



The Pretend Husband

Declan Rhodes

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"We could pretend I'm your husband."

Alex only needed a place to crash for two or at the most three weeks while he licked his wounds from the end of a bad relationship and found a full-time job to get back on his feet. Liam was more than generous offering room and board in exchange for regular dog walking and home maintenance.

It all seemed so simple until Alex's stay stretched into a month, six weeks, and more. Faced with the skeptical eyes of friends, and complete strangers' unsolicited compliments about being the perfect couple, Liam and Alex concoct a scheme to present themselves to the world as husband and husband.

It works perfectly until they lose control of their plan. Alex finds out about a quality job, and it looks like it's time to leave. Will the pretend marriage turn into a pretend divorce or something much more real?

The Pretend Husband is the first book in the **Romance In the City** series. It is a romance centered around a fake relationship theme. The novel contains steamy scenes, no cliffhangers, and a happily-ever-after ending.

The Pretend Husband Details

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Author : Declan Rhodes

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From Reader Review The Pretend Husband for online ebook

Meags says

2.5 Stars

Okay, here's the rundown. We have MCs, Alex and Liam, meeting in a bar one night, at which point Alex immediately starts divulging his life woes to Liam, and Liam, the kind guy that he is, offers Alex a place to live for a time while he gets back on his feet.

They co-habit for a time and become good friends, yet they attempt to ignore their growing attraction because ultimately Alex might end up moving back home (interstate), making a potential relationship difficult or impossible.

Somehow, in an effort to impress one of Liam's higher ups at work (AKA a donor for the museum he curates), Liam and Alex decide to tell a little white lie and pretend to be a married couple. They also extend this ruse further and tell neighbours and acquaintances the same, because pretending to be married is just easier than explaining their friendship every time someone asks about their relationship status.

This goes on for a time, with the assumption that their fake marriage will end with a fake a divorce once Alex moves away, but then the two legitimately fall for one another and decide a real marriage is in order! Hurrah! The end.

Right. So, clearly, the plot was on the unrealistic side of things. The fake relationship trope is one of my quirky favourites, and I know going into these stories that I'm leaving logic and reason at the door, but I rarely care because the trope is amusing and often leads to some fun and sexy revelations between the MCs. All of that happened here, but I did struggle with the way the fake marriage was set-up to begin with. I had issues with this because, in my opinion, Alex and Liam didn't actually have a reason to pretend to be married – they just decided to do it in order to sound more official when having dinner with the boss, and because they were annoyed at having to tell people they were just friends. To me, those were pretty weak reasons in the world of fake relationship plots, but I'm sure for some readers this will work better for them than it did for me.

Liam and Alex were definitely sweet together. They were such nice guys that I couldn't help but wish for their HEA, and thankfully they got one in delicious fashion. I also liked Liam's female bestie, Sarah; she provided some humour and logic to all the conversations she shared with Liam (and sometimes Alex too). Plus, Liam has a dog, and who doesn't love a good book dog!?

This was my first time reading a story by Declan Rhodes, and although I had some issues with various plot points and the overall writing style, I would still be open to possibly reading more of his work in the future.

Bárbara says

*ARC provided by the author *

This was so much fun... Honestly, I love the premise, and how it was executed. At times it did feel like there was a bit of unnecessary drama going on, but it was nothing too bad, or that it prevented me from having a good time while reading.

I also appreciated the pace of the relationship! I was glad of the way the development was handled. It felt right (also the chemistry between the character!)

It was a sweet, funny story, with some charming characters.

Becky Baldridge says

In all honesty, I've grown a bit tired of the fake marriage trope for romance, but Rhodes gives us something a little different than the typical with this type of love story, and make no mistake, this is a love story, even when our sexy fellows don't know it.

Liam and Alex are so good together and I found it amusing that for much of this story, everyone realizes that except for this miss-communicating pair. Their chagrin at how quickly the ruse has spread along with the struggle to find a resolution is equally amusing and kept me turning pages, hoping for their happy ending. Overall, Rhodes has given us another sweet, sexy romance and an all-around fun read. It's well-written with great characters and a witty dialogue. This reader will be anxiously awaiting whatever comes next for this series.

