



## How it Works: The Wife

*Jason Hazeley, Joel Morris*

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This delightful book is the latest in the series of Ladybird books which have been specially planned to help grown-ups with the world about them.

The large clear script, the careful choice of words, the frequent repetition and the thoughtful matching of text with pictures all enable grown-ups to think they have taught themselves to cope. The subject of the book will greatly appeal to grown-ups.

## How it Works: The Wife Details

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Author : Jason Hazeley , Joel Morris

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## From Reader Review How it Works: The Wife for online ebook

### Deanne says

Tina is getting married. It is the best day of her life.

Next year, she will claim that becoming a mother was the best day of her life, but only because she was on some very strong drugs.

Neither is true. The best day of her life was her eighth birthday when she got a yellow bike.

If only the other titles on the back existed, would love to read such books as The mistress or the second wife. Have a few friends who will probably receive this for Christmas.

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### ~?clockwork says

As a child i used to love the original ladybird books so I was excited when these adult editions were released. They look great hardback and illustrated in the same style as before which I loved as it made me feel nostalgic. The book is full of humour and I saw myself agreeing and laughing throughout I'd definitely recommend these they are great for stocking fillers or little pressies I want to collect them all

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### Natalie says

I liked The Mom much more because I identified with it more.

I can still see the humor in this one, however. And the illustrations are top notch.

*Wives like to talk.*

*Phil's wife Imogen had a furious go at him last night about how he avoids talking to her.*

*Phil feels bad about this today, and is making it up to Imogen by mending the roof.*

This book would have been more humorous to me if my alcohol of choice was wine. But it's Captain.

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### Ray says

For those of us of a certain age Ladybird books were a large part of learning to read. They were everywhere, and covered a huge range of topics, fiction, reference and how to books galore.

Now we have a new range of ladybird books. Written for adults but in the style and spirit of the originals.

Of course these are a spoof and very funny with it.

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## Manny says

"I see," says Father. "So it's not a proper children's book, is it? I should have noticed that."

Father isn't paying attention. He is really thinking about sexting his mistress.

"You are wrong," says Mother. "It is a children's book. Since the invention of the smartphone, people can no longer get through anything more challenging than a long Facebook post. But because this unsubtle spoof contains references to sex, alcohol and drugs, they can convince themselves that they have a reading age of more than nine."

"Yes dear," says Father.

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## Cecily says

Like most Brits of my age, Ladybird books were a staple of my childhood, and I still have many at home: inexpensive, varied subjects (fiction, history, science, general knowledge), different reading levels, hard covered, and conveniently small.

Another reason for their success and enduring popularity is the distinctive font and style of illustration.

*"The authors would like to thank the illustrators whose work they have so mercilessly ribbed, and whose glorious craftsmanship was the set-dressing of their childhoods. The inspiration they sparked has never faded."*

However, modern children are unlikely to find them appealing, so Penguin Books commissioned humorous new titles for adults, but using artwork from the original children's books. Titles include: The Shed, The Hipster, Mindfulness, The Meeting, and The Zombie Apocalypse. See list [here](#).

These spoofs have been so successful, there are spoofs of the spoofs - which are far better than this. See Dungbeetle's **We Go To The Gallery**, which I reviewed [HERE](#).

I think these Ladybirds will only appeal to those who want to indulge and gently prod fond childhood memories, and I doubt many would want to read more than a handful. I think two is my limit. The titles and concept are more fun than the content (except for some of the small print).

## Stereotype Alert

All the humour in the Husband and Wife books is based on the sort of gently demeaning stereotypes - of men and women - that were common when the pictures were drawn, when mother-in-law jokes and Benny Hill were all the rage. Not so zeitgeisty now: what was once mainstream now feels easy but risky.

If you read just one of the books in this pair, you might sputter in indignation, but reading them together, I saw the balance, and smiled a little in recognition - and especially at how far most of society has moved on since I was a child.

There are two illustrations that appear in both books - but with different words. Here's one:

### **The Wife**

Wives need wine and chocolate to cope with husbands and children. Well, I don't like chocolate, and I prefer gin to wine, but wine will do. And friends (yes!) and shopping (not so much).

Hints about sex are even vaguer and more euphemistic in this than *The Husband*. And not sufficient to raise a smile.

