

Rotating Polyandry and Its Enforcers

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By way of [Foseti](#) and [Mangan](#), F. Roger Devlin's *Rotating Polyandry – and Its Enforcers*, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

Edit: H/T as well to [Flavia](#) for sharing this first.

I have only made my way through part one so far, but wanted to pass it on for those who haven't already read it. I struggle to pick out quotes because every paragraph is quotable. But I'll share a few teasers just to pique your interest:

Like other observers of the contemporary scene, the author notes the pervasiveness of female anger. "It's impossible . . . to understand anything about women in this country today, unless you understand that a) they're angry, and b) their anger is directed at men. Women today aren't seeking equality. They want retribution—revenge."

and

Langley is on firmer ground when she suggests women actually enjoy being angry because it gives them a kind of power: "Angry people not only spur those around them to walk on eggshells, they motivate them to do exactly what the angry person wants them to do. Some women stay angry long after divorcing their husbands because, as long as they're angry and their ex-husbands feel guilty, they've got power over them."

A third factor is the unrealistic expectations women now have about marriage: "their not getting the expected payoff [of] continued excitement over getting and being married."

and reminiscent of the plot of practically every movie or TV show involving divorce (or threatened divorce):

Eventually, women do come out and tell their husbands they are "unhappy." But this does not mean they have any intention of working on improving the marriage; women ordinarily make no overt, specific complaints until they are

100 percent done with the relationship—meaning [they] have lost all feeling. . . . It's not uncommon for women to eventually feel less for their husbands than they would for a stranger on the street. . . . When women start being specific to men about their needs, it's usually only to let their husbands know all the many areas in which they have failed. In other words, their husbands have already been fired; their wives are just giving them the reasons for the termination. . . . She already has another "Mr. Right" picked out or is eager to find one. She is looking for the feeling of excitement again.

Men rarely understand this. The author found that most men blamed themselves and "beat themselves up" for the things they thought they had done wrong in the marriage. Their initial response to their wives' stated unhappiness was to *try to make them happy*. "In most cases, their husbands launched futile attempts to make their wives happy by being more attentive, spending more time at home and helping out around the house. Regardless of these women's past and present complaints, the last thing they wanted was to spend more time with their husbands." (Langley notes that wives do often complain that "my spouse doesn't pay attention to me," but calls this code for "I want another man.") In fact, wives often became angry precisely over their

husbands' efforts to please them, because this increased their own feelings of guilt for infidelity.

and finally, for all of those who are convinced that it is a man's responsibility to keep his wife loyal and happy:

Langley reports that she interviewed just two men who responded effectively to the challenge of their wives' disloyalty.

The first man took the initiative and filed for divorce after his wife expressed on several occasions that she was unhappy and considering a separation. Before the divorce was final, his wife was trying to reconcile, but he chose not to because of her [lack of interest] in working on the marriage prior to his filing for divorce.

The second case was a man in a second marriage who had made all the usual mistakes the first time around but, unlike most husbands, managed to learn from the experience. As soon as his second wife started talking about a vague "unhappiness," he inferred that she had met another man. He put down in writing clear conditions for remaining married to her and refused to agree to any separation, knowing it would only be a prelude to divorce. Insisting she break off her extramarital affair at once, he wrote: "I will not allow my spirit to deteriorate because of your indecision." Rather than attempting to remove all possible grounds for his wife's discontent, he simply told her: "complaining is no longer acceptable. If you want me to do or not do something, you must tell me what it is. I do not expect you to read my mind and I will no longer try to read yours." This worked.

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