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## Don't fall for this deadly honey trap

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► [How to spot a toxic wife](#)

Toxic Wife Syndrome, first revealed in these pages six weeks ago, is more prevalent than we thought, says Tara Winter Wilson

- [From trophy wife to toxic wife](#)

You may not know one personally, but you will certainly have read about them. They are, increasingly these days, the figures who emerge triumphant from the divorce courts. They are the ones who get to keep the house (no mortgage), the cars (usually more than one), the staff (approaching double figures) and, more often than not, half the husband's fortune, regardless of what she has done to contribute towards it.

I'm not talking about the ones who sacrificed careers at the altar of family life only to be cruelly abandoned when their useful days are done. I'm talking about the ones who knowingly take their husbands to the cleaners claiming, while they are at it, that they could do with £20 million or so to keep them in blow-drys. What kind of person actually needs £20 million for spending money? The Toxic Wife, that's who.

Such was the furore earlier this year over [my identification of Toxic Wife Syndrome in the pages of the Telegraph](#) that it is clear I have hit a raw nerve. From the staggering response, from Japan to Iraq and America to Berkshire (where my article is now framed in the gentlemen's loo of a Lambourn pub), there is little doubt about the course of action required: toxic wives must be weeded out.

Let me remind you what a toxic wife is - some of you got the wrong end of the stick when I first addressed this issue, thinking I was referring to all stay-at-home-mothers and housewives. Not a bit of it. I have every admiration for women who choose the selfless task of caring and nurturing the next generation. No, the toxic wife is a completely different species.

She is the woman who gives up work as soon as she marries, ostensibly to create a stable home environment for any children that might come along, but who then employs large numbers of staff to do all the domestic work she promised to undertake, leaving her with little to do all day except shop, lunch, luxuriate. Believe me, there is no shortage of the breed and I've been inundated with horror tales about them.

advertisement There is, for example, the TW who made around £30 million from only four years of marriage. Her husband couldn't stand the way she was abusive to his staff, aggressive towards him and extravagantly indulgent with herself.

Then, there's the ex-wife of a friend of mine, Belinda, who has been awarded several million pounds for a marriage that lasted less than three years and produced no children. The sum amounts to almost £5,000 for every day of marriage. No wonder her ex-husband, let's call him Crispin, a City financier, is in despair. After reading the article he told me: "Giving her £5



Toxic wives leave everything to their staff while they shop, lunch and luxuriate - and make their husbands' lives a misery

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million for doing absolutely nothing except shop and lunch makes me question the sanity of our legal system."

Of course, there is no fail-safe way of knowing what someone is like until you live with them, as Crispin says he discovered to his cost. "She put a gun to my head and I took the bullet," he admits. "I think she must have been following the text book

'How to trap your man', because she refused to live with me until we got married. I made a stupid mistake and now I have to pay for it."

Soon after their wedding, Belinda gave up work to care for the house. "At first, I couldn't understand why, because we had a cleaner who cleaned, a gardener who gardened and home cooking was provided by M&S," says Crispin. "Overnight she changed.

"Friends were no longer allowed to drop in like they used to - at least a week's notice had to be given. Shoes had to be taken off at the front door. She became nagging, scolding, overbearing and shrewish. She made my life a misery. It pains me that this able-bodied, 40-year-old woman will be handsomely rewarded for the rest of her life - all at my expense. I feel as though I'm the victim of legally sanctioned burglary."

Capturing a rich husband is seen as a legitimate career choice in itself. A 25-year-old banker friend told me that many girls don't even bother getting a job after university - they stay on the party circuit until they've trapped their milch-cow.

"Just turn up at Mahiki, (the London nightclub frequented by Princes William and Harry) and you'll find an army of potential TWs... they're like a gang of seductive, pretty vampires who are sharpening their talons and teeth in a bid to catch a rich husband and then suck him dry of his hard-earned cash. It's common knowledge now that one of the most lucrative careers a woman can have is to get married, have a child, and get divorced."

Not only do ex-husbands of TWs get skinned alive when they divorce, the toxicity levels reach a poisonous high, goaded and condoned by society. Indeed, I heard of a high-profile divorce lawyer who said to the wife of an acquaintance of mine: "When you leave my office you must hate your husband as much as possible." How toxic can you get?

But TWs are not confined to the divorce courts - many of them are toxic mothers, too. Only this week, when I was trudging up Kensington Park Road, I spotted a serious TW. She was striding ahead of her beautiful young son, a bejewelled ear clasped to her mobile phone while her son pleaded: "Mummy! Mummy! Won't you hold my hand?"

"Oh stop being mental," was her terse, distracted response.

Traipsing behind, the little boy burst into sobs. "Oh do shut up," she said, her voice thick with irritation.

Believe me, there is a completely different species out there. They may look human, in an artificially manufactured way, but they don't seem to have any conscience or interest in anything other than the trivial minutiae of their own existence and, naturally, how to hitch themselves to an alpha-male.

According to Susie Ambrose, who runs a "gold-digger-vetting" business called Seventy Thirty, there are increasing amounts of women who are desperately materialistic and who have learnt the art of "faking love". They don't want to marry for emotional support, intimacy or companionship; they are driven by monetary rewards. And, dear readers, they walk among us.

So how can you spot a potential toxic wife? I feel it is my duty to provide you with a checklist (courtesy of Susie Ambrose). This is vital reading material for all you potential husbands. Pay close attention; this is professional advice from an expert and it could save you millions - not to mention your sanity. And, women, too, take note - for it could save love and marriage from becoming things of the past.

#### HOW TO SPOT A TOXIC WIFE

1 Women who are secure in themselves and have a more developed emotional intelligence and personal depth do not feel the need to show off. Check whether or not she is festooned with 'designer' accessories. Listen carefully to what she says. How often does she name-drop?

2 On first acquaintance, she will want to find out if you're rich or not. If you find yourself discussing your assets within the first 10 minutes you know her agenda. She is not going to waste time on you if you don't have serious money.

3 She will flirt without first finding out if you're married or involved with someone else. She has no scruples about stealing another woman's man.

4 Even though she may have an impressive job, her main asset is sex. She will come on in a highly provocative manner, be wearing lots of make-up and revealing clothes. Potential toxic

wives are extremely clever. Do not equate intelligence with emotional values and worth.

5 Often she will use the FSM tactic (feel sorry for me). This will manifest itself on the second or third date. She wants to assess how generous you can be and will tell you how "naive" she is and how "mised" by some nasty people she owes money to. As a chivalrous male, you get out your chequebook.

6 You must find out how motivated she is. Ask her what her future goals, dreams and aspirations are.

7 Toxic gold-diggers tend to target older men. And your level of physical attractiveness makes no difference. Do you genuinely wildly arouse her or is this all an act?

8 She will choose the most expensive item on the menu or the most expensive drink.

9 Men, who have been recently widowed or divorced are great prey. You are at your most vulnerable.

10 Before you marry, go on holiday together or spend at least some time co-habiting. Remember, if you make a mistake you will pay for it for the rest of your life.

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