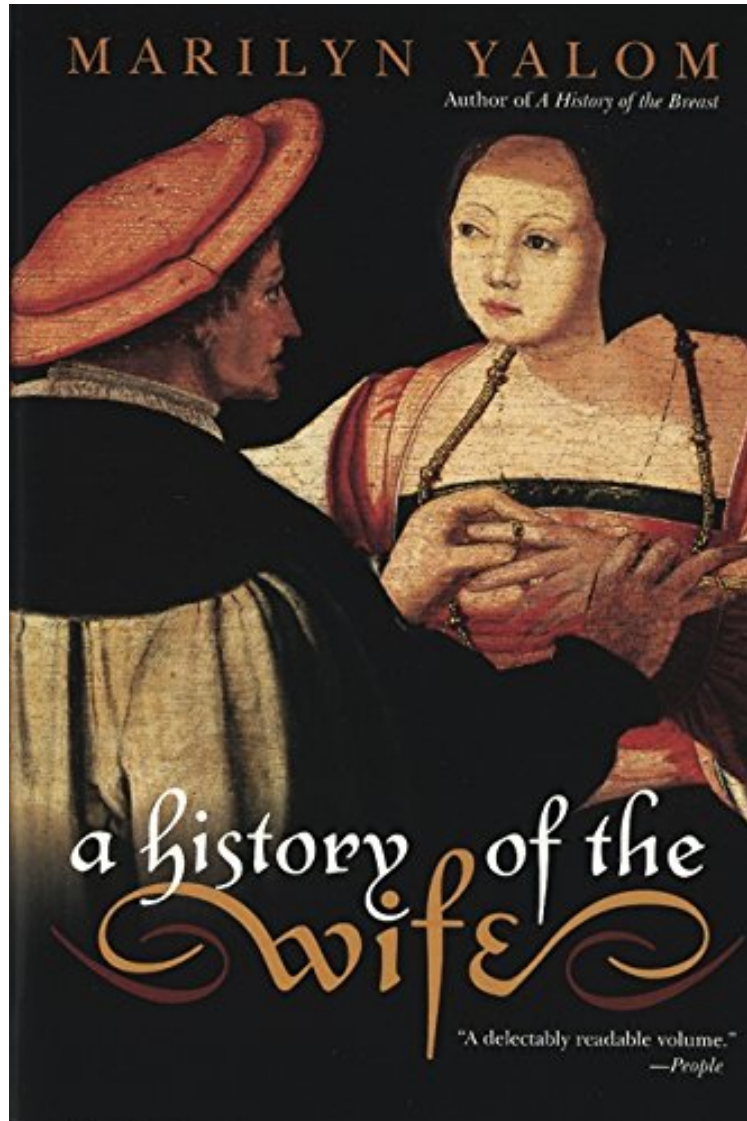


[Download free pdf] A History of the Wife

## A History of the Wife

Marilyn Yalom

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#161969 in Books Marilyn Yalom 2002-02-05 2002-02-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x 1.05 x 5.311, .87 #File Name: 0060931566464 pages A History of the Wife | File size: 29.Mb

**Marilyn Yalom : A History of the Wife** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History of the Wife:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating! Ought to be required reading for every women...By Ginnie Siena Bivona I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It's very well written, entertaining and informative without being the least bit dry. I highly recommend it even if you are not particularly a history buff...this book will open your eyes to the realities of life as a wife since the earliest written records up to today. Rarely do I immediately re-read a book, but I am this one! Loved it! 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. An interesting read for all women By

Stephanie Manley I really enjoyed this book. I have to give it four stars as it really only includes Anglo Western women. This gives little detail for women of the East, African nations, or even indigenous people of the Americas. With that being said the book is highly informative and goes through marriage through times. Attention is given to the Greek, Roman, Western European wives, then off to America and how American women's lives have changed. This book explores what typically was an arranged marriage for family prestige and gain, until it became a love match. Wives' roles were more than simply taking care of the house and children through out time. Wives often ran a husband's business, and was even a requirement for some careers. While this book may have been written from a feminist point of view, I believe this book can be read by all who want to know about the role of a wife from a historical standpoint. It's a wonderful thought provoking read that will leave you thankful you live in the modern age. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very in-depth look at marriage. By Allana Scott I truly enjoyed reading about the history of married life throughout the years. This was quite an interesting look at the way marriage has changed since antiquity. Marilyn Yalom wrote this in a very easy to read way and made it interesting.