Becky says

I love a good fake relationship. Sadly, this was not a good fake relationship. Their reason for claiming to be married was skimpy at best, and their reason for expanding the scam to just about everyone they knew was downright stupid. Beyond the poor motivation, the writing was clunky and the characters' POVs were indistinguishable.

Mary Mary says

* I received an ARC copy in exchange for a honest review *

This is a VERY sweet, predictable and unfortunately not very believable or original story. I really wanted to like this but my eyes hurt from eye-rolling so much and I can't say that I am not more than just a little bit disappointed :(Declan Rhodes was a new author to me and I wanted to give this story a go because I normally like stories like this.

This book is well written, fast paced and it is enjoyable if You're looking for some super sweet, uncomplicated love story . Here we have Liam, a nice guy who works in a museum and one day decides to take Alex, a now homeless guy who doesn't have money, works only part-time (and spends last of his money on beer - nice and wise) to his house and live with him. Then they decide to pretend they are married and then - surprise, surprise - they get married for real.

As I said, it is VERY predictable and completely unbelievable. First of all, who offers strangers place to

sleep (for 3 weeks and then longer)??? Then again, who pretends to be married (to almost complete strangers) during important business meetings?? There were other things that annoyed me like Mark and his "connections" (predictable), Linton's cottage (too many romantic comedies I think), and both MCs. I didn't like any character in this story, they were all plastic and unreal. Maybe Chester the dog is ok (dogs most often are).

I recommend this book if You're looking for an uncomplicated, easy read with no angst.

Izzy Ferreira says

I received an advance copy of this book

I enjoyed reading the story of Liam and Alex. I really admire the author for making tension appear when you least expect. It's like the HEA happens one moment but the book isn't finished so you get the tension. Then it happens all over again. I enjoyed this although the tension parts weren't so heartbreakingly bad that made the good parts become excellent. It also meant that we missed on that big conflict just before it all resolves itself. The whole premise of their fake marriage seemed too fake, even for fiction but the characters were nice enough to keep going. I'm also not sure about Alex fitting into a role of "housewife" in exchange for accommodation. Wasn't he meant to have carried on working or looking for another job? This was a big part of the plot that I felt was missing from the action. All in all, it was a very enjoyable read and I'd recommend if you have KU.

mrs sarah frost says

The Pretend Husband

This is a cute story of Liam and Alex. When they meet in the bar Alex confesses to Liam that he's homeless after his cheating ex boyfriend packed his bags? Liam takes pity on him and lets him stay with him in exchange for dog walks and chores around the house. What's the harm in having a sexy room mate? Liam confides in his best friend Sarah about his feelings.

Liam introduces Alex to all the other dog walkers with Alex hitting it off with Mark and becoming great friends. They get told they make a great couple!

Liam works for the museum and needs to impress the donor, Hubert Linton at a meeting which sends him into a panic. Alex offers to go with him and as a couple but Liam goes one better what about as his husband! The meeting is a complete success with Hubert and his wife Beatrice loving Alex.

As a thank you Alex takes Liam to a baseball game. When they get caught on the kiss cam there's only one thing for it, kiss! Liam passes it off that he took one for the team because if Alex does move back home he won't have a broken heart.

Alex gets offered a job back home but he can't leave Liam behind, he needs to find the right time to tell him. When a surprise trip comes up Liam needs Alex to go with him still as his pretend husband where they give into their feelings. When they confess to Sarah they are officially an item they need to work out how to tell everyone they're not actually married but Sarah suggests they get married for real!

This is a great first book with fun characters and has potential for an amazing series!

** I received an arc in return for a honest review by the author **

wild_orchid says

A good start

Reasons I liked the book: interesting premise, fur baby, kiss cam appearance, steamy loving.

I really wanted to love this book, but it fell just shy of love for me. I'm not sure if it was just the lack of believability for me or what. The characters were likeable and while they definitely had chemistry later in the book, I think their insta-connect just didn't run true...."sees stranger in a bar and likes his smile, so invites said complete stranger to live with me, initially for 3 weeks"... uh no??? This book also didn't flow at a steady pace for me. There were many times I found myself wanting to just skim ahead. I've enjoyed this author's work in the past and will probably continue to read the rest of this series as well. I didn't LOVE it, but I enjoyed it enough to continue on and hope the next one really pulls me in.

