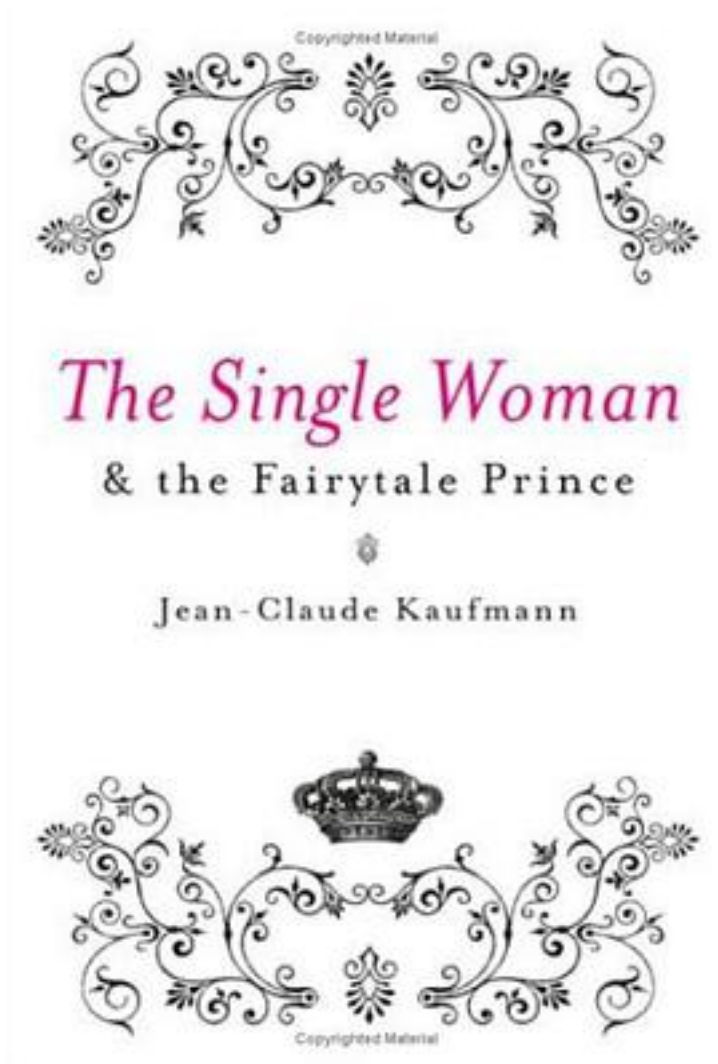


The Single Woman and the Fairytale Prince



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The number of one-person households is rising steeply all over the world and a growing proportion of these 'new singles' are women. It is estimated that one woman in three lives on her own. This development reflects general social trends, ranging from rising divorce rates to the growing professionalization of women and their dissatisfaction with a traditional model that offers them a future organized solely around 'husband-baby-home'. At the same time, the attractions of that model still linger and the fairytale prince is by no means a figure from a story or a remote past. Even in an age in which the internet promises that love is 'just a click away', many women still wait for their prince to come. Jean-Claude Kaufmann's sympathetic study of the lives, aspirations and sometimes despair of the 'new single women' is based mainly on an analysis of a sample of the hundreds of letters sent to Marie-Claire magazine after it published a first-hand account of the single life. Funny, touching and at times profoundly sad, the letters paint a collective portrait of the single woman and her life that is both intimate and socially significant. Kaufmann concludes by situating their stories in a broad comparative context and considering the possible impact of novel phenomena such as the recent vogue for 'mail-order brides'.

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