How did marriage, considered a religious duty in medieval Europe, become a venue for personal fulfillment in contemporary America? How did the notion of romantic love, a novelty in the Middle Ages, become a prerequisite for marriage today? And, if the original purpose of marriage was procreation, what exactly is the purpose of marriage for women now? Combining "a scholar's rigor and a storyteller's craft" (San Jose Mercury News), distinguished cultural historian Marilyn Yalom charts the evolution of marriage in the Judeo-Christian world through the centuries and shows how radically our ideas about marriage have changed. For any woman who is, has been, or ever will be married, this intellectually vigorous and gripping historical analysis of marriage sheds new light on an institution most people take for granted, and that may, in fact, be experiencing its most convulsive upheaval since the Reformation.

.com The cultural historian who gave us *A History of the Breast* takes stock of the wife from her conception by the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans to her 20th-century manifestation as the New Woman. Beginning with the charter myth for the Judeo-Christian wife (Adam and Eve), Marilyn Yalom explains the religious, legal, and social practices of ancient civilizations that provided the template for the idea of wife as property of and subservient to her husband, with a role limited to mother and housekeeper. What she discovers is that the recent transformation of wifehood from sexless stay-at-home dependent to sexy supermom is actually the distillation of changes that have been going on for a long time, say a couple of thousand years. In fact, what makes Yalom's passage through time so fascinating is the steady rise and fall and rise again of the status of the wife and her struggle for greater autonomy. There are plenty of surprises: the first reciprocal marriages were actually had in Roman times; divorce became popular around the same time that monogamy was instituted; and while it's true that Puritans punished adultery harshly, it was they who brought the concepts of mutual love and lovemaking (other than for procreation) to America. The growing tension between women's impulses towards emancipation and the reaction against it was a quickly repeating theme in the 20th century, best exemplified by a WWII ad of a working woman pledging to "guard every bit of Beauty that he cherishes in me." The wives in this revelatory genealogy resonate with the aid of illuminating stories and the lively voices found in letters and diaries. Through these, Yalom lithely demonstrates that the fantasy of the selfless devoted wife has always had an ineluctable twin, the archetypal powerful woman--and vice versa. While college women in the 1970s may have declared that "the idea that a woman's place is in the home is nonsense," Yalom points out that society still acts like every breadwinner has a stay-at-home wife, and the anxieties that are raised in advice columns today are not that different from those a hundred years ago. Greater independence and equality have not, as feared, led to the abandonment of the marital institution, nor many of the issues that haunt it. --Lesley Reed From Publishers Weekly The voices of ordinary women speak volumes in this sweeping history of women and marriage in the Western world. As with her well-received *A History of the Breast*, Yalom, a scholar at Stanford's Institute for Women and Gender, moves easily among several fields: feminist history, religion and myth, anthropology, personal narratives, literature, pop culture and sociology. To trace the changing role of wives from ancient times to the present. The general direction of change: from subordinate toward more egalitarian roles. Comes as no surprise. What may be unexpected, however, is Yalom's evidence that, while generally conforming to cultural norms, individual marriages throughout history have been more complex than law and tradition may have dictated. Barren wives were sometimes favored over fertile ones, arranged marriages sometimes encompassed deep love and wives' personal "power" could vary considerably. Nevertheless, marriages were hardly egalitarian, even after late-18th-century political ideals proclaimed women to be "co-creators of... new republican societies" in America and Europe. Wives had little legal autonomy; they could not control their own money or even have access to their children in the event of separation or divorce, until equal rights began to be won during the 20th century. Yalom discusses the push for birth control rights, the impact of the depression and World War II and today's two-spouse-income economy and 50% divorce rate. She excels in presenting personal perspectives, including those of working-class wives, immigrants, African-Americans and lesbians. Yet she is less successful in examining wider societal effects, including the impact of high divorce rates. "To be a wife today when there are few prescriptions or proscriptions is truly a creative endeavor," she concludes; true enough, but it's an

insufficient explanation for how egalitarian marriages might actually work. (Feb.) Forecast: Stunning cover art, a topical subject and the title's echo of Yalom's previous book should attract many readers in addition to this book's obvious audience of women's studies majors. If Oprah did history, this might be her kind of book. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Cultural historian Yalom (Inst. for Women and Gender, Stanford Univ.) has apparently written the first truly comprehensive history of the Western female spousal experience; indeed, there are precious few long views of either marriage or the family to which this book can be compared. Beginning with the biblical ancients and ending with Bill and Hillary, Yalom concludes optimistically, asserting that the situation of contemporary wives today and despite disquieting statistics on infidelity and divorce is at long last less a burden than a collaborative, loving opportunity. Yalom's particular interest tends toward how wives have entered or more typically, have been entered into marriage. One oddity: despite referencing numerous works in the popular literary canon including a thoughtful discussion of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* she virtually ignores what film and music have had to say about wives. Yalom's previous book, *A History of the Breast* (LJ 2/15/97), was certainly more daring and will have the more lasting intellectual impact. But this is an important work for all libraries valuing significant gender studies acquisitions. Recommended. D Scott H. Silverman, Bryn Mawr Coll. Lib., PA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.