

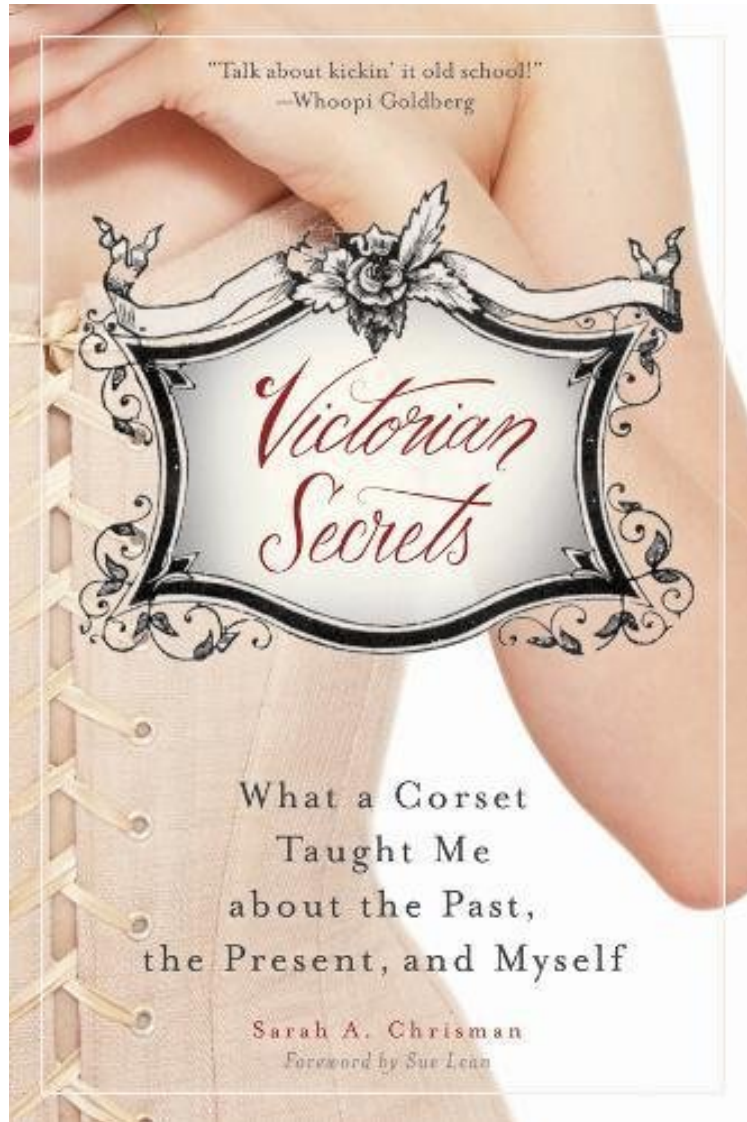
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Sarah A. Chrisman

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(Free) Victorian Secrets: What a Corset Taught Me about the Past, the Present, and Myself

Victorian Secrets: What a Corset Taught Me about the Past, the Present, and Myself

Sarah A. Chrisman : Victorian Secrets: What a Corset Taught Me about the Past, the Present, and Myself before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Victorian Secrets: What a Corset Taught Me about the Past, the Present, and Myself:

112 of 119 people found the following review helpful. Author's Negativity Completely Ruins Any Benefit To Reading This BookBy Erin GI was excited to read this book and initially enjoyed it. However, the author's sanctimonious, self-righteous and downright negative personality became the only thing I was able to take away from this book. Nearly

