



## She's Unlikeable: And Other Lies That Bring Women Down

**Aparna Shewakramani**

Chicago Review Press (Feb 8, 2022)

Softcover \$27.99 (224pp)

978-1-64160-666-0

Aparna Shewakramani's memoir *She's Unlikeable* is a rallying cry for women's independence and empowerment.

Looking for love and a South Asian Mr. Right, Shewakramani, a successful lawyer in Houston, auditioned for the reality show *Indian Matchmaking* and was cast. But her experience of the show turned sour as she clashed with the show's matchmaker, Sima, over her ideas of how an Indian woman should behave: pleasing, servicing, and with no opinions of her own. Though labeled a troublemaker, Shewakramani refused to give up on her dream of finding true love, thinking that by the time the cameras were turned off, she would have found her man.

But things did not go according to plan. *Indian Matchmaking* became an instant hit, and Shewakramani was edited as its villain. Finding herself in a social media maelstrom, Shewakramani was harassed, doxxed, and received death threats. Strangers dragged her through the mud, declaring their hatred of her. There was nothing she could do to stop it. But then a woman in India tweeted that all women should be like Shewakramani: stubborn, independent, opinionated, and empowered.

In *She's Unlikeable*, Shewakramani takes control of her own narrative. She talks about circumnavigating the globe on a ship; surviving Hurricane Harvey; her challenges living with a chronic illness; and her experiences of racism and colorism. She confronts the misogyny inherent in social media and reality television, too, spilling the beans on what went on behind the scenes on *Indian Matchmaking*, and asking the question of why women turn on each other when sisterhood is the way forward. Though this work is sometimes repetitive, the book's ending comes too soon.

*She's Unlikeable* is a powerful memoir that makes a statement about women being "difficult"—an actually positive force in their lives.

ERIKA HARLITZ KERN (March / April 2022)

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