



Helena Rubinstein: The Woman Who Invented Beauty - by Michèle Fitoussi

**Helena Rubinstein: La Femme qui inventa la beauté - Translated from the French -
by Kate Bignold and Lakshmi Ramakrishnan Iyer
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She invented beauty, understood women and created a revolution.

Helena Rubinstein, one of the most extravagant and wide-ranging style-makers, built a cosmetics empire that spanned the globe. Her creative, professional and scientific approach to beauty coupled with innovative advice on skincare were an instant worldwide sensation. This visionary businesswoman and entrepreneur lived and breathed her own life's work. Helena Rubinstein was a breathtaking, stunning original. She struggled, nearly gave up, and triumphed. This is her riveting, rags-to-riches life story, a vivid account packed with fascinating detail, the stuff that romantic fiction is made of.

A true heroine at heart, Helena believed in herself and in her extraordinary power to conquer the world. She turned all her disadvantages into strengths. Her character was forged in iron and steel. Driven by great courage, extraordinary intelligence and an indomitable will to succeed, she invented modern cosmetics, making them accessible to all. To Helena, beauty was a new power to assert independence. Her innate sense of marketing helped her to promote her cosmetics empire successfully. She constantly invented new sales techniques to set high professional standards, using creative advertising to her advantage.

Helena worked tirelessly. Work was her best beauty treatment. She believed in the energizing power of hard work. It kept her young, smoothing the wrinkles from her mind and spirit. She became one of the richest women in the world, amassing a fortune almost singlehandedly, by the power of sheer, hard work. She was a visionary and deserved her hard-won success. Madame, as everyone called her, became a billionaire businesswoman and a highly successful entrepreneur. She even acquired a royal title by becoming a princess later in life. Helena Rubinstein watched the dramatic democratization of beauty, the advent of consumerism and women marching towards freedom and liberty.

What is so interesting about Helena Rubinstein? First encounters are often mysterious. We do not know exactly how things happen. Mostly it is a matter of chance. A person's story touches us in ways we cannot express. With her name boldly emblazoned on beauty products, the opening lines of her life story are dramatic enough. Born in 1872 in Kraków, Poland, she had seven younger sisters. Aged twenty-four, she sailed to Australia as a pioneer, armed with only a parasol, twelve jars of cream, and inexhaustible energy. She disembarked in Melbourne, in the heart of a foreign land, where she struggled, nearly gave up, then triumphed.

Helena Rubinstein became a sort of romantic heroine who despised the past. Her motto seemed to be 'Onwards!'. She was a conqueror. Her character was forged in iron and steel. Helena set out to prove one thing alone: 'Give a girl the right cosmetics and she can conquer the world.' Her extraordinary and tumultuous life spanned almost a century and across four continents. Inspired by courage and imbued with intelligence and a will to succeed, she built an industrial and financial empire.

More impressively, she re-invented modern cosmetics, making them accessible to all. It was not an easy task for a woman. But she loftily disregarded disadvantages, often turning them into strengths. Her first beauty institute was opened in Melbourne in 1902, when Australian women obtained the right to vote. Helena was a strong supporter of women's equality, which meant fighting for their rights and their liberation.

For Helena, beauty was a new power through which women could assert their independence, using the assets at their disposal to conquer the world. Cosmetics existed before Helena Rubinstein but she was the visionary who created the science of modern beauty. Her extraordinary and tumultuous life spanned almost a century and across four continents. Inspired by courage and imbued with intelligence and a strong will to succeed, she built an industrial and financial empire. She lived through many eras and died in 1965, aged 93.

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