

Mary Ann or Ginger: The Dilemma in Every Man's Life and How to Deal with It

Barry Rothman

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For many people, the duration of the quest for a soul mate can last anywhere from the length of a first, magical look to well over half a lifetime. For as-yet-unmarried author Barry Rothman (now in his fifties), his search for the perfect partner falls into the latter category, starting with his initial awareness of the opposite sex when he was still in kindergarten. This former practicing attorney has traversed the globe in his tireless efforts to find The One.

Rothman brings to the table an extensive knowledge of movies and television, whimsically making allusions to what he might have done differently had he been cast opposite fictional femmes such as Lara from *Dr. Zhivago* or Ginger from *Gilligan's Island*. The author's breezy, candid, and boastful anecdotes about his past flirtations, friendships, romances, and one-night stands will resonate well with his target demographic—males between the ages of sixteen and sixty who are perpetually torn between the unadorned wholesomeness of good girls and the unapologetic wickedness of their vixen counterparts.

Although female readers will likely roll their eyes at the book's objectification of women based on looks, they'll find no argument with many of the conclusions that appear at the end of each chapter. While the following are not particularly original or groundbreaking rules for romance, they aptly apply to both sexes: "When you encounter someone with seeming personality disorders, run, don't walk, out of the relationship;" "Whatever you do, don't ever lower your standards just to be with someone;" and "A relationship is a two-way street with two-way communication—an impossibility if one of the parties never, ever stops talking."

The subtitle Rothman has selected for this volume is somewhat of a misnomer. *The Dilemma in Every Man's Life and How to Deal With It* infers that the author will be offering a deeper exploration of why men are so conflicted over their good girl/bad girl decisions as well as solutions to remedy the problem of having a high-speed libido in the driver's seat while common sense flies out the window. The only chapter that actually comes close to this expectation insofar as advice is the final one, which contains a twenty-five-point list that seems better suited to a filler article in a men's magazine.

Readers may also stumble a bit during the penultimate chapter on dating websites, which, while humorous, is inconsistent with the storytelling rhythm that precedes it. That said, sometimes the best way for others to learn is by example, and Rothman provides no shortage of illustrative disasters from his own dips into the dating pool.

Rothman's conversational and often self-deprecating style can be compared to syndicated humorist Dave Barry. With its appealing cover and professional formatting, *Mary Ann or Ginger* is a light, entertaining read for any guy who has ever wondered if he is the only person on the planet that true love is passing by.

CHRISTINA HAMLETT (March 5, 2013)

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