



Hell Hath No Fury

“Why should first wives want revenge? They usually end up with the home, the kids and a big slice of their ex-husband’s future earnings.”

*Richard P. Huemer
Vancouver, Washington*

ISN'T IT A SAD COMMENTARY ON TODAY'S world that a movie like *The First Wives Club*, with revenge as the central theme, is so popular [SOCIETY, Oct. 7]? The notion that revenge must always be obtained against anyone you now consider your “enemy” contributes to the thinking patterns that are responsible for so many troubled and failing marriages. Hollywood continues to do its part to subvert American society while laughing all the way to the bank.

*M. Kent Miller
Lexington, North Carolina
Via E-mail*

I AM A DIVORCED WOMAN IN HER MID-50S, and I disagree with the sweet-revenge focus of your story. My motive for going to (and thoroughly enjoying) *The First Wives Club* was to see these three fiftyish women who are talented, sexy and successful. Diane Keaton, Bette Midler and Goldie Hawn are inspiring examples of life after menopause. They illustrate the fact that mature women need not feel invisible but are still vital and appealing. The best revenge is living well—and looking great!

*Marsha E. Huberman
West Los Angeles*

IF *FIRST WIVES* AUTHOR OLIVIA GOLD-smith had consulted sociologists or psychologists who specialize in divorce, she would have learned that her book does not depict the common experience of middle-age divorced women in America. It describes a very small minority of divorces. Here are some of the myths contrasted with what recent studies in fact tell us:

Myth No. 1: Most men cheat on their wives. In the best-designed study to date, 80% of men reported they had never cheated on their wives.

Myth No. 2: Most divorced women are jilted by their husbands. Actually, the great majority of divorces are initiated by women. Studies have shown that men are generally happier being married than are women.

Myth No. 3: Women bitterly regret divorce. Most divorced women do not regret it. Moreover, divorced women are generally happier than divorced men, and divorced women are better off emotionally too.

One aspect of the film is accurate: women in general are financially worse off than men in the years immediately following a divorce. But some studies indicate that this difference washes out after five years.

*Orli Peter, Director
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WHY SHOULD FIRST WIVES WANT RE-venge? They can end up with the home, the kids and a big slice of their ex-husband’s future earnings. That type of alimony makes marriage the only job in the world that one can quit but still get paid for while providing no service whatever. Alimony is a holdover from those unequal times when single women had few employment options and little status. Now there is plenty of equality, status and jobs. Divorced women should shoulder their load like the men, get on with their independent lives and turn a bit of that anger inward. After all, it takes two to mess up a relationship.

*Richard P. Huemer
Vancouver, Washington*

WOMEN SHOULD BE LINING UP IN SUP-port of Prince Charles. He had the guts to dump the young, beautiful princess chosen by Mom and go for the frumpy, older woman. Three cheers!

*Judith Briles
Denver
Via E-mail*

I THOUGHT MY (YOUNGER) HUSBAND AND I were the happiest married couple I knew. Then one day he came home from a business trip to announce he was hav-ing an affair with a co-worker—she’s old-