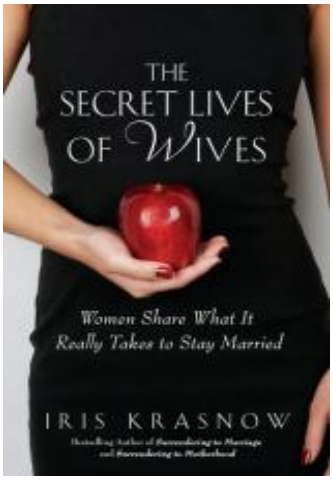
The Secret Lives of Wives: Women Share What it Really Takes to Stay Married

by Iris Krasnow



About the Book

America?s high divorce rate is well known. But little attention has been paid to the flip side: couples who creatively manage to build marriages that are lasting longer than we ever thought possible. What?s the secret? To find out, bestselling journalist Iris Krasnow interviewed more than 200 wives whose marriages have survived for 15 to 70 years.

In raw, candid, sometimes titillating stories, Krasnow?s cast of wise women give voice to the truth about marriage and the importance of maintaining a strong sense of self apart from the relationship. Some spend summers separately from their partners. Some make time for wine with the girls. One septuagenarian has a recurring date with an old flame from high school. In every case, the marriage operates on many tracks, giving both spouses license to pursue the question ?Who am I apart from my marriage??

Krasnow?s goal is to give women permission to create their own marriages at any age. Marital bliss is possible, she says, if each partner is blissful apart from the other. For anyone who wants to stay married and stay sane, this is the book to read!

Discussion Guide

1. Did THE SECRET LIVES OF WIVES challenge any of your beliefs about marriage? Whose story resonated most with you? Was there a wife whose marriage you wished you could have? If so, what are the steps you could take to achieve it?

2. Do you agree with Krasnow?s assertion that"you can shake loose legally from a vintage marriage, but you will forever be entangled in a place so deep that even the best lawyer is incapable of performing a clean extraction" (p. 37)?

3. Whether it?s taking up a discarded hobby or giving more attention to your appearance or taking a separate vacation, are you considering altering some behavior or attitude after reading this book?

4. Many of the women profiled gave up their jobs and careers when they married or became mothers. For them, returning to work revived their self-confidence as well as their marriages. But Alice and Jade are working wives and mothers. For them, the necessity of work breeds feelings of resentment toward their husbands. Jade complained,"even when I was working seventy hours a week? I still did the lion?s share of the work around the house" (p. 143). Is a successful marriage a socioeconomic luxury?

5. Cynthia has never had sex with her college boyfriend, but they regularly meet for lunch and follow it up with a make out session in his car. Mimi and her husband, Gerald, are swingers who regularly engage in foursomes. Do you consider Cynthia and Mimi?s marriages to be"technically" monogamous? Is Shauna?s infidelity okay since her husband doesn?t seem to care?

6. Do you think all of the wives profiled have an accurate sense of their husbands and marriages?

7. Were you surprised by Falisha?s overwhelmingly positive experience as a wife in an arranged marriage? Krasnow writes that,"divorce rates in India, where 95 percent of marriages are arranged, are among the lowest in the world" (p. 219). What do you see as the benefits of an arranged marriage versus a"love" match?

8. How --- if at all --- do you think the surge in Internet dating will affect marriage and divorce statistics in the decades to come?

9. Would you recommend THE SECRET LIVES OF WIVES to your husband?

Author Bio

Iris Krasnow is a graduate of Stanford University who covered fashion for the *Dallas Time-Herald* before becoming the national feature writer for United Press International. She is currently a journalism professor at American University inWashington, D.C. Krasnow frequently speaks on issues related to family, relationships, and female empowerment in the national media, at business organizations, women?s groups, and religious and academic institutions across the country. Her previous books include I AM MY MOTHER'S DAUGHTER, SURRENDERING TO YOURSELF, SURRENDERING TO MOTHERHOOD, and the *New York Times* bestseller SURRENDERING TO MARRIAGE. More on Iris Krasnow?s work, and contact information, can be found on: www.iriskrasnow.com

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