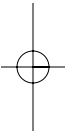
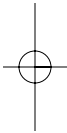


# Mama Gena's Marriage Manual

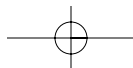


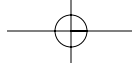
*Regena Thomashauer*



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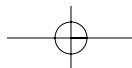
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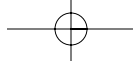
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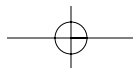
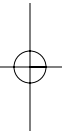
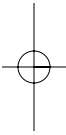
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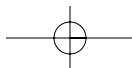
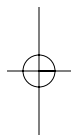
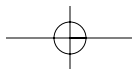
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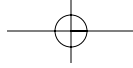




*This book is dedicated to all romantic fools  
who would do anything for love, even get married.*

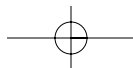
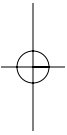
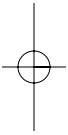


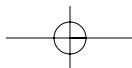
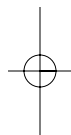
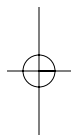
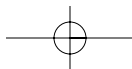


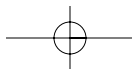


## *Author's Note*

The stories about people told in this book reflect feelings or situations which many of us have experienced in our own lives. While the essence of the stories is real, many are composites and, in most cases, names of individuals and other characteristics have been changed.

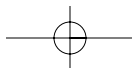
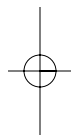
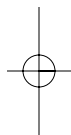
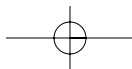




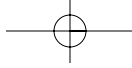


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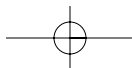
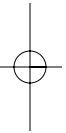
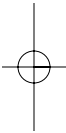
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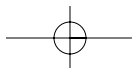
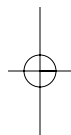
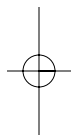
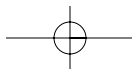






*Mama Gena's  
Marriage Manual*



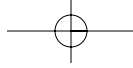


## Introduction

*Oh, life is a glorious cycle of song,  
A medley of extemporanea;  
And love is a thing that can never go wrong;  
And I am Marie of Roumania.*

—Dorothy Parker

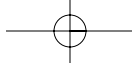
**D**arlings!!!! Have no fear, Mama Gena is here!  
Well, darlings, she's back. The irrepressible, outrageous, fabulously irreverent Mama Gena is here to break open the seal on the secret to a fabulous marriage. Marriage, today, is about as relevant an institution as the National Rifle Association. Mama wants to renovate, to revive, to revitalize! To tear down the existing structure and build something new, something fabulous, something that will accommodate everything a woman is, and everything a woman wants. If Mama can make room, within every marriage, for the fulfillment of every single woman on this planet, we will have a glorious foundation from which to build passion, friendship, intimacy, and a flourishing family life for the entire world.

*Introduction*

Congratulations on your marriage. You found yourself a kick-ass man, you owned, you operated, you dragged him back to your cave . . . and now, what do you do? You don't know what the hell to do, do you?

Wives are driving themselves into the ground in oh so many ways. Remember Party Girl Patty, in her hot leather miniskirt, who used to go wild and dance on the bar every Tuesday? Since the wedding, Patty doesn't even go out to party with her girlfriends anymore. Or what about Party Girl Sally, who is the talk of the town, criticized by everyone in her church group because she's married, with a child, and she still goes out in a miniskirt with her girlfriends every Tuesday? What's a party girl to do? And what about Fat Nancy who seems to eat a whole cheesecake by herself every time her husband has another affair? Or sweet Rachel who is inconsolable now that her kids are in college and she is all alone with the big, boring lug? Or disillusioned Susan who had this fantasy of living in a big house in the suburbs and being a full-time mom, and now that she's there, she is so isolated and lonely, with her husband working fifteen hours a day, that she can barely function? Or Constance, whose hairdresser is seeing far more of her than her husband ever did? Or Grace, who dropped out of school twenty years ago, when she became pregnant, never got the degree in nursing she always wanted, and now she is too scared to go back? Or Brenda, who never misses a chance to put her husband down in front of everyone? Mama, can we do better than this?

