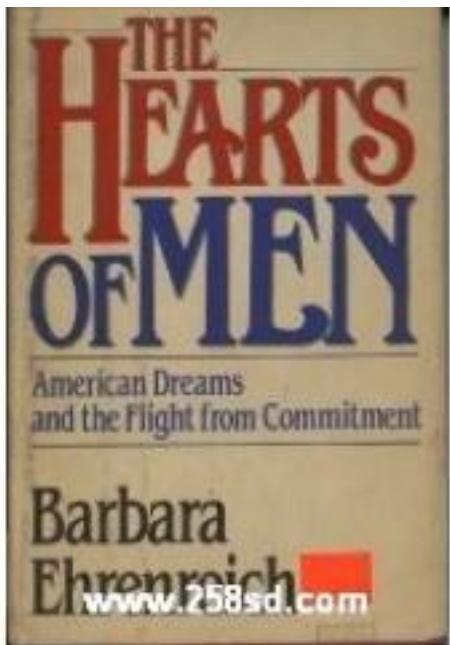


The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment



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INTRODUCTION
Necessity as well as instinct sends the ladies pell-mell to the altar; it is only the secondary things social pressure or conscience that send the men. --Emily Hahn 1956
The fact that men marry in precisely the same numbers as women do conceals a basic inequality of motivation: namely that in the sort of marriage we have rather suddenly come to see as "traditional" women need men much more than men need women. When I was growing up in the fifties everyone acknowledged the "battle of the sexes" in which women "held out" for as long as possible until by dint of persuasion sexual frustration or sudden pregnancy

they \"landed a man.\" From their side of the battle lines men viewed the proceedings with a certain sarcastic detachment. For example a 1958 article in Esquire described courtship with humorous references to the military theories of Field Marshal Rommel and offered the following account of a typical girl's attempt to win an \"MRS\" degree: College is four years okay? . . . A freshman dates every body. She doesn't care. A sophomore dates in flurries. . . Now a junior is looking for real love. She'll go out three times with a boy who is a Possible. She may worry: there aren't enough Possibles in her immediate circle of friends. So she gets interested in extra-curricular activities! . . .

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