



# Hard To Do: The Surprising, Feminist History of Breaking Up

*Kelli María Korducki*

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## **Hard To Do: The Surprising, Feminist History of Breaking Up** Kelli María Korducki

Whatever the underlying motives—be they love, financial security, or mere masochism—the fact is that getting involved in a romantic partnership is emotionally, morally, and even politically fraught. In *Hard To Do*, Kelli María Korducki turns a Marxist lens on the relatively short history of romantic love, tracing how the myth of economic equality between men and women has transformed the ways women conceive of domestic partnership. With perceptive, reported insights on the ways marriage and divorce are legislated, the rituals of twentieth-century courtship, and contemporary practices for calling it off, Korducki reveals that, for all women, choosing to end a relationship is a radical action with very limited cultural precedent.

**Kelli María Korducki** is a journalist and cultural critic. Her byline has appeared frequently in the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, as well as in the *New Inquiry*, NPR, the *Walrus*, *Vice*, and the *Hairpin*. She was nominated for a 2015 Canadian National Magazine Award for "Tiny Triumphs," a 10,000-word meditation on the humble hot dog for *Little Brother Magazine*. A former editor-in-chief of the popular daily news blog *Torontoist*, Korducki is based in Brooklyn and Toronto.

## **Hard To Do: The Surprising, Feminist History of Breaking Up Details**

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# From Reader Review Hard To Do: The Surprising, Feminist History of Breaking Up for online ebook

## Kevin says

My impression of this book changed as I read it. Sometimes it really felt like I was reading a dry history, but then other times it pumped out quick theses in informative, short bursts. It's no Most Dramatic Ever: The Bachelor in terms of punchy explorations of 21st century topics, but it does the job. Wish it had a bit more warmth to it, but I guess breaking up isn't wholly warm in itself...

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## Kyla Belvedere says

Didn't hold my interest the entire way because admittedly it was a bit above my level of understanding at some points, but this text got me thinking about topics surrounding relationships (ending) with a feminist lens. The voice is humorous; the book is well written and edited, so I am interested in seeing more in this interesting series.

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## Leah Rachel von Essen says

Kelly María Korducki's *Hard to Do: The Surprising, Feminist History of Breaking Up* intrigued me from the start. I had read a good amount in both fiction and non-fiction about how the fight for the right to divorce is a feminist fight for women's freedom and ability to choose for themselves.

Korducki's book begins strong, with a fascinating set of questions about why modern-day women feel so much pressure to find the right man, about why they feel so bad about breaking up with "good men." Her questions are rooted in memoir and in her Marxist philosophy and outlook—she puts much of the blame on the history of gaining the right to marriage for love and divorce, and the way marriage is part of economic prosperity. Unfortunately, I knew much of the history she recounts in the majority of the book—the feminist history of winning the right to divorce—and so found myself skimming somewhat. While her humor was sometimes off-putting while she discussed certain issues, her voice bled away more and more in the history section as well. I think the main strengths of this philosophy rested in her more personal investigations of modern-day love, marriage, break-ups, and divorce, and less so in the history, and I wish she'd brought it back more so to the interesting voice of the first few chapters. This wasn't my favorite—at certain points through her sarcasm or through her arguments, I felt she was much too dismissive of certain issues—but to be fair, I knew much of this history already, and it would be a useful and short tome for anyone who wants to learn more about a crucial piece of feminist history through a Marxist lens. This book was given to me by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## Gillian G. says

This is the book we need right now. Korducki does what 90% of relationship columnists and therapists fail to do: talk about relationships through a systemic and historic lens. That might not sound scintillating at first,

but trust me, this is not a text book. Having a deft writer point out, name and give well-researched examples of fears and suspicions you've always had but doubted... it's scintillating as hell. And deeply reassuring.

Korducki is an excellent writer and blends extremely relatable personal experience with research and cultural touch points from the Bachelor/ette to Jane Austin and beyond. She points out the necessary truth: that our template for relationships isn't inherent, and her deconstruction of where we came from and how we got here - for me - was incredibly freeing. And it made me wonder, why isn't EVERYONE talking about relationships like this?

While it places a lot of focus on relationships between women & men, she addresses nuances around different types of love and relationships (all gender, poly, cis, trans, etc.) making this a book that every person can connect with regardless of the way they try/fail/succeed at love and relationships.

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### **Kaylie says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK. Smart and sharp, an economic history of marriage that emphasizes the increasing and unfair pressure on single-partner marriage to satisfy every need. Like a lovely feminist manifesto that draws the same conclusion I always do: RELATIONSHIP ANARCHY.

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### **Randi says**

This book was...good but strange. At some points, it was smart, sharp, and a joy to read. At other points, it was slow and dry. Overall, it's still worth a read.

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### **Jena says**

While this was a fast and interesting read, I'm honestly not sure what its supposed to be about. Despite the title it really isn't about breaking up at all. It more about the history of women in relationships in general.

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### **Denna Bee says**

I wish i read this book when i a single, as it summated so many inklings i had but had to work hard to form to concrete concepts. worth the read

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### **Nicola says**

This book wasn't quite what I expected it to be. It was more of a historical recap of the feminist movement especially as it relates to the laws around marriage and divorce. It was a little dry but good information.

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## Meg says

Interesting! this is the second of the Exploded Views series that I've read this year. Korducki provides a concise rundown of the domestic partnership in western culture and women's socialization into holding onto partnerships. I wanted more of that second part than I got. I should look up the article she quotes from Dear Sugar (Cheryl Strayed) instead:

"Go, even though you love him.  
Go, even though he's kind and faithful and dear to you.  
Go, even though he's your best friend and you're his.  
Go, even though you can't imagine your life without him.  
Go, even though he adores you and your leaving will devastate him.  
Go, even though your friends will be disappointed or surprised or pissed off or all three.  
Go, even though you once said you would stay.  
Go even though you're afraid of being alone.  
Go, even though you're sure no one will ever love you as well as he does.  
Go, even though there is nowhere to go.  
Go, even though you don't know exactly why you can't stay.  
Go, because you want to.  
Because wanting to leave is enough."

'Because wanting it is enough' kinda brings the whole thing full circle for me :)

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## Shagufta says

One of my finds at Toronto's @typebooks, this was an interesting exploration of how relationships are posited to be the be all end all of female happiness and of how relationships shape women, disadvantage women, and overall tries to give a history of western partnerships. This is a very western account but the author does try to point out the the narrative is very western and white and includes critiques and perspectives of other theorists along the way. My critique is that I thought it would explore the act of breaking up more, rather than being such a historical, survey account. Still, interesting read, definitely was food for thought. 3 stars.

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## Krystina says

What I loved about this book was that it asks an important question. Why are monogamous relationships structured as a societal norm and is this structure still relevant for modern women? The author chooses to take a more quantitative approach to answering the question, skipping on real-life stories in the narrative. I don't mind that approach, but the volume was so slim that the author didn't have the space to dig into any subject in depth. Aspects of feminist Marxism are so complex that they were skipped altogether. It ends up being a clunky assortment of facts and thoughts that don't quite flow right. Still, I love the topic, I love where the author's head was at. If only the book were 5x longer, then each chapter could've been expanded to include more takeaway content.

