

## SUMMARISE

Summarise what you have read in no more than five bullet points

- Victorian England had rigidly defined gender roles: men worked and provided financially, while women managed domestic duties and household servants.
- Women were viewed as morally superior but physically weaker, dominating the domestic sphere as the "Angel of the House" — passive, pure, and self-sacrificing.
- Women were denied individual power and political influence, with their husbands acting as their representatives in public matters.
- Marriage often functioned as a transactional agreement, with women and their property legally becoming their husband's possessions.
- Under the law, a married couple was treated as a single legal entity represented solely by the husband, controlling finances, property, and even the woman's body.

## VOCABULARY

Select three words from the article and define them

- 1.Suffrage:** The right to vote in political elections. In the context of the article, it refers to the movement advocating for women's voting rights, which was opposed during the Victorian era based on traditional gender roles.
- 2.Pious:** Devoutly religious or virtuous. In the Victorian context, it reflects the idealized moral and spiritual qualities expected of women as part of their role as the "Angel of the House."
- 3.Transactiona**l: Relating to an exchange or trade. Here, it describes Victorian marriage as a practical arrangement centered on property, financial, or social advantages rather than love or mutual partnership.

## READ

Read the following information and underline the five most important or interesting things you learn.

Possibly more than at any point in history, gender roles in Victorian England were more defined than ever. Women - whether in the role of wife, daughter or sister - oversaw domestic duties and the work of any servants in the household, and the two sexes inhabited wildly different spheres. It was the man's role to go out to work and provide financially for his family.

Women, in the domestic sphere, were considered to be morally superior to men, though physically weaker, though they ruled the domestic life of a married couple. Indeed, of the many reasons given to prevent female suffrage, it was this influence in the domestic sphere that was considered one of the main reasons not to give women the vote. Because women dominated in this environment, the belief was that they could have their voices heard with their husbands acting as conduits. Despite the era being absolutely defined by the reign of a powerful woman, Queen Victoria, individual power for women was denied them. Even the ownership of property was impossible as a married woman, with property belonging to the husband.

Such was the strength of belief in the role of women at home that there was even a phrase associated with them: they were thought of as the 'Angel of the House'. She was devoted to her husband, passive and powerless, meek, charming, pious, self-sacrificing and, above all else: pure.

As previously discussed once married, a woman, and her worldly possessions, became the property of their husband. In this sense, then, Victorian marriage was often a transactional agreement rather than a match made for love. Under the law, a married couple became one legal entity which could only be represented by the husband. He would be in charge of all property and finances, and the woman herself in terms of what her body produced with regards to children, sex and domestic work.

## TRANSFORM

Transform what you have read into one or two small images

## EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

How does the information you have read link to your understanding of the word patriarchy?

Patriarchy is evident in the way men held dominance over legal, financial, and public matters, leaving women dependent and without direct representation. Women's societal roles were confined to domestic responsibilities and the expectation of being moral guides within the home, reinforcing their secondary status. Marriage further solidified male authority, as it denied women independence, with their property and identity legally subsumed under their husbands.