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Sommario/riassunto	Adoption challenges our understanding of the core symbols of kinship in American culture - birth, biology, and blood. Judith Modell examines these symbols and the way they affect people who experience the "fictive" kinship of adoption. Her findings are timely and profoundly moving; as presented here, they contribute valuable insights to the current debates about removing the veil of secrecy from adoption

records and about giving more decision-making power to the participant in an adoptive relationship. Modell draws extensively on interviews with birthparents, adoptive parents, and adoptees, some of whom are active in the movement to reform American adoption. The proposed reform - the opening of records, the acknowledgment of a biological and a legal parent, the blending of families that are related only through a child - challenges accepted meanings of "mother" and "father," "parent" and "child," "ancestry" and "identity" in this country. But Modell shows that uncertainties have long surrounded these familiar concepts and that adoption has always upset our conventional cultural interpretations of "being related." *Kinship with Strangers* explores for the first time the profound impact of this need to interpret and reinterpret kinship on the part of those who experience adoption. As the members of the adoption triad tell their stories, certain motifs appear that organize each person's experience of adoptive kinship and at the same time offer a profound critique of American adoption policies. "Surrender" is the dominant motif for birthparents, while "love at first sight" captures an adoptive parent's sense of parenthood. For the adoptee, "telling" is central - the moment when one learns one is not "like everyone else." Modell's book not only presents the personal side of an increasingly urgent and public debate but also demonstrates the persistence of these debates.

From nineteenth-century movements on the part of adoptees, birthparents, and adoptive parents, there have been efforts to modify this institution that so deeply alters individual lives. The last chapter on recent upheavals in American adoption places *Kinship with Strangers* at the heart of a discussion that has moved out of the privacy of families, agencies, and even legislatures and onto the front pages of newspapers. With a perspective drawn from the anthropological analysis of kinship, this insightful analysis reveals how complex, and perplexing, the discussion actually is.

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