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## Donelson: Married Today, Single Tomorrow: Marriage Breakup and the Law

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Married Today, Single Tomorrow: Marriage Breakup and the Law.*

By KENNETH AND IRENE DONELSON. New York: Doubleday, 1969. Pp. 320. \$6.95.

Are you married? Are you contemplating such behavior? Are you an attorney who will at some future time possibly handle a divorce? Do you regularly handle divorce cases? If you answer any of the above in the affirmative, then *Married Today, Single Tomorrow* may be of special interest to you.

The termination of marriage, whether by death, divorce, separation, abandonment, or permanent physical or mental incapacitation, is a very difficult moment. This is frequently true even if both the parties are in favor of ending cohabitation or the responsibilities of marriage. Many of the difficulties and complications involved undoubtedly are not contemplated by the parties at the time of the marriage proposal. This book was written to inform couples of all aspects of marriage breakup.

Although it is quite evident that one should be "informed" prior to marriage, the Donelsons speak primarily to those who are already married and already suffering from its inevitable problems. This book, however, will be helpful to anyone, married or not, who has never been through his own divorce or other form of marriage breakup. The inexperienced attorney who may someday be asked to represent one of the parties in a divorce or separation proceeding can benefit greatly from a thorough reading of this work.

*Married Today, Single Tomorrow* is written primarily for women; however, it is, quite remarkably, very objective in its analysis of the causes of marriage breakup. It is quite free in its condemnation of both parties to a marriage breakup.

The Donelsons begin with the *emotional* aspects of marriage breakup. They then proceed to the *legal* aspects of the breakup and conclude with the aftermath. The structure of the book, however, is somewhat artificial since, of necessity, the authors must integrate legal matters with a discussion of emotional factors leading to disintegration of the relationship and the resulting post-breakup trauma. The structure of the work is not at all aided by the Donelsons' desire to include death as one of the causes of marriage breakup. Since the book is basically devoted to divorce and separation, many of the topics discussed have little or no application to widows or widowers. In spite of these apparent structural defects, the book reads smoothly and its repetition and cross referencing operate as a benefit to the reader.

The authors set out the basic causes of marriage breakup and give advice as to how such problems might be worked out and where persons might obtain the most beneficial assistance. The book cautions against hasty action in selection of attorneys, "quickie" divorces, and improper

behavior prior to the final divorce decree. The authors warn of the many problems one faces in a marriage breakup and discuss finances, children, in-laws, the "other" man or woman, friends, and a trial, should one be necessary.

Problems which probably would not otherwise cross one's mind are raised, and solutions, or at least sources for assistance in finding solutions, are offered. Such problems include hidden costs of marriage breakup, credit ratings after breakup, changes of name, and disposition of family insurance.

One of the more salient aspects of the work is the authors' instructions to the reader regarding selecting, dealing with, and following the instructions of an attorney. The time to seek advice under various circumstances is stressed, the type of advice to expect or request is succinctly set out, and the things an attorney can and cannot do or decide for a client are discussed in detail. In setting forth this information to a potential client, the Donelsons also give advice to the inexperienced attorney. From this material an attorney may observe an experienced divorce attorney's view of his role in solving marital problems and the practical considerations such an attorney feels must be dealt with. It may be helpful for a young attorney to read the advice given the intended reader so that he will be familiar with problems which potential clients may face.

Another advantageous feature of *Married Today, Single Tomorrow* is its scattered "check lists." Dispersed throughout the book are lists of points potential refugees from marriage should consider. These are set forth on the theory that one's attorney will suggest these problematical areas and that the client should be prepared to deal with them. Note that in setting out these lists of notable considerations, the authors give the inexperienced attorney a list of points he should mention to his client. A fine example of this is the Donelsons' list of expenses in a divorce action. The list covers the obvious expenses of legal fees and court costs but, in addition, goes into items such as fees for private investigators (along with advice on when and how to use them), medical bills resulting from the strain of the breakup, and tax consequences of a breakup.

To review this book without mentioning the authors' exemplary job of indexing would be an injustice. Reading the entire work, of course, has already been advised. However, even after reading the book, or for one only interested in advice on certain points, the index is an invaluable aid. It is quite complete and will lead a reader to exactly the subject matter he desires. Virtually every point has been set out in the index.

*Married Today, Single Tomorrow* discusses in detail the common problems of marriage breakup, how they arise, how to obtain help when they arise, and how to deal with the aftermath, legally and emotionally, if breakup cannot be avoided, which is valuable reading for anyone. However, its major importance to the practicing attorney may be in presenting the book to a prospective client. The lawyer's task may be immeasurably aided if his client is aware of the facts noted by the Donelsons.

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