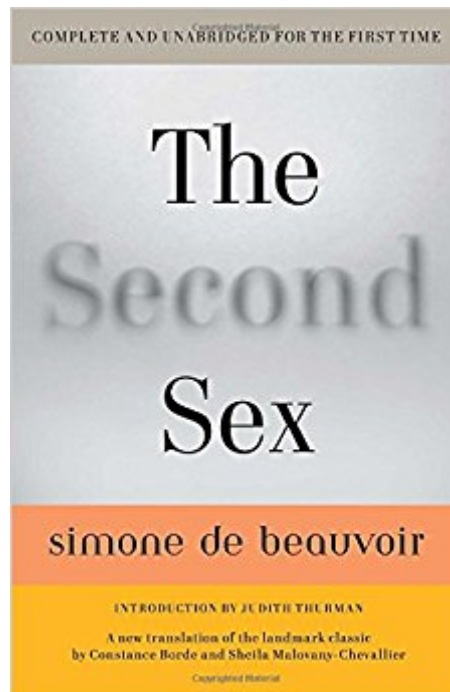




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# The Second Sex



## Synopsis

Simone de Beauvoir's essential masterwork is a powerful analysis of the Western notion of womanhood and a revolutionary exploration of inequality and otherness. Unabridged in English for the first time, this long-awaited edition reinstates significant portions of the original French text that were cut in the first English translation. Vital and groundbreaking, Beauvoir's pioneering and impressive text remains as pertinent today as when it was first published, and will continue to provoke and inspire generations of men and women to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir posed questions many men, and women, had yet to ponder when the book was released in 1953. "One wonders if women still exist, if they will always exist, whether or not it is desirable that they should ...," she says in this comprehensive treatise on women. She weaves together history, philosophy, economics, biology, and a host of other disciplines to show women's place in the world and to postulate on the power of sexuality. This is a powerful piece of writing in a time before "feminism" was even a phrase, much less a movement. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"The effect of the new translation, which should be applauded, is to make Beauvoir more herself. . . still lively, still apropos." --Slate  
"This is the edition Beauvoir herself would have wanted, one so true to the original that we can hear her voice in the text. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's new

translation is long overdue, and it is a triumph. • "Margaret Simons, Distinguished Research Professor Emerita, Southern Illinois University [Borde and Malovany-Chevallier's translation] can be read with confidence, enlightenment, and pleasure. . . . A significant step forward and a remarkable achievement. So if you're one of those people who always meant to read *The Second Sex* "why not now?" • "Women's Review of Books" • "From Eve's apple to Virginia Woolf's room of her own, Beauvoir's treatise remains an essential rallying point, urging self-sufficiency and offering the fruit of knowledge. • "Vogue "[A] long-awaited achievement." • "Book Bench," [newyorker.com](http://newyorker.com)

This should be a must-read for any woman starting out on adult life, because it clearly lays out the forks in the road we will experience, and explores the human condition of half the population with a relatively objective eye. I found it stunningly relevant today, to my life, as a professional woman in technology.

I believe that this book is even more timely and significant today, than ever before. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (originally published in 1949), is a groundbreaking study, that was clearly years ahead of its time (it still is), in providing a thorough and well-thought-out thesis, that examines what/who has shaped the role, place, and personality of Women in the world at large, from the ancient societies of Mesopotamia right down to the present time. Clearly, we already know the answer to that one! However, what's different about Simone de Beauvoir's tome, she doesn't let all the "women" off that easily, since she readily admits that not all "men" are responsible for the forced or assumed conditions of inferiority, mistreatment, injustice, inequality, etc., and all the other miseries that the "men" in "charge of the world" have imposed on women, and on other men for that matter. She also allots and assigns blame to the inactive, ignorant, narcissistic, and parasitic woman (her words), for not truly rising up against this system, and not just for women, but for all of humanity. Here are some excerpts that I found to be exceptionally important and relevant, and right-on-the-mark. From pages 381 - 382: "The girl's character and behavior express her situation: if it changes, the adolescent girl's attitude also changes. Today, it is becoming possible for her to take her future in her hands, instead of putting it in those of the man. If she is absorbed by studies, sports, a professional training, or a social and political activity, she frees herself from the male obsession; she is less preoccupied by love and sexual conflicts. However, she has a harder time than the young man in accomplishing herself as an autonomous individual. I have said that neither her family nor customs

