



Love For Sale: A World History of Prostitution

Nils Johan Ringdal

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From the Whore of Babylon to The Happy Hooker, eminent historian Nils Johan Ringdal has written a masterly, extremely readable world history of the world's oldest profession, spanning a wide historical swathe armed with a lively wit. Beginning with The Epic of Gilgamesh, the Old Testament, and ancient cultures from Greece to India and beyond, Love for Sale takes the reader on a tour through the entire recorded history of prostitution up to the modern red-light district. It shows how different societies have dealt with prostitutes—ancient Greece, Rome, and India incorporated them into several social echelons, including the priestess class; their close relations with artists in 19th-century Europe made them muses to the modern sensibility; the Victorians campaigned against them. It shows the similarities between medieval European heterosexuals and contemporary gay men when visiting public baths, gives lively commentary on the classic Fanny Hill and on Emma Goldman's and Eva Peron's sympathy for prostitutes, and closes with Sydney Biddle Barrows, the rise of the sex-workers' rights movement and contemporary "sex-positive" feminism, and a realistic look at the true risks and rewards of prostitution in the present day.

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