



The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV

By Jennifer S. Hirsch, Holly Wardlow, Daniel Jordan Smith, Harriet M. Phinney, Shanti Parikh and Constance A. Nathanson

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A CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title of 2010

For many women around the world, their greatest risk of HIV infection comes from having sex with the very person with whom they are supposed to have sex: their spouse. *The Secret* situates marital HIV risk within a broader exploration of marital and extramarital sexuality in five diverse settings: Mexico, Nigeria, Uganda, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea. In these settings, the authors write, men's extramarital sex is an officially secret but actually widespread (and widely acknowledged) social practice, rather than something men do because their bodies demand it and women can't stop them.

Drawing on research conducted as part of an innovative comparative ethnographic study, and modeling a novel approach to collaborative anthropological scholarship, the authors show men's extramarital sex to be a fundamental aspect of gendered social organization. Through theoretically sophisticated yet lucid writing and vivid ethnographic description, drawing on rich data from the marital case studies conducted by research teams in each country, they trace how extramarital opportunity structures, sexual geographies, and concerns about social risk facilitate men's participation in extramarital sex. Also documented throughout is the collision between traditional ways and the new practices of romantic companionate marriage.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The book is impressive in substance and method."

—*Contemporary Sociology*

". . . deftly paints a more complex picture of the competing factors that compel women to choose to be complicit in their husbands' secrets."

—*Global Public Health*

"This book is a treasure trove of good theory and critical case studies of contemporary marriage and extra marital sex globally. It begins where many prior studies have stopped: Investigation of the public secret of sex in extra-marital affairs. From Mexico to Vietnam and Uganda and beyond, marriage involves the dreadful challenge of women's exposure to HIV through their husbands or long time partners. Here is a new approach to the social organization of extra-marital sex that combines love with the sexual geography of desire in unique and disturbing ways that will be of interest to all students of these issues in the social sciences."

—**Gilbert Herdt**, San Francisco State University

"While this is a book mainly for scholars and students, its conclusions will be enlightening for those who are concerned with HIV prevention in the international arena."

—*A & U: America's AIDS Magazine*

"In prose that is mercifully clear and easy to understand, the five case studies in this fascinating collection focus on the social and economic forces that encourage husbands to have extramarital affairs, exposing their wives to the risk of contracting HIV. These authors, each of whom had experience in the locale discussed, describe the spaces conducive to extramarital sex and the social encouragements to indulge. They explore men's subjectivity rather than depicting them as victims of emotions or sexual drives. 'Modernization,' in the form of people's increasing need for cash, is one of the culprits. It requires husbands to migrate in search of jobs, exposing them to establishments catering to migrating men that offer sexual services, even as peer pressure to appear wealthy encourages even reluctant husbands to indulge. Wives, confined at home with children and needing a husband's cash to care for them, usually keep "the secret," sometimes to the extent of refusing to 'know.' The initial and final chapters describe the authors' theoretical framework and methods, providing useful information for scholars contemplating collaborative, comparative research, or interested in curbing the spread of HIV."

—**Jane F. Collier**, Stanford University

"This very-well-written book is a great addition to the existing literature on sexuality, marriage, extramarital opportunities, and HIV risk and a pleasure to read. Highly recommended."

—*Choice*

About the Author

Jennifer S. Hirsch, Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, is the author of *A Courtship after Marriage: Sexuality and Love in Mexican Transnational Families* and co-editor of two recent volumes on the comparative anthropology of love.

Holly Wardlow, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Toronto, is the author of

Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society.

Daniel Jordan Smith, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Associate Director of the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University, is the author of *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*.

Harriet Phinney is a lecturer at Seattle University.

Shanti Parikh is Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Washington University in St. Louis.

Constance A. Nathanson, Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences and Professor of Population and Family Health in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, is the author of *Disease Prevention as Social Change* and *Dangerous Passage: The Social Control of Sexuality in Women's Adolescence*.

Users Review

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Corey Gardner:

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The guide with title *The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV* possesses a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world now. That is important to you to know how the improvement of the world. This book will bring you in new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book in your smart phone, so you can read the item anywhere you want.

Charles Powers:

Exactly why? Because this *The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV* is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap that but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you for not

hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book have got such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking means. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

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