



## Synopsis

A bestselling sensation when it was first published by Viking in 1978, *A Woman of Independent Means* has delighted millions of readers and was the inspiration for the television miniseries starring Sally Field. At the turn of the century, a time when women had few choices, Bess Steed Garner inherits a legacy—not only of wealth but of determination and desire, making her truly a woman of independent means. From the early 1900s through the 1960s, we accompany Bess as she endures life's trials and triumphs with unflinching courage and indomitable spirit: the sacrifices love sometimes requires of the heart, the flaws and rewards of marriage, the often-tested bond between mother and child, and the will to defy a society that demands conformity. Now, with this beautiful trade paperback edition, Penguin will introduce a new generation of readers to this richly woven story. . .and to Bess Steed Garner, a woman for all ages.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (98 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #82,525 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Epistolary](#) #569 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies](#) #688 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies](#)

## Customer Reviews

I just finished this book, of which I could not put down for a moment. It is an excellent read! I cried several times throughout the book. I was amazed by this woman, Bess. She was the obvious life-force behind her marriage and family. She always asked questions and made comments about life that were ahead of its time...classic...timeless! She was such a progressive thinker for her time. The letters spanned from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1940s. Time and time again she surprised me with her observations and decisions: *We should just do, instead of waiting for something to happen, since the future is unknown.* She commented about philosophical concepts that many of us ponder today. Her thoughts on children-rearing were so refreshing too; that we

shouldn't lose ourselves in our children; that raising children doesn't necessarily mean one has to make it her sole occupation. Her perception of life was so positive, even in the face of so many unbelievable tragedies. She treated death like an enemy, which forced her to live her life to the fullest. A very interesting, positive, way to look at things, especially in an age where a lot of us have become complacent about death. Her question about why society expects us to spend our lifetime of experiences with one person, is one that I'm sure many of us ask ourselves today! She sees the complexities of people and of life in general, which makes her so understanding, and so tolerant. Even her subtle way of introducing social change is brilliant, leaving a lasting impression. It was inspiring to read those letters, and reminded me of how important writing is...so much more thought goes into words when one writes them down. The written word can often be so much more powerful than words which are spoken.

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