

## **Steve Allen**

# **"What Is A Wife"**

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Immediately following the  
Innocence of childhood  
And the freedom of bachelorhood  
Comes that incredible creature  
Known as a wife

Wives come in assorted colors  
That vary from day to day  
Platinum blonde, red, ash blonde  
Brunnette, henna, auburn and camel brown  
According to a recent thirty day survey  
By the way, more doctors are switching  
To camel-haired women than ever before

All wives have one creed in common  
To spend every nickel of every dime  
Of every dollar of every pay check  
Before you get it, in this respect  
They're very much like the government

Wives are found everywhere  
In reducing saloons, bridge parties  
Saks Fifth Avenue, beauty parlors  
Bargain basements, in your hair  
On your lap, in mud packs, maternity rooms  
And going through your pockets

Mothers love them, mothers-in-law tolerate them  
Spinsters envy them and husbands fear them  
A wife is a purity with cold cream on her face  
Dignity with a dish mop in her hands  
Beauty with curlers in her hair and  
Wisdom with an unbalanced checkbook

No matter how busy you are  
Your wife'll keep you on the phone til  
She gets that new dress she saw downtown  
But when you want to show her off  
She hasn't a thing to wear

A wife is a composite of many things  
The curiosity of an income tax collector

The suspicion of a detective  
The imagination of a psycho-analyst  
And the temper of a marine first-sergeant

She likes charge accounts, babies  
Soap operas, diets, all kinds of presents  
Gossip, a 21-inch waistline, mink coats  
Sleeping late, eating out and other men

She hates corsets, ironing, being over thirty  
Husbands who use guest towels, budgets  
Cigars, The Jones' Cadillac  
Her husband's secretary and other women

Nobody can get as happy on  
One glass of champagne or be  
So late to so many appointments  
Nobody could spend as much time  
Tweezing, plucking, vibrating  
Combing, brushing, polishing  
Rubbing on, rubbing off  
Touching up and still come out looking  
Pretty much the same as she did before

Nobody can be so illogical  
Cry so conveniently, interrupt so frequently  
Or louse up the punch line  
Of a good story so often

And nobody else can cram  
Into one small pocketbook  
Four lipsticks, last years expired license  
Ten handkerchiefs, two lumps of  
Wrapped sugar, hairpins, an extra  
Pair of nylons, keys to the trunk  
In the attic, two compacts  
A raffle ticket for a turkey and enough  
Perfume to keep her going for eight years

A wife is a magical creature  
She can make more things disappear  
Just when you need them  
She's your warden, your overseer  
Your treasurer, your probation officer  
And your wife

And when you come home at night  
Tired from a rough day at the office  
Longing for your slippers  
And a warm fire

There's nothing in the world like  
A wife to greet you at the door  
With three little words  
Where's the money

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