Is it possible to create something new, something fun, something real, something true that contains and encourages the hot,

*Introduction*

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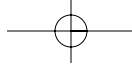
sexy, vibrant spirit of a woman? Do our *Sex and the City* days have to end? Can we be responsible, and have a blast as we love our husbands and raise our children? Can we keep the hot in our throb? Can we be flirtatious, outrageous, joyous, and still change diapers, go to the office, and have a hot hunk of manhood in our bed every night?

Marriage is misunderstood. That's why so many of them fail. We live in a world right now where over half of marriages end in divorce, and of those that survive, how many are actually happy? OK, OK, you may say, happiness was never the point. Putting food on the table, a roof over their heads, and raising children, that is the point. Ain't it so, word up. The institution of marriage was created for the purpose of the survival of the human species. And therein lies the problem. In this wealthy, abundant world, we no longer need marriage to survive. Women can support themselves very well, thank you, in the world today, and make enough money to live on their own. One-third of all babies born are born out of wedlock, so apparently you don't need wedlock to feed yourself, clothe yourself, or make babies. Seems we have all figured that one out. So what exactly is marriage for? Has it not become extinct, like a relic hanging from the ceiling in the Natural History Museum?

Are you ready? Mama's gonna tell you, but you may not be able to hear. You may even disagree. But hang with me on this one. In fact, don't agree with me about what a marriage is for. Just let this viewpoint float right alongside your viewpoint.

Ready?

Fun.



Marriage is for fun. It is to make our lives more fun than they would be without marriage.

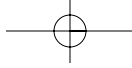
But isn't *fun* so . . . frivolous, Mama? So shallow and unimportant? Our culture guides us to feel that way. But let's look from another perspective. Don't you love the people you have fun with? Don't you want to be with them? Don't you look forward with enthusiasm and spirit to activities that are fun? For instance, on the first sunny day of summer, you jump out of bed, pack up the car, and race to the beach. Or when you get your hands on a fantastic book, you stay up all night reading it. Why? It's fun.

Fun has restorative, youth-giving powers. That's the beauty of fun. It is attractive. When you serve fun, it pays big dividends. You can solve problems with fun, be creative with fun, create intimacy, closeness, sacredness. Rarely can you do any of those things with force or obligation. Everyone knows the fun has been sucked right out of marriage and replaced with obligation, but many people are doing it anyway, and then blaming each other, or themselves, when it does not turn out to be the solution to all their problems.

Which is why marriage is in trouble right now.

But marriage has two really big things going for it:

1. Gay people want to do it. Why is this a good thing? Because as soon as gay people move into a bad neighborhood, the property values start going up.
2. Mama Gena is here to do a massive excavation and restoration. In other words, darlings, relax, we've got you covered. All you need is an open mind.

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I want to hand you the keys to the Queendom of marriage—you know, that place where your husband treats you like an absolute Goddess, and you would be lost without him.

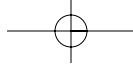
“Where is that place, Mama?” you ask.

I’ll show you.

As Goddess is my witness, I am going to hack my way through the brambles of our cultural limitations, our piss-poor education, our lack of imagination, and haul your ass there, kicking and screaming.

Welcome to the world of *Mama Gena’s Marriage Manual*. I am going to shock you, encourage you, and fling open unexplored highways toward your desire. I am going to persuade you to chart very different courses, ancient and modern pathways, toward a marriage that sustains and supports your pleasure, your creative unfolding, and your burgeoning desire. A marriage in which your joy is the highest value to you and your partner. A marriage in which he lives to serve you, and his job is to make sure there is a smile on your face. A marriage in which you are married first to your pleasure, your desire. A marriage that fuels and feeds and refreshes, rather than drains and creates hopelessness and compromise. Basically, I want you to marry a woman (yourself) and him to marry a woman (you). If I can get you both to use *you* rather than *him* as the basis for your combined happiness, I have a shot at making sure you both are happy.

The life-support system of a marriage is fun, not suffering. Mama’s going to seduce you into using your good times as a compass



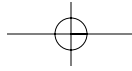
to navigate the hills and valleys of your married life. This is a world that excludes compromise and includes all that you desire. Why? Because you have no idea how good marriage can get. And I want to shake you awake to your potential in partnership. Don't you think you deserve it?

