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Then Comes Marriage: United States V. Windsor And The Defeat Of DOMA



Synopsis

A Los Angeles Times Best Book of 2015 Roberta Kaplan's gripping story of her defeat of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) before the Supreme Court. Renowned litigator Roberta Kaplan knew from the beginning that it was the perfect case to bring down the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer had been together as a couple, in sickness and in health, for more than forty years—enduring society's homophobia as well as Spyer's near total paralysis from multiple sclerosis. Although the couple was finally able to marry, when Spyer died the federal government refused to recognize their marriage, forcing Windsor to pay a huge estate tax bill. In this gripping, definitive account of one of our nation's most significant civil rights victories—named a Ms. Magazine Top 10 Feminist Book of 2015 and a National Law Journal Top 10 Supreme Court Aficionado Book of 2015—Kaplan describes meeting Windsor and their journey together to defeat DOMA. She shares the behind-the-scenes highs and lows, the excitement and the worries, and provides intriguing insights into her historic argument before the Supreme Court. A critical and previously untold part of the narrative is Kaplan's own personal story, including her struggle for self-acceptance in order to create a loving family of her own. Then Comes Marriage tells this quintessentially American story with honesty, humor, and heart. It is the momentous yet intimate account of a thrilling victory for equality under the law for all Americans, gay or straight. 8 pages of illustrations

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Customer Reviews

I was surprised by this book in the best of ways. I expected an interesting but ordinary legal

nonfiction book along the lines of a mediocre text that rhymes with Schmuffalo Creek. As a law student, I was already deeply familiar with the Windsor case in terms of both its factual history and its legal outcome, so I wasn't sure how much this book would really offer me in terms of new information. I should have known better. Even someone who is totally unfamiliar with or uninterested in constitutional law will find something valuable in this book. Kaplan intertwines her personal journey from closeted law student to one of the legends of gay rights in the United States with Edie Windsor's fascinating life story as a gay computer programmer who became engaged to her spouse, Thea Spyer, in 1967 — over a decade before New York held its sodomy statute unconstitutional. Both stories are deeply moving, personal, and compelling even to a casual reader. I think it's rare for this kind of text to feel so honest, but I'm glad it is. I think there is a place for dispassionate analysis in law, but it is far from the only valuable trait in a writer or a lawyer. This is an exciting, emotional read, and I felt gripped with anticipation even though I knew how everything would turn out. Importantly, also, this is a funny book. There are parts I actually giggled out loud, which is rare for me even in reading fiction. Kaplan also discusses really interesting strategy choices as a litigator and civil rights advocate. This book raises a lot of issues around the politics of civil rights litigation and managing tensions, even within and among groups that have the same goals, and also has a lot of fascinating things to say about succeeding in our federal court system. Professors who teach advocacy or public interest classes might want to look into assigning this book as a good primer on and overview of successful advocacy in a civil rights context.

My copy arrived electronically at 12:03 this morning. I have not finished it, but I love this book so far! Edith Windsor and her wonderful spouse Thea Spyer put faces and hearts on the movement to legalize marriage equality. Roberta Kaplan is the smart, hardworking, courageous lawyer who fought for legal recognition of their Canadian marriage and the end of the Defense of Marriage Act before the United States Supreme Court and WON! How brilliant to frame the question as one about estate taxation!!!! I will buy this in hardback for signatures of my heroes Robbie and Edie when they visit a bookstore near me. In the meantime, READ THIS BOOK! And be grateful for lawyers like Roberta Kaplan!

I got a sneak peak of this manuscript this summer and now have my hands on my own hard copy. This is an incredible blend of legal procedure and personal story, a groundbreaking version of memoir. In as much as Edie Windsor is lesbian celebrity, it almost appeals to the voyeur—we learn so much more about her love and life. But, equally compelling, we also learn about Roberta Kaplan

and how her mind worked in this, the most important case yet for her. We meet their friends and their colleagues, their hopes and their fears, their challenges and their breaks. This first-hand account of one of the most important cases of our times is as compelling as it is readable. Every LGBTQIA person needs this in her library. Every legal scholar will enjoy the inside view of the arguments. Every library needs this on its shelf. This is how great love stories should be told.

My eagerly awaited copy came two days ago. As of this morning I'm ninety pages in and, though other obligations call, I am finding it harder and harder to put this book down. *Then Comes Marriage* makes it easy for those of us whose post-graduate work did not involve law school to understand complex legal issues. But what's best, I think, is the way Roberta Kaplan and Lisa Dickey have woven together the personal stories of real people, people who feel hope and sorrow, people who come alive as complex human beings, with the public story of how many people, not the least of whom is Roberta Kaplan herself, who have worked for years to bring marriage equality to the United States. Issues are, the gods know, important, but I think we "get" issues most clearly when we encounter them through the eyes of real people, good people with whom we can empathize. Like Marc Solomon's *Winning Marriage*, *Then Comes Marriage* is a winner.

What an amazing story. How one attorney with vision, drive and a huge heart helped change the course of millions of lives around the world. Robbie Kaplan took Edie Windsor's case against the odds, against the advice of others who "knew better" and won. She then used that case to argue for gay marriage in the toughest civil rights state in the country: Mississippi. And she won there as well, forever inscribing in Mississippi history that gay people matter. Even in the Deep South. Told with honesty, humor and courage, this book had me up all night reading even though I knew how it ended. Love won.

This is a brilliant, full-hearted, first-hand story from one of the key players in the successful fight for marriage equality in the United States by Roberta "Robbie" Kaplan. Ms Kaplan is the attorney who successfully argued the historic *Windsor vs. U.S.* case before the Supreme Court, overturning the misnamed Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which was subsequently cited in the swift repeal of most of the state anti-LGBT laws prohibiting same-sex couples from marrying. Despite knowing the eventual outcome, the book is still a gripping and fast-paced read, and gives a fascinating look at the insider debates and strategies that resulted in this key victory for LGBT right on a federal level. Despite the significance of the case, the legal complexities and historic impact of *Windsor* are

translated into a compelling and easy to understand narrative that is accessible to a layperson. In the book Ms. Kaplan also testifies, in eloquent and touching detail, about her own painful coming out story, and her mysterious almost mystical connection with her client Edith "Edie" Windsor's own life history. Ms. Kaplan also writes thoughtfully about the sustaining role of her own religious faith and the impact of Judaism upon her own sense of personal dignity, and understanding of the transformative power of the law. Finally, this book is a love story - both the romantic love story of two lesbian couples and the legal love story between two determined women, Roberta Kaplan and Edith Windsor and the LGBT community, and the determination to win legal and social recognition of, and respect for, ALL marriages. Despite knowing the eventual outcome, the book is still a gripping and fast-paced read. Cannot recommend this enough - a key book for those interested in LGBT, legal or American history, and for all social justice activists.

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