Kindness of Strangers

John Boswell

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In *The Kindness of Strangers*, John Boswell argues persuasively that child abandonment was a common and morally acceptable practice from antiquity until the Renaissance. Using a wide variety of sources, including drama and mythological-literary texts as well as demographics, Boswell examines the evidence that parents of all classes gave up unwanted children, "exposing" them in public places, donating them to the church, or delivering them in later centuries to foundling hospitals. *The Kindness of Strangers* presents a startling history of the abandoned child that helps to illustrate the changing meaning of family.



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