

The Playbook

Emile Manara

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“When was the last time she held your hand in public?” This question, which will make most married men squirm, is typical of the wit and wisdom of *The Playbook* by Emile “Moe” Manara. *The Playbook* is a collection of pithy sayings designed to open men’s eyes to the truth about the interplay between men and women.

At times the perspective seems harsh or macho, as in the first entry in the book: “Aunt Grace was right, treat them rough and tell them nothing...” or as in another selection, “Be a winner, be powerful, be rich, be important for you, not for her.” And some can only be characterized as chauvinistic: “Does she know how to iron. If not run....” When Manara shows us things to watch out for, or even run from, he notes some reasonable items, such as alcoholism, drug dependency, or multiple divorces, but also some that are arbitrary or biased, such as too many pets, tattoos, or an ankle bracelet.

At other times the pages are filled with stark, but wise, insightful reality: “Let’s not pretend to be something we’re not...” and “When you are alone with yourself, ask the question, is this the love I ordered....” And who can argue with wisdom such as, “Remind her that heart to heart talks don’t happen on the go.”

The author’s cautious advice warns men against the down-and-outters, high maintenance women, and women’s libbers. Manara also guides readers to look beyond the surface, to evaluate and look for quality women who will participate in quality relationships. This book is a mixture of good judgment and bad. Although it attempts to give men a heads up about women and practical insight into their real nature, the tenor of thought is generally too cynical, and flies in the face of those who have hope for the possibility of a genuinely good relationship. In short, this volume seems to be written by a man who has been burned in a relationship and hasn’t healed yet. Manara gives some good insights about relationships, but shows us also that he is not measuring true love.

While young men should read this book with caution, it is a useful and fun volume that would make a great gift book for a mature man—especially one who has recently divorced.

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