



## Synopsis

A prominent turn-of-the-century social critic and lecturer, Charlotte Perkins Gilman is perhaps best known for her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," a chilling study of a woman's descent into insanity, and *Women and Economics*, a classic of feminist theory that analyzes the destructive effects of women's economic reliance on men. In *Herland*, a vision of a feminist utopia, Gilman employs humor to engage in a story about three male explorers who stumble upon an all-female society isolated somewhere in South America. Noting the advanced state of the civilization they've encountered, the visitors set out to find some males, assuming that since the country is so civilized, "there must be men." A delightful fantasy, the story enables Gilman to articulate her then-unconventional views of male-female roles and capabilities, motherhood, individuality, privacy, the sense of community, sexuality, and many other topics. Decades ahead of her time in evolving a humanistic, feminist perspective, Gilman has been rediscovered and warmly embraced by contemporary feminists. An articulate voice for both women and men oppressed by the social order of the day, she adeptly made her points with a wittiness often missing from polemical writings. This inexpensive edition of *Herland* will charm readers with the tale's mischievous, ironic outlook. A

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*Herland* is utopia with a smile, a gentle, witty version of what women can be. As fascinating to women for what it omits entirely as for what it discovers and invents for us, it is a fast and

invigorating read." ---Marge Piercy --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

On the eve of World War I, an all-female society is discovered somewhere in the distant reaches of the earth by three male explorers who are now forced to re-examine their assumptions about women's roles in society. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Herland is a feminist utopian novel originally published as a magazine serial in 1915 and then in book form in 1979.. It is well-written and enjoyable even though most of the characters, probably by design, are stereotypes. For instance, if I remember correctly, the three male characters represent the manly man, the scholarly, thoughtful man and the compliant man.

This is a lively page-turner, and the writer's voice is so contemporary it's hard to imagine this was written 100 years ago. This is really a fascinating novel about a land ruled by women. It's funny and very entertaining, told from the point of view of three male explorers who trek into this land and undergo many amusing misadventures.

I loved the idea of this plot: three archetypes of man find a world of women and fight to keep their unsuppressed machismo and misogyny intact. It is such a cool book and such a cool idea. Will definitely get around to drawing some fan art.

Of course one has to have a moment of suspension of belief to accept the concept of their motherhood in a society without men, but what a great work on how men view women, their supposed adoration for the 'weaker' sex, yet at the same time, their disgust for the very ideal of women they created. Would a society of only women evolve into a near perfect civilization which strives together for the benefit of the whole, that evolve so they think in terms of 'we' instead of 'I'? A national identity so intuned, so benevolent that every thought of every person was the advancement of every generation to reach a higher 'goodness'. The creation of a perfect culture which has conquered almost every problem faced by modern society, would a community of women separated from any contact with men be able to create that...interesting concept and fascinating reading when put in a fictional story of three men, one a macho blockhead, another a soft idealist and finally the anthropologist who stands as the man in the middle. How would these three very different men survive in such an accomplished society? Great story. Word of warning, there is an abrupt ending, leading of course into a sequel, so prepare oneself for that. Also, it is helpful to remember this was

written by a woman who died in the 1930s. Society was indeed different then than now, but surprisingly not as much as one would think.

if only.....

Out on adventure, three young men in a time period not defined but after planes were on the scene, crash and discover a civilization unknown to the outside world - a group without men for 2000 years. Somehow they evolved in ways unexplainable and succeed in bearing children. These three men come to know three women and marry them with different degrees of success. Way far out concepts, yet interesting to consider how women might succeed in learning to live in harmony without the tension of men.

Gilman's novel is a bit clumsy as far as the plot is concerned, but it is representative of her advanced thinking for the times. The male characters are all types, and the same may be said for the women. The novel is not very long and is a milestone in women's literature, and it should be read for that reason if no other. Generally, only her short stories are taught, probably because of time constraints, in general literature courses. But this and Chopin's *The Awakening* are deserving of attention by any inquisitive reader about the development of American society and literary taste.

A+

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