

Cook and the Carpenter: A Novel by the Carpenter (The Cutting Edge: Lesbian Life and Literature Series)

June Davis Arnold

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Women's liberation sought to transform every sector of U.S. society--its educational system, culture, language, politics, and, importantly, the delivery of social services. To enable this movement, women all over the country began to establish women's centers.

In New York City, women from almost every local women's liberation group took over an abandoned building in lower Manhattan on New Year's Eve, 1970. They named the building The Fifth Street Women's Building and renovated it to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate women in need. The take-over was a huge success, attracting hundreds of activists and community members. Thirteen days later, the New York City Tactical Police stormed the building, expelled the women, and ended the action. The City then tore the building down and built a parking lot on the site.

June Arnold was one of the original planners and an active participant in this episode. When she got out of jail, she went home and wrote this novel about what happened. *The Cook and the Carpenter*, which quickly gained fame for its use of a non- gendered language, remains one of the best representations of the time period that berthed modern feminism and paved the way for lesbian communities.



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