Megan says

Alex and Liam were very likable characters. They were both the nicest, most accommodating guys that happened to find themselves living together. What harm would it be to pretend they were more than just housemates? Everyone already thinks they're a couple and it would make things easier for Liam with a possible museum investor...so really, how bad could it be?

There's a general feeling that things will get bad and that things will be revealed and then they'll have to put out that fire while trying to salvage a relationship they weren't expecting. Things didn't get bad, the truth was revealed but only to those who were closest to them, and the relationship between Alex and Liam was building and growing into something neither expected but secretly hoped for. This general summary doesn't really capture the niceness and sweetness and happy coexistence that the men shared, though. It also doesn't capture the good friends that they have and how much of a support they all became to them.

When they finally got around to confessing things it wasn't until after things got real...in more ways than one. Watching them adjust to living together and the way Alex took care of Liam was very sweet. I can't help feeling that there could have been a solution to his job situation if he were open to his talents and thoughts. There was a hint at a career change possibility but it just turned out to be an errant thought. He didn't seem driven to be a teacher and with how things worked out it was like their future was just gifted to them. It would have been nice if everyone were honest with themselves and others a lot sooner but then the book would have been much shorter and I can't see that being very satisfying in the end either.

Overall this was a really simple story. The dialogue was generally good but I couldn't help feeling that I was missing something. Everything was very superficial, not in a catty, vapid way, just that I didn't feel deeply from or about either of these men. No matter, though, because if you're looking for simple, sweet, and a satisfying conclusion, this is a good book to go with.

My favorite line from the book:

"I recognized a hole that existed in my life which only a cold nose and a happy tail would fill."

-Liam, The Pretend Husband

John-Torleif Harris says

While I absolutely loved the end of this book, I struggled to stay engaged for the first 40%, or so. In fact, I got the impression that the first part of the book had been massively revised late in the process and the flow of narrative was choppy because of it. During this time I kept asking myself why Alex didn't seem to be looking for a job in the city that he was living in at all; why didn't it occur to either of them to really get married; and why were both Alex and Liam making this whole thing so much more complicated than it needed to be?

I didn't particularly like Liam and didn't really understand exactly why he latched onto the fake marriage as tightly as he did when Alex humorously suggested it. Liam was described by his co-worker, at one point, as being meticulous and risk averse to a fault, and yet, we saw none of that in his repeated impulsive and reckless decisions throughout the book.

But, having all of that going against it, I found myself smiling and truly happy when Alex and Liam got everything settled between them and declared their love for one another. Their friendship grew into love and they said it perfectly when they declared that together they are better.

I voluntarily reviewed an ARC of this book.

Line says

Freebie at amazon.com right now: <https://smile.amazon.com/Pretend-Husb...>

Sandra says

It's not often that I put a book aside before finishing it, but this was one of them.
I love the fake/pretend trope, it can lead to funny/awkward/sexy situations, but it takes good writing.
Not the case here.

The author tries to give us two different POVs but fails. The POVs are so alike, most of the time I didn't know who was talking. I've read so many good books with 2 POVs (some with 3) that I guess it took me reading a bad one to realise how difficult it is to do it properly, to create different personalities so that you know exactly who you are reading at all times.

I could get over some silliness about the fake/pretend plot, but this one was just not believable at all.

The dialogues are childish and unpolished, there are loose points everywhere, things don't make sense, actions don't make sense. I was hoping at least for some hot sex scenes, but even those are bland. The characters are empty and have no... well, character.

Linda says

A lighthearted fun and romantic story. Full of the feels and steamy stuff Declan Rhodes is known for. The first in this series. Well worth reading. Charmingly told and with detail and great characters.

Sarita Chapdelaine says

I enjoyed this book and found the story very intriguing. The writing did feel a little stilted and forced at times but the characters more than made up for that. Alex and Liam are perfect for each other but they try so hard to ignore it as they both know that Alex is leaving in a few weeks. The secondary characters added a lot to this book as well, I love Dean Fetterson and Sarah. I hope that there is a book for Mark and I look forward to reading the next book in this series.

I was kindly given an ARC by the author.

Jennifer says

The Pretend Husband

While this book has cute moments it started out completely unbelievable. From there it went to chaos with the pretend thing, but like I said it was cute at times.
