



All or Nothing: A Short History of Abstinence in America

Jessica Warner

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A completely original exploration of the abstinence movement in America — from alcohol to sex to meat.

America's long love affair with abstinence goes back to the early nineteenth century, when thousands of men and women suddenly stopped drinking hard liquor. Consistency then demanded that they give up all their other vices — beer and cider, tobacco, coffee, meat, pickles, pies, masturbation, and more. Two centuries later, the ideal of abstinence has lost none of its power to influence how Americans live — and how they want you to live.

With her trademark wit and irony, acclaimed author Jessica Warner tells the story of one of America's most enduring and powerful ideals. There are many surprises along the way, starting with the abolitionists, feminists, and other do-gooders who were the first — and most thoroughgoing — of America's abstainers. And always there are the colourful people who brought the idea to life — the visionaries, preachers, college professors, feminists, and cranks who practiced what they preached.

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