

The Oscar curse? Study says that Oscar win for best actress increases the risk of divorce

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Will Academy Award nominees Nicole Kidman and Annette Bening be at higher risk for a divorce if they win the Oscar for best actress next month? A long line of best actress winners including Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Halle Berry and Kate Winslet experienced the end of their marriages not long after taking home their awards.

A study by researchers at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management and Carnegie Mellon University finds that Oscar winners in the Best Actress category are at a higher risk of [divorce](#) than nominees who do not win. By contrast, Best Actor winners do not experience an increase in the risk of [divorce](#) after an Oscar.

"Research has shown that, in the general population, [gender differences](#) have historically given roles with greater power and status to men and roles with lesser status and power to women. Studies have demonstrated that breaching this social norm within a marriage—for example, when a wife earns more than her husband—can strain the relationship," says Tiziana Casciaro, an assistant professor of organizational behavior at the Rotman School, who co-authored the study with Colleen Stuart, a post-doctoral fellow at Carnegie Mellon University, and Sue Moon, a PhD student at the Rotman School.

"It appears that even the marriages of Hollywood actresses at the top of their careers are not immune to the consequences of violating social norms that affect the wider population. Our results suggest that the sudden success reduces the longevity of their marriages," says Stuart.

The study looked at the 751 nominees in the best actor and actress categories of the Academy Awards between 1936 to 2010. The results show that Best Actress winners have a 63% chance of their marriages ending sooner than the marriages of non-winners. The median marriage duration for Best Actress winners was 4.30 years, substantially lower than the 9.51 year [marriage](#) duration for non-winners. By contrast, the difference between Best Actor non-winners (median = 12.66 years) and Best Actor winners (median = 11.97 years) was not statistically significant.

More information: The complete study is available at:
[papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm ... ?abstract_id=1749612](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1749612)

Provided by University of Toronto

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