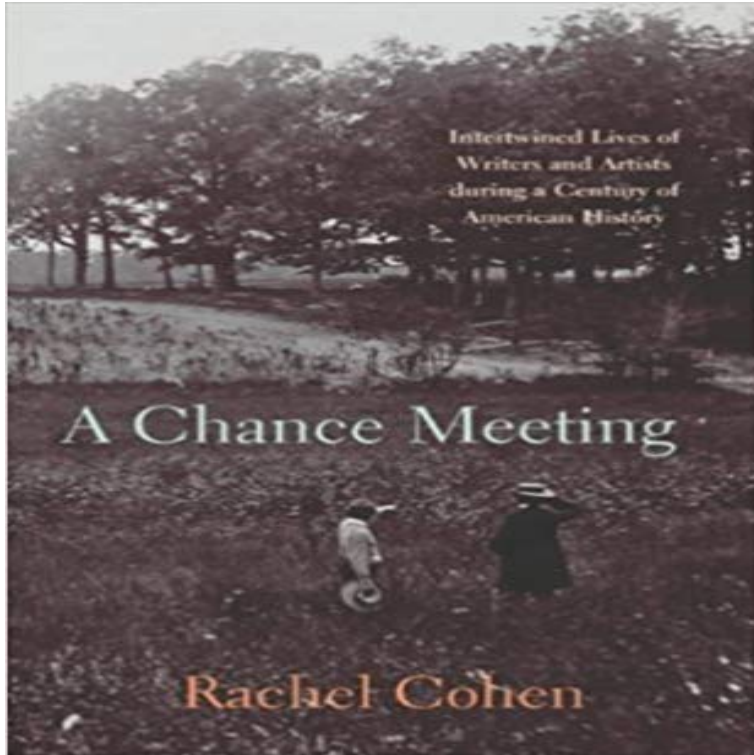


A Chance Meeting: Intertwined Lives of American Writers and Artists, 1854-1967



Each chapter of *A Chance Meeting* takes up an actual encounter between two historical figures. As Rachel Cohen writes in her introduction: They met in ordinary ways - a careful arrangement after long admiration, a friend's casual introduction, or because they both just happened to be standing near the drinks. They talked to each other for a few hours or for forty years, and later it seemed to them impossible that they could have missed each other. *A Chance Meeting* opens with a young Henry James in the studio of the great Civil War photographer Mathew Brady, and captures the boy in a moment of exquisite self-consciousness about being American. Later in the book Brady will return with Walt Whitman and with Ulysses Grant, while Henry James reappears with William Dean Howells and Sarah Orne Jewett. Cohen brilliantly reanimates such unforgettable pairings as Grant and Mark Twain; William James and W. E. B. Du Bois; Edward Steichen and Alfred Stieglitz; Carl Van Vechten and Gertrude Stein; Hart Crane and Charlie Chaplin; Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston; Elizabeth Bishop and Marianne Moore; Richard Avedon and James Baldwin; and John Cage and Marcel Duchamp. In all, thirty figures

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