every interaction she has with other people besides her corset-obsessed husband is completely negative and downright strange. She goes off on random rants berating everyone around her for things that literally have nothing to do with the subject matter. This book comes off as a petty diary of an immature girl's teenage years while she also happens to be wearing a corset. I really wish I could mention a redeeming quality about this book. I want to so badly because - hello - Victoriana, corsets, early 1900s fashion- what isn't there to love? Unfortunately, nothing of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating! By James B. Potter Fascinating book; once I started reading it I couldn't put it down. Sarah Chrisman is a brilliant writer and the book is well researched; there were so many myths that she disproved. I so enjoyed reading about her immersion into the Victorian era, a time that has always been of so much interest. I had to underline some of the passages so that I could read them to my husband, especially the section where she disproves the myth about Victorians being prudish. We had a good laugh. We could all do well to embrace some Victorian manners and etiquette. This should be required reading for young women! I am now in the process of devouring "This Victorian Life" 357 of 387 people found the following review helpful. Would have been a delightful book, but... By Dawn Rider I was really looking forward to reading this book, having read a short review of it on a website. How different the reality! Though I did finish it, I could only tolerate it in small doses. Ms. Chrisman is a good writer and has a way with words, it's true, but her contemptuous attitude towards everyone in the book who was not her husband or of any benefit to her was off-putting to the max. I was particularly offended by her classification of a bus driver who attempted to help her and accidentally unraveled an already loose petticoat ruffle as "a low class southern brute" - she prattles on ad infinitum about her poor abused petticoat having been manhandled, as if the driver recognized her clothing as antique and maliciously decided to destroy it, rather than just trying to help her on the bus. This same petticoat she refers to as one she purchased for herself "for learning to walk again" (NOT!) after having to recuperate from a broken foot for a mere six weeks, part of which time she spent walking in a supportive orthopedic boot. Reading this, I was outraged for everyone who has experienced a genuinely traumatic injury and has had to spend months or years in physical therapy truly learning to walk again. She downs doctors, the healthcare profession in general, people who have misconceptions about corsetry, people who don't dress according to her high standards of historical accuracy, people who may or may not be staring at her in coffee shops, a party hostess that has an unfortunate moment of inattention, and on and on. She has hardly anything good to say about anyone, excluding her husband and a few people who flatter her. It just became downright tiresome to read all that vitriol. This would have been a delightful read if Ms. Chrisman had stuck to her experience learning to wear her corset, debunking the myths about corseting, and imparting details about Victorian clothing. That's what I really wanted to know. As it is written, she comes across as alternately spoiled, condescending, self-righteously preachy, and self-pitying. My (no doubt unappreciated) advice to Ms. Chrisman: Develop a little empathy for others before you write another book. It will make your life happier and your writing voice stronger.

On Sarah A. Chrisman's twenty-ninth birthday, her husband, Gabriel, presented her with a corset. The material and the design were breathtakingly beautiful, but her mind immediately filled with unwelcome views. Although she had been in love with the Victorian era all her life, she had specifically asked her husband not to buy her a corset ever. She had heard how corsets affected the female body and what they represented, and she wanted none of it. However, Chrisman agreed to try on the garment . . . and found it surprisingly enjoyable. The corset, she realized, was a tool of empowerment not oppression. After a year of wearing a corset on a daily basis, her waist had gone from thirty-two inches to twenty-two inches, she was experiencing fewer migraines, and her posture improved. She had successfully transformed her body, her dress, and her lifestyle into that of a Victorian woman and everyone was asking about it. In *Victorian Secrets*, Chrisman explains how a garment from the past led to a change in not only the way she viewed herself, but also the ways she understood the major differences between the cultures of twenty-first-century and nineteenth-century America. The desire to delve further into the Victorian lifestyle provided Chrisman with new insight into issues of body image and how women, past and present, have seen and continue to see themselves.

"In a personal account of the social and historical evolution of the corset, Sarah Chrisman provides a distinct and revisionist analysis of Victorian attire. This book encourages us to put aside our assumptions of the oppressive nature of fashion. Chrisman thoughtfully focuses on the ways women of many classes within society sought to create impressions, still critical in today's political economy." Christine Ingebritsen, professor, the University of Washington "Reading this book reminded me of just how much what we wear shapes us both figuratively and literally. . . . Chrisman's experience pushed me to be not only confident in what I choose to wear, but knowledgeable as to why and how I am choosing to wear it." *WORN Fashion Journal* (Toronto) "In *Victorian Secrets*, Sarah Chrisman shares what it's like to live a Victorian life in today's modern world. In an attempt to further understand the nineteenth-century lifestyle and truly connect with the past, she began wearing a corset on a daily basis and now rarely takes it off! A stately lady with the twenty-two-inch waist, she uses her experiences to teach others about the past, the present, and the future. You won't regret forgetting to read this book." Hilda Meryhew, treasurer and historian, Neely Mansion Association "Wherever Sarah Chrisman goes, she turns heads. Now, you can turn pages to find out why that is. What

has been viewed as restrictive has freed her to live a life of her choosing that elusive thing we all seek. In her fascinating book, whether you agree with her or not, Sarah captures the essence of living a truly authentic life." Terry Murphy, Seattle TV Producer/Writer "While it seems these days everyone is trying some sort of personal challenge or experiment to blog about it, Chrisman's experience is much more genuine. She didn't challenge herself to 'a year of corset wearing' to advance her fame and fortune. Her memoir of her transformation into a twenty-first-century Victorian lady is candid, funny, and offers new perspectives on the assumptions and biases of our own era and astute observations on timeless human tendencies." Debra Alderman, The Womans Century Club