I was on the phone recently with a young woman from *Elle* magazine who was interviewing me for an article on sex and marriage. She was thirty-two years old and about to move in with her boyfriend of one year, with whom she was very much in love. Working on this article had begun to make her very nervous about marriage. "Mama," she asked me, "do you think that marriages are destined to fail? That things get less fun or less sexy over time when you're together? I have so much fun just with myself, I can't imagine that it won't be even more fun once I marry this man that I love." It was such a breath of fresh air and springtime for Yo Mama to hear a young woman who actually enjoyed her own company, who found herself to be fascinating, interesting, and enchanting, all by herself. I said, "Jo, if we can keep you loving yourself with that degree of enthusiasm, there is no possible way that your marriage will be anything other than a lifetime exploration of heaven."

Once we get this wonderful rapport going between you and your fine self, we are going to explore how to use your man and train your man in a way that leads to true partnership.

You may not know this know this yet, but you have signed yourself up for the adventure of a lifetime. As a married woman, your



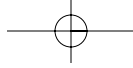
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potential for world-class fun, lust, love, intimacy, friendship, and exploration has never been greater. You have a partner by your side! Someone to experience the world with! You have a confidant, a loyal fan who can see you through to your dreams when your spirits are flagging. Someone to celebrate with, to cuddle you when you want consolation, to ravish you when you want sensual fulfillment, to diaper your babies when you are otherwise engaged, and to buy you things you wouldn't have thought of on your own. My darlings, a partner is the most fun tool you can have in your toolbox! If you want fun, he will amplify it. You got a problem? He wants to solve it. He can get to a point where he knows what you want before you even ask for it. Downright indispensable, that's what a man is.

Now, don't get me wrong, you and I both know that you are a succulent thing on your own. A man simply broadens your reach, expands your pleasure, and opens your doors. I do not want to talk you into a husband if you do not have one. I think life alone is divine. I just want to talk you into having fun with him if you've got him. And show you how to make really wonderful use of him, since he's already there, taking up space on your couch.

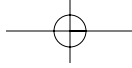
I think men, husbands, are the most underused commodities that a woman has. I'm going to show you how to tap that keg, girlfriends, and suck every juicy drop out of that man! Men love love love love to give of themselves to the women in their lives. Like the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, men want to be used in service to our dreams and desires. But I suspect that most of you do not know a dot about how to use your husband to serve you. So many key items were left out of our education. *Ways to use*



*your husband in order to really have fun with him* was one of them. Money was another, and forget about sex. But I know you. You are clever. When someone gives you directions that make sense, you are willing to take the ride. How else would you have gotten to the bookstore this morning, darlings? How else would you have baked your first cupcakes, gotten your first job, or programmed your cell? Hell, Mama just spent twenty minutes with tech support on the phone resetting the power settings of her iBook. If Mama can do that, *you* can find a way to use your husband for your pleasure. This book is here as a vehicle for you to reinvent your marriage as a source of celebration instead of an energy drain.

I see so many women who get absolutely sucked dry by the Institution. They have spent much of their lives planning their wedding and looking for their prince, just as their mothers did before them. Now add a full-time job to all their expectations of themselves, and you have a generation of women who are positively fried. They are supposed to keep beautiful homes, prepare healthy meals, spend quality time with their children, bring home a paycheck, and manage their own careers while emotionally supporting and encouraging their husbands to be all that they can be, and delivering great, regular sex. And the horror of it all is that we think we can do this. The pressure is so enormous that it makes me want to curl up with my blankie and twirl my hair.

I don't know about you, but I spent my twenties darting around, doing whatever I could to hide so no one would even think about marrying me. Marriage scared me. I hadn't seen too many good ones, and I surely did not want to get myself stuck in the same knot-

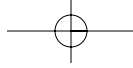
*Introduction*

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hole. From my high and almighty perspective, women who were married looked disappointed, or worse, they looked like fish out of water, hooked and struggling on the line. There were simply no good role models out there. I liked Jackie O's style, but life did not look so good there with Jack. It looked even worse with Ari, although she did get herself a private island. But how much fun is it to be a trophy wife? I'd rather turn tricks than marry for money. At least you get variety. And no pretense of happiness. I think pretense is the most exhausting thing in the world. Don't wear me out by making me pretend to be happy.

