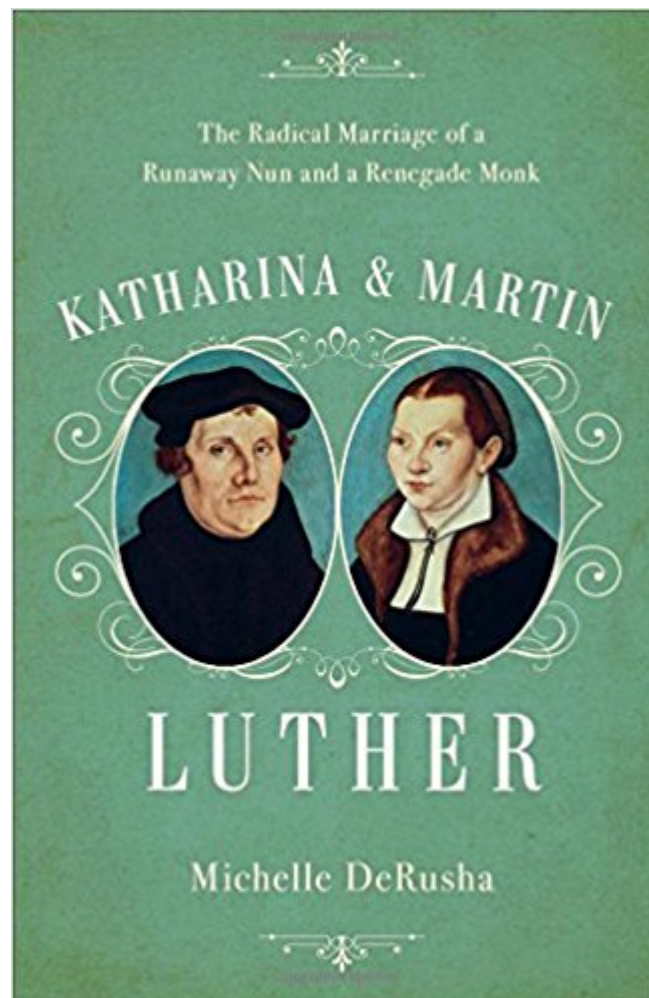




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# Katharina And Martin Luther: The Radical Marriage Of A Runaway Nun And A Renegade Monk



## Synopsis

Their revolutionary marriage was arguably one of the most scandalous and intriguing in history. Yet five centuries later, we still know little about Martin and Katharina Luther's life as husband and wife. Until now. Against all odds, the unlikely union worked, over time blossoming into the most tender of love stories. This unique biography tells the riveting story of two extraordinary people and their extraordinary relationship, offering refreshing insights into Christian history and illuminating the Luthers' profound impact on the institution of marriage, the effects of which still reverberate today. By the time they turn the last page, readers will have a deeper understanding of Luther as a husband and father and will come to love and admire Katharina, a woman who, in spite of her pivotal role, has been largely forgotten by history. Together, this legendary couple experienced joy and grief, triumph and travail. This book brings their private lives and their love story into the spotlight and offers powerful insights into our own twenty-first-century understanding of marriage.

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## Customer Reviews

Their revolutionary marriage was arguably one of the most scandalous and intriguing in history. Yet five centuries later we still know little about Martin and Katharina Luther's life as husband and wife. Until now. Against all odds, the unlikely union of a runaway nun and a renegade monk worked, over time blossoming into the most tender of love stories. This unique biography tells the riveting story of two remarkable people and their extraordinary relationship, offering refreshing insights into Christian history and illuminating the Luthers' profound impact on the institution of marriage, the effects of

which still reverberate today. Together, this legendary couple experienced joy and grief, triumph and travail. This book brings their private lives and their love story into the spotlight and offers powerful insights into our own twenty-first-century understanding of marriage. |Michelle DeRusha is the author of *50 Women Every Christian Should Know*. She publishes a monthly column on religion and spirituality for the Lincoln Journal Star and writes about faith in the everyday on her blog, [www.michellederusha.com](http://www.michellederusha.com). She lives with her husband and their two boys in Lincoln, Nebraska.

"No wonder it is sometimes said that the impact of this marriage was as great in the social sphere as the Ninety-five Theses in the religious sphere. Here is a story of a growing love accompanied by sorrow, the joys of marriage, and faith in God's providence. These well-researched pages are filled with unexpected treasures."--Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer, pastor emeritus, Moody Church, Chicago

"Michelle DeRusha gives us a fascinating peek into the Luthers' individual lives, their theological wrestlings, and an unexpected partnership that redefined yet another biblical institution--Christian marriage. The Luthers, through DeRusha's masterful portrayal, remind us again and again how the grace of Christ truly affects all of life."--Christine Hoover, author of *From Good to Grace* and *Messy Beautiful Friendship*

"We owe Michelle DeRusha a debt of gratitude for her impressive commitment to tell the story of this unlikely marriage. This book is a gift for believers everywhere, a reminder of how the transformational grace of God can leave a lasting and unforgettable legacy."--Emily P. Freeman, author of *Simply Tuesday*

"A fascinating, behind-the-scenes look at one of the most well-known Christian couples of all time. This is the Luthers' story, but in important ways, it's the story of all of us."--Jennifer Dukes Lee, author of *The Happiness Dare*

"I promise that this book will hold your attention and open your eyes."--Warren W. Wiersbe, author; former pastor of Moody Church, Chicago

