



## First Comes Marriage: Modern Relationship Advice from the Wisdom of Arranged Marriages

By Reva Seth

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**Seven time-tested secrets to dating the husband of your dreams -- taken from the centuries-old tradition of arranged marriages**

Want commitment, love, and romance? Forget *The Rules*, and stop waiting for an idealized Prince Charming. In *First Comes Marriage*, Reva Seth shares the wisdom of more than three hundred women in arranged marriages...and shows how this classic tradition can teach twenty-first-century women important lessons about how to find -- and keep -- Mr. Right.

The men you date will become the men you marry. The seven secrets in this counterintuitive guide will help you become more selective *and* increase your chances of finding the right person to share your life with. Seth knows her secrets work -- she married her husband after only meeting him seven times.

- **Secret #1: Your man doesn't have to be your best friend.**  
(That's why you've had a best girlfriend all along, right?)
- **Secret #4: It doesn't matter if he doesn't dance.**  
(Common interests are less important than shared values.)
- **Secret #6: Sexual chemistry isn't always organic.**  
(Attraction can be created -- if you know how to unlock your passion.)

A practical, surprisingly progressive guide to love and romance, *First Comes Marriage* will open your eyes to what makes a guy perfect for you...and will help you find him, date him, and keep falling in love with him forever.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Reva Seth is a journalist whose articles on arranged marriages have appeared in national newspapers across the U. K. and Canada, including The Globe and Mail. Seth and her husband live in London and Toronto with their son.

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#### Introduction

##### First Comes Marriage...Seriously?

Are you sick of random dates that seem to go nowhere? Ready to move on to the next stage in your life? Wondering why you never seem to meet your Mr. Right or find the commitment you want? Or are you in a committed relationship and worried that your boyfriend or fiancé may not be the perfect soul mate you always dreamed of ?

If any of these sound like your current experience, then this book has some answers for you -- answers and insight that come from arranged marriages.

When it comes to dating and relationships, the arranged-marriage approach has only one focus: fostering commitment and marriage. It's not about dating for fun or dating for the experience, or wasting months or years agonizing over the issues you need to overcome before you think you can get what you want out of both life and love.

It's not about hotties, cuties, sexual chemistry, or soul mates.

Instead, it's about finding the right partner, making the decision, and getting on with building a life of purpose and marital contentment together. That's pretty much what arranged marriages are all about. And this book is all about sharing concepts, tips, and strategies from arranged marriages in a way that all of us can use to identify an ideal mate and maintain a happy relationship, not just for now but for life.

These are life- changing lessons that will work for you, regardless of your age, culture, or past relationship experiences. And don't worry; it's not about convincing you to have an arranged marriage (I didn't!), but about understanding how you can make that approach work for you.

But wait...

*Relationship advice from arranged marriages?*

I know, I know. The idea of dating or relationship advice based on -- or even in the same time zone as -- the arranged-marriage experience seems completely strange. Backward. Ancient.

If that's what you're thinking, I don't blame you at all. Until quite recently, I would have completely agreed with you. But keep reading and you'll see how and why the arranged-marriage approach is both a proven route to a stable and happy relationship and particularly insightful when it comes to many of our contemporary dating and love dilemmas.

So if I didn't have an arranged marriage, how did I learn so much about this approach and how it can help us?

I learned these lessons through five years of research and more than three hundred interviews with women in arranged marriages. And along the way, I found that arranged marriages have a lot to teach us about dating, love, and long-term happiness. From finding a great partner to falling in love, sharing a home, building a family and -- yes -- hot sex, arranged marriages offer amazingly practical and effective relationship strategies. And the best part is that you don't actually need to have an arranged marriage to feel the benefits.

No matter how counterintuitive it may sound, the arranged-marriage approach to relationships offers lessons and guidelines that are increasingly relevant to the modern dating scene. But until now, these lessons have been largely ignored and overlooked, even though they are lessons that many of us can benefit from tremendously.

I firmly believe that there has never been a better time to be a woman than right now. Think about it: compared to any other moment in history, we have unlimited freedom for opportunity, fun, and sexual adventure. And then, when we decide we're ready, we can also have a stable, fulfilling marriage and family. But there's one catch: finding and sustaining and *enjoying* marriage seems to be getting harder and harder. That's one reason why women are increasingly taking lessons from alternative models from the past (remember *The Rules*, anyone?) and, as in this book, using these models to modify their approach to commitment and lasting love.

According to Marian Salzman, coauthor of *Next Now: Trends for the Future*, "Today is the era of the arranged couple who fall in love around the birth of the first child. It sounds traditional, but in some ways so much of the future is back to the past, turbo-charged."