So many of the married people I knew in my town were miserable. Maybe miserable is overstating it, because I think that many of these couples were unaware of their low-level discomfort. I mean, if you are breathing, how can you *not* notice when your husband is having an affair? One way, and one way only. When you are gasping for breath yourself, you don't notice too much of what is going on around you. Take, for example, my neighbor Lucy. One day, after thirty years of marriage, her husband just up and vanished. Cleared out all his possessions, and his bank account, and blew out of town. Lucy was devastated. I could never understand why exactly, because Harry was no picnic. He was a real pain in the ass actually, and he was never really nice to anyone. I thought she was way better off without him. But she had become so accustomed to the lack of attention and ongoing hostility that she was lost without it.

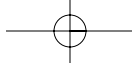
I can still remember that retching feeling in the pit of my stomach in my twenties as I was asked, when are you planning to find a man, settle down? I was not interested doing *anything* that *everyone*



expected me to do so desperately. I left home and went to a city where I did not know anyone. I had three different jobs so no one would get to know me too well. I took countless classes on evenings and weekends so my free dating time was nonexistent. I broke up with my spectacular boyfriend after seven years so no one, especially him, would get the wrong idea. I went on dating hiatus. I was an actress, so I busied myself by suffering for my art. The point is, I filled my days with so many things—activities, volunteer work, work work—that there was no possible way I could be perceived by myself or others to be on the marriage track. I was buying myself some time and perspective to figure the whole thing out. I was not about to put a satin-covered foot on the white carpet, ever, unless I could design a fun way to do it. I watched, I observed, I learned, and, most important, I experimented. In this book, I am going to share with you the results of my own personal research and the experiences of hundreds of women who carry themselves over my threshold each year.

Thirteen years ago, my husband, Bruce, and I started a company called Relationship Technologies. We taught classes for single people and couples with the goal of delivering to them the tools for creating great relationships. We wanted to experiment ourselves—working together and creating a relationship that started well and got better and better over a lifetime. Our theory was that no matter what sort of dysfunctional past or insufficient education one has had, each of us is capable of creating a great relationship with ourselves, and with partners, once some basic behavioral skills have been learned.

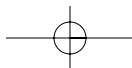
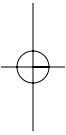
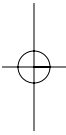
After a few years, I realized there was something I wanted to say

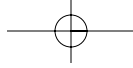
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to women, specifically, about relationships. I noticed that when a woman was happy with her life, her relationship was usually happy, too, and she felt in control of her destiny. And when a woman was unhappy, she was driven desperately to search for happiness in her relationship, where, suddenly, it did not exist. I resolved to show women how to find that joy within themselves, to awaken them to the incandescent joy that they were born with, and to help them create relationships that are in service to their own pleasure, rather than in service to others. Because when a woman is getting everything she wants, everyone else's life improves, too.

I created a forum called Mama Gena's School of Womanly Arts, a school devoted to the study of pleasure. The women who read my books and participate in my classes are called "Sister Goddesses." Why? Because it is my conviction that all women are sisters and that each of us possesses at least a drop of the divine within us, if not a whole lot more. Women feel that divinity most deliciously when they devote themselves to the pursuit of pleasure and the study of the Womanly Arts (those skills that, when practiced, allow us to use the power of pleasure to have our way with the world). They find that their outlook on life improves dramatically. Rather than spending all of their time in the trenches, problem solving, caretaking, and working their fingers to the bone, they are capable of reaching their goals by investigating their desires and playing with pleasure. This new perspective actually allows women to get what they want faster and with a lot more fun. When people spend their lives addressing problems, investigating their pasts, and looking at what's missing from their lives, they do not necessarily find happiness. Rather, they find



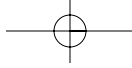


that their problems have expanded. When women pursue pleasure, they discover more pleasure and experience true exhilaration.

Our courses are designed to enhance, celebrate, and inspire us to choose fun and to step into our power. You will own and enjoy your sense of pleasure, joy, sensuality, and greediness. Mama's intent is to enhance and expand the voice of women by fanning the flames of their desires, which opens the doors of fun and pleasure for everyone.