“Two Pigtales on the Pillow” - If that chapter title from a book about the great Reformer, Martin Luther, doesn't intrigue you, what would? Actually, the book is about much more than Martin Luther; it's about the woman behind the man: Katharina Luther, the runaway nun he married. Michelle DeRusha's new book, *Katharina and Martin: The Radical Marriage of a Runaway Nun and a Renegade Monk*, is a fascinating look at life and marriage in the 1500s, yet deeply pertinent to us today because of the influence of Luther on Protestantism and its doctrines concerning marriage. DeRusha highlights their relationship and the effects marriage had on him as a person and his work as a Reformer. Luther, a former monk and already leading in the Reformation when he got married,

ultimately affected, perhaps even defined, the Protestant view of marriage we hold today. Like most of us, what Luther said and wrote about marriage and the inner dynamics of his actual marriage, were sometimes at odds. I found that comforting. If Luther was sometimes not practicing what he preached about marriage, well, that means on-the-job-training is probably to be expected for the rest of us. DeRusha has delved deeply into the scholarly works written by and about Luther, but in her book, she writes for all of us. It reads like a work of fiction, plot and character driven, compelling the reader to keep turning the pages. It's a story, first and foremost. I found myself having to remind myself that this was a work of non-fiction. Katharina and Martin are alive to the reader. Through their letters, we see them working through frustrations with people in their community, their worries for each other, their grief after the death of their daughter, and even their questioning of their faith in that most difficult time. Luther wasn't in love when he married Katharina; and most probably, she wasn't either, but over time, the relationship grew to be one of endearing care, great mutual respect, and playful banter. In the end, it had all the hallmarks of a happy, love-filled marriage. Luther said, "Marriage does not always run smoothly; it is a chancy thing. One has to commit oneself to it." He did and she did, and several children and years later, these two changed the institution for all of us. As a runaway nun, marriage was an absolute must for a woman of this time as she had no legal status or means of supporting herself. Luther had no intentions of marriage but tried to help Katharina and the other runaway nuns find suitable mates. At one point, he encourages her to marry another man who she finds unappealing and she flatly refuses; but suggests she would marry Luther! That kind of spirit and strength was exactly the kind of woman a man like Martin Luther would need to run his home, rear his children, and entertain and host his countless houseguests - up to fifty at a time! DeRusha's book is full of surprises, candor and humor. A worthy read and a fun read all at the same time.

I was dually drawn to this book being interested in both religious and music history. I could not have predicted what a "can't-put-it-down" read awaited me. Before you think, "oh yeah, another book on Luther!" let me assure you this is not the case. Michelle's exhaustive research and masterful story-telling give us an up close and personal look at the separate and combined lives of this couple as no other document has done. I would be remiss if I did not mention the excellent forward to the book. It really sets the stage well for what follows and is extremely well-written. Katharina's biographical material is fascinating. When combined with

the brilliant informed speculations and poignant writing of Michelle, this book invites you into the lives and places that shaped Katharina before and during her marriage to Martin. If you want to learn how a Reformation feminist was formed – this read is essential. The story that unfolds shatters every stereotype one might have about Katharina based on the status of women in those days. This lady was strong-willed, determined, and a force to be reckoned with. Being invited into her life is a treat, and like a treat, the reader always wants more. Michelle has taken what could be dry biographical data and breathed life into it. You will experience Katharina's home life, the decision of sending her to a monastery (made without her knowledge or consent), her daring and risky escape from that monastery, and her meeting of and eventual marriage to Martin. It is probably not possible to talk about their marriage to the exclusion of Martin's revolutionary and reforming ideas, but to have those presented with the backdrop of wife and family was enlightening. Martin's role as a "women's role" was apparently worse than his bite, as the Luther abode was really quite progressive for its time. It was fascinating to follow them through their journey of falling in love, because that it not how the marriage began. Possibly the most amazing part of Katharina's life, and the one that showed her most legitimate strength and gumption, was her life after Martin's death. Michelle draws us deep into the emotions Katharina no doubt felt trying to hold her family together and provide for them in a time where a woman was defined only through her relationship to a man. I am reticent to give too much away, but I can promise you an engaging, intelligent, informative, and inspiring journey through the pages chronicling this window into the Luther's lives and relationship. I recommend Michelle's book without reservation, and want to thank her for sharing her acquired knowledge, heart, and linguistic acumen with us. Not just everyone can take a string of factoids and weave them together in a way that tells a captivating story. Michelle does exactly that. Treat yourself and read it. Clark Roush, Ph.D.

After reading the first chapter of DeRusha's marvelous book about the marriage of Martin and Katharina Luther, I could NOT put it down! Her meticulous research of their lives and the historic period in which they lived, opened my eyes to a fresh appreciation of Christian faith and Christian marriage, and how to live them both faithfully even when it seems the world is turning against you. DeRusha's keen eye for detail and nuance is impeccable. You will enjoy this read, guaranteed!

Michelle DeRusha has written an informative and fascinating book on the personal life of Katharina

and Martin Luther. There were so many tidbits of information about them in this book. Such as the fact that Katharina escaped from the Cistercian Convent. Can you imagine being a rebel nun who chose to escape in those days? Michelle's storyline maintains a fast pace drawing the reader in from beginning to end. Her style of writing is informative yet inviting and friendly. It begs the reader to ask, "What's next"! Although there is little direct historical information about Katharina and Martin's personal life, Michelle brings Katharina to life as a real woman and equal partner to Martin. She threads together Martin and Katharina's devotion to each other and God. The font, spacing and layout selected for this book makes it a comfortable, "easy on the eyes" read. Anyone interested in biographies or the reformation period of history or is just wanting to read an historical account of two great lives, this is the book for you!

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