

Rapunzel's Daughters: What Women's Hair Tells Us About Women's Lives

Rose Weitz



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The first book to explore the role of hair in women's lives and what it reveals about their identities, intimate relationships, and work lives

Hair is one of the first things other people notice about us--and is one of the primary ways we declare our identity to others. Both in our personal relationships and in relationships with the larger world, hair sends an immediate signal that conveys messages about our gender, age, social class, and more.

In Rapunzel's Daughters, Rose Weitz first surveys the history of women's hair, from the covered hair of the Middle Ages to the two-foot-high, wildly ornamented styles of pre-Revolutionary France to the purple dyes worn by some modern teens. In the remainder of the book, Weitz, a prominent sociologist, explores--through interviews with dozens of girls and women across the country--what hair means today, both to young girls and to women; what part it plays in adolescent (and adult) struggles with identity; how it can create conflicts in the workplace; and how women face the changes in their hair that illness and aging can bring. Rapunzel's Daughters is a work of deep scholarship as well as an eye-opening and personal look at a surprisingly complex-and fascinating-subject.



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