Increasingly, both men and women are realizing that the fantasy of randomly meeting and instantly recognizing "the one" is unlikely to happen on its own. So instead of passively waiting, they are deciding that practical, pro-active measures must be taken. Just as in an arranged marriage, these are measures that take a more direct, down-to-earth, and ultimately successful approach to long-term relationship success. "This is about picking a marriage partner -- not about falling into bed for a world-class romance," says Salzman, whose trend forecasts are based on pattern recognition and the issues that style makers are talking about. "There is a newfound interest in letting someone else solve the love dilemma," she explains. "We're on option overload, and we're maxed out in terms of time, and we'd all love a partner. So it makes sense to enlist those who know us best to forge a proper and satisfying match."

Much of this is thanks to the Internet. From chat rooms to online dating services, the Web has essentially become our electronic yenta. *Time* magazine estimates that approximately 40 million Americans regularly log on to dating websites and services. Online ads, matchmakers, and speed dating are no longer considered to be the hallmark of people who are "desperate." The old stigmas that came with using these methods to find a partner are quickly disappearing, especially since the participants are often confident, busy professionals who are increasingly trying to search out partners the way they would a new job.

The statistics are compelling. For instance, a 2005 survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project showed that 15 percent of U.S. adults knew someone who had had a serious relationship with or married a person whom he or she met online, and 31 percent knew someone who has used an online dating service.

Some websites even feel like modern versions of ancient traditions. Consider how social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn act like social registries where you can "verify" a potential mate's social standing, appearance, and future prospects. On these sites you can even ask a mutual friend for an introduction to a complete stranger -- as is the custom for arranged marriages.

## A Marriage Arranged by America?

If the idea of your parents or extended family picking out your husband seems strange, then just imagine leaving it to a group of network executives or worse -- the American viewing public!

In her book *The Meaning of Wife*, Anne Kingston discusses the success of Fox Network's *Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire*, or, as she describes, "The commercialized update of the Cinderella tale." This was the show where fifty women between the ages of 19 and 43 were selected from a pool of over a thousand women who sent in videotaped biographies. The lucky fifty then got to compete to become the bride of a millionaire they had never met. Oh yeah, and they also got to take home an Isuzu Trooper and a \$35,000, 3-carat engagement ring! So how was the bride selected? Well, the groom, a motivational speaker cum stand-up comic cum real estate tycoon, asked the women a series of questions, ranging from what they would do if they found a woman's name and phone number in their new husband's pocket to whether they wanted to have children.

The success of this show (the final episode on February 15, 2000, drew more than 22 million viewers) led to several other spin-off shows along the same lines, including *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, *Joe Millionaire*, *Married by America*, and *Race to the Altar*.

Why am I bringing this up? My point is that arranged marriages aren't as foreign as you might think. The overwhelming response to these TV show setups seems to indicate that more and more people are interested in alternative methods for finding a life partner. Although I'm not sure how I'd feel about millions of people voting on my future happiness!

Online dating, matchmaking, and other assisted-dating services are growing in popularity (come on, admit it: you've watched *The Bachelor* -- or at least *The Bachelorette*!). Why? Because, sadly, most women in our society have been groomed to think that one day our wealthy, handsome Mr. Right will just walk into our lives (with little or no effort on our part) and lead us away to blissful lives of happily ever after. We have been taught to believe in a fairy tale, and many of us spend our twenties, our thirties, and even our forties waiting for that fairy tale to come true. And when it doesn't happen, we turn to the Internet.

Could it happen? Well, theoretically it could. Will it? Probably not. But the belief or hope, however faint, that it might is what leaves so many women unhappy and alone. I want to change all that for you and for anyone you know and care about who's stuck in this situation. And I know that the answer can be found in these love lessons from arranged marriages. Here's why.

- Arranged marriages don't leave love up to chance.
- Arranged marriages don't require you to passively wait for love to find you.
- Arranged marriages are suited to each person's unique relationship and life needs.
- Arranged marriages offer women an approach that is proven to lead to stable and fulfilling relationships.

No matter what you know, or think you know, about arranged marriages, it's time to pause and give them a chance to show you what you can learn from their success -- especially since the secrets I will share are proven strategies for finding and creating a fulfilling, happy, healthy relationship.

## What, Exactly, Is an Arranged Marriage?

Before we go any further, let's get clear on what arranged marriages really are. Unless you grew up with or have some firsthand experience of them, I'll bet that the words "arranged marriage" don't conjure up visions of happy, committed couples or l...

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