Spoiler alert:

### **The Husband**

I'm not sure what to make of the fact my father and his partner gave me this as a stocking-filler at Christmas!

You can guess the gist: a husband just needs sausages, beer, and time to indulge hobbies, like watching sport. He doesn't care about his clothes, finds it difficult to express his feelings, and rarely listens to, let alone remembers, what his wife says. I'm not offended, but I don't find that funny.

Although these are adult books, there's no explicit mention of sex. This caption was presumably inspired by his awkward pose in the original illustration:

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I was also amused to recognise one of the illustrations. It's of a Scotsman in a kilt, coming into a house, bearing a piece of coal. He's first-footing, and it was in a Ladybird book about traditional customs around the UK (possibly *Stories of Special Days and Customs*).

### **Natalie says**

I'm cheating a bit on my reading challenge here but I'm going to defend myself by saying that it simply said to read 50 books this year and didn't stipulate on length. I figure, if it's on Goodreads, then it can count.

These 'Ladybird Books for Grown-Ups' are great. They've got fantastic vintage illustrations and they're paired with sarcastic, witty captions. I think they're a good stocking filler or a little joke present for friends.

I liked this page on *How it works - The Wife*:

"Wives and husbands both like gadgets.

Ian has bought Victoria a hoover, an iron, a sewing machine, a washing machine, a food mixer, a hairdryer, a

kettle and a toaster.

He has also bought himself a record player, so he can stay out of Victoria's way while she enjoys her new gadgets."

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### **Paul says**

Mildly amusing at first, but soon it only portrays sexist stereotypes. Not worth the paper it's printed on. Avoid.

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### **Peter says**

Dear lord, these books are so good.  
One day I shall stop laughing.

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### **Hilary says**

Funnier than the Mother and The Father but still a bit hit and miss. An enjoyable 5 minute read. Love the original illustrations, hope the library gets the rest of this series.

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### **Vivek Tejuja says**

Who is a wife? What are her responsibilities? What is she supposed to do and not supposed to do? Is there a manual at all to all of this so wives can lead easier lives? The spoof on The Wife is here – from Ladybird again in the series of Ladybird Books for Grownups and once again it hits right on the spot and makes me a happy man.

This time as you must have guessed, it is about the wife – who is she and what is she all about. It is highly tongue-in-cheek and works very well given the entire patriarchal centricity of our society. Ladybird books for grownups is about our learning (mockingly) or more unlearning the age old stereotypes created for us and how we can actually break free.

“The Wife” is what the typical wife should be and it makes fun of all of those models. I loved this book the most. I thought it was the book on dating, but this one beats it hands down.

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### **Negin says**

This was absolutely hilarious, especially for me, since I grew up with Ladybird books. There were parts that had me laughing so hard that I was crying. I look forward to getting more in the series. I'm looking for a few,

but sadly, they seem quite difficult to get.

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### **Graham Whatley says**

A present that's not just for Christmas but for life.

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### **Nick Phillips says**

Considering that all of the pictures in these re-purposed Ladybird books were actually used in the original books it does make one wonder what the original text was for the picture of the family driving what appears to be a Morris Oxford past the moon.

This book also makes one wonder just how much of a drinking problem Mr Hazeley's wife has.

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### **Sarah says**

It's my Mum & Dad's wedding anniversary today and what do you get for a couple that have been together for 34 years? Something silly of course so the **Husband** and **Wife** versions of the **Ladybirds for Grown Ups How it Works** series seemed like the perfect option!

Do you remember those old Ladybird books you used to read as a child? I have fond memories of fiction titles like **Mick the Disobedient Puppy**, **The Discontented Pony** and who could forget books like **Tasseltip and the Boozle** but there were also the educational ones that were actually supposed to teach you something. The books were all illustrated, written in very simple language and easy for children to read, something that has been continued into the adult versions that have been released much more recently. Including illustrations from the original series these books are like a step back in time but a very humourous one.

These books are snarky, play on male and female stereotypes and epitomise a dry British sense of humour. All in they're just fun, silly books that aren't meant to be taken too seriously but are designed to put a smile on your face.

My favourite quote from **How it Works: The Wife** -

*Wives like to be right.*

*Sara has been waiting for her husband Tom to arrive. He is half an hour late.*

*Sara is delighted. She knew this would happen.*

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