In Mama's view, a woman is the keeper of the flame of desire in a relationship. It is key that we, as women, recognize our power, our part, and our potential as the fire keepers. If you feed the flame, it glows brightly. If you blow it out, it's over. He can become your able-bodied assistant, bringing you fuel for the fire, or he can bring on cold buckets of water to help you douse it. Ultimately, it's your fire and it'll burn if you want it to.

This book is in service to desire. It is for women at any stage of relationship—whether you have been together four months or forty years. I will be disabusing you of the notion that the controls of your relationship are housed in your partner's lap. As long as we think we are not in control, we are victims of love. As soon as we see that we are in control, we can begin to explore our pleasure in partnership. Most people never take the opportunity to explore their pleasure because they are so deeply tangled in the state of victimhood that passes for relationship in our culture. Look around you right now. How many of your friends and family are in relationships that you look at and think, Wow, that looks like so much fun! I want a relationship just like that! They are so cute and sexy and laugh so much and get

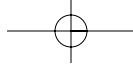
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along so well! Don't look at people who have just started dating. I want you to look at life in the trenches of relationship—two, five, ten, twenty years down the line. How many people have got it going on? I see many partnerships in which both men and women tacitly agree, in some way, to turn off essential parts of themselves in order to keep the relationship alive. I don't want that for you. I don't want that for anyone.

Mama's going to move your marriage to higher ground. The first step is to awaken you from the coma called the Good Wife Syndrome. That is the state of suspended animation in which you do everything you think *he* wants, and you give up the things you are passionate about in order to prioritize *him*. You put yourself on a shelf somewhere in order to be a *good wife*. This altered state stifles a lot of great women and kills a lot of great relationships. So Mama's here to administer the antidote. One of the ways to ensure you never have a relapse is by gathering together a group of Sister Goddess girlfriends who share a similar goal—they all want to create great relationships with their men. Your Sister Goddess girlfriends will be there to make sure that you stop complaining and start pursuing pleasure instead. It takes a village to train a man, and you will be choosing your own village to take your marriage even higher than you could on your own.

I am going to teach you how to dedicate yourself to your joy with some simple exercises that will strengthen your stamina. Mama will teach you how to *train* your husband. This will require you giving up your whining, your complaining, and your anger. What the hell, that trio is so worn-out and moth-eaten, you will be well rid of it.

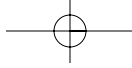


There is no room for victims in man training. Your self-defeating behaviors have had their day. There is a new kid on the block—you! Which means you can finally, once and for all, get what you want. And one of the things I *know* you want is a great sex life. Married sex can be yummy. You just can't leave it to chance—practice, practice, practice. Let's see what those eight thousand nerve endings you've got are *for*. Of course, there will be obstacles. But Mama is gonna guide you through the most common obstacles that occur in relationships, including money, in-laws, children, trust, and betrayal. There is not a single obstacle that you cannot overcome as you build a marriage based on pleasure, rather than obligation. We are in this boat together, Oh Sisters mine, so let's take this ship called *Marriage* for a four-star cruise on the open seas.

After years of exhaustive research, to which Mama has donated her body and mind, time and time again, the conclusion is simple: when you go for pleasure, you get pleasure. When you go for fun, you get fun. When you go for blame and problem examination and investigation, you create a marriage filled with hostility rather than passionate friendship. And since you are reading this book, you expose yourself as a fan of marriage as a passionate friendship. It will be our little secret. . . .

Mama wants you to get it going on. First with yourself, and then bring the whole enchilada that you are into the mouth of your relationship. You can be hot, you can be spicy, you can be stuffed with a variety of ingredients, all of which will serve to give you and your partner a taste of what life in partnership with another human being has the potential to be. I want you to have a relationship, a partner-



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ship with a man that sizzles with life, lust, and love. I want you to be the envy of every married or single person you meet. I want you to create a scene everywhere you go by the joy you bring because of the love you are living. I want you to blow open your own mind with how much you allow a man to give you, to spoil you, to pamper you. I want you to get everything your greedy little heart desires, and then some. The world exists to serve you, to celebrate you, to fulfill you. I want you to be escorted to the finest seat at the banquet table and have your husband pull out your chair. Not only do you deserve it, but the happiness of the world depends upon it.