assist her attempts. Besides, even if she chooses independence, she still makes a place in her life for the man, for love. She will often be afraid of missing her destiny as a woman if she gives herself over entirely to any undertaking. She does not admit this feeling to herself: but it is there, it distorts all her best efforts, it sets up limits. In any case, the woman who works wants to reconcile her success with purely feminine successes; that not only requires devoting considerable time to her appearance and beauty but also, what is more serious, implies that her vital interests are divided. Outside of his regular studies, the male student amuses himself by freely exercising his mind, and from there emerge his best discoveries; the woman's daydreams are oriented in a different direction: she will think of her physical appearance, of man, of love, she will give the bare minimum to her studies to her career, whereas in these areas nothing is as necessary as the superfluous. It is not a question of mental weakness, of a lack of concentration, but of a split in her interests that do not coincide well. A vicious circle is knotted here: people are often surprised to see how easily a woman gives up music, studies, or a job as soon as she has found a husband; this is because she had committed too little of herself to her projects to derive benefit from their accomplishment. Everything converges to hold back her personal ambition while enormous social pressure encourages her to find a social position and justification in marriage. It is natural that she should not seek to create her place in this world by and for herself or that she should seek it timidly. As long as perfect economic equality is not realized in society and as long as customs allow the woman to profit as wife and mistress from the privileges held by certain men, the dream of passive success will be maintained in her and will hold back her own accomplishments."From page 612:"Cinderella does not always dream of Prince Charming: husband or lover, she fears he may change into a tyrant; she prefers to dream of her own smiling face on a movie theater marquee. But it is more often thanks to her masculine protection that she will attain her goal; and it is men---husbands, lovers, suitors---who confirm her triumph by letting her share their fortune or their fame. It is this need to please another or a crowd that connects the movie star to the hetaera. They play a similar role in society: I will use the word "hetaera" to designate women who use not only their bodies but also their entire position as exploitable capital. Their attitude is very different from that of a creator who, transcending himself in a work, goes beyond the given and appeals to a freedom in others to whom he opens up the future; the hetaera does not uncover the world, she opens no road to human transcendence: on the contrary, she seeks to take possession of it for her profit; offering herself for the approval of her admirers, she does not disavow this passive femininity that dooms her to man: she endows it with a magic power that allows her to take males into the trap of her presence, and to feed herself on them; she engulfs them with herself in immanence."

couldn't have said it better myself! This is an amazingly accurate description of the endless parade of the interchangeable and artless "scion" of young women (and there's no shortage of men, that fit this bill too), produced by Hollywood and the music industry here in the US and abroad. Their only talent is "self-aggrandizement" and "publicity" thanks to the polluted world of social media. I could go on and on about this all-important work, that is not only relative to women or "feminism," but encompasses something for all of humanity in general as well, men and women alike. Her words are truly eloquent and poetic too, made all the more so in this new edition and translation by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (thank-you, both), a huge debt of appreciation and gratitude is owed to them. I can truly say that Simone de Beauvoir was one of the greatest minds of our time, and believe me, there aren't that many anyway! She herself acknowledges in how there are very few truly "great minds" in Art/Science/history that were women (due to their social position in the "hierarchy of man"), let alone very few men, for that matter. But, she explains that this is not due to some natural predisposition or biological cause, but is the result of the "man-made" world we live in, that is then assisted and enabled by the weak, unaware, unknowing, and just plain ignorant men and women that are willing to play along with the charade! The Second Sex (hardcover) by Simone de Beauvoir, complete and unabridged for the first time. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. Alfred A. Knopf, New York 2010. Love and Peace, Carlos Romero

My husband says, "Every man should put down his gun and read this."

Blending Philosophy, literature, and her own brand of Feminism, this edition, the better of the two translations of "The Second Sex" is a well written, and insightful look into the condition of Women, the Second Sex. Though it was in a difficult read at times, it was still a well written book.

this book was Mary Daly's first book and it offers great reasons and discussions for how the church enforces patriarchal rule. make sure to read this book before her second book Beyond God the Father as her opinions and views change drastically from this book to the next

Very interesting book - but I bought this for my philosophy class and needed a specific version and the correct ISBN number... The e-book has a different ISBN (even though the digital version is an option when you search by the correct ISBN) so that is something to note if you are buying this for a class.

This will be a long and arduous read, but I have learned a great deal from the very beginning. One of the best purchases I have made ever. It should have been required reading in my collegiate experience.

There is nothing valuable I can say about this book that hasn't already been said, but, having read part of the older translation and this, I'd highly recommend reading this. The translation is far better and all of Beauvoir's splendid philosophical writing is kept intact.

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