



A Scandal, a Secret, a Baby / Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby!

Sharon Kendrick

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One sinful night...

Dante D'Arezzo is the last person famous songwriter Justina Perry wants to see at her best friend's wedding. The wickedly sexy Italian is ruthless to the core. He broke her heart once; she won't surrender to his insatiable desire again. But what Dante wants...

One very big scandal!

Justina's pregnancy hits the front page and Dante knows he's the father. He'll make her pay for trying to keep his child from him. His Miss Independent is about to become completely dependent...on him!

This Italian will claim his heir and-if he wants her-a wife!

A Scandal, a Secret, a Baby / Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby! Details

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From Reader Review A Scandal, a Secret, a Baby / Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby! for online ebook

Melody Cox says

The hero is a cheater and I simply couldn't tolerate him. I hate the arrogant, cruel, alpha hero type. I ached for the pain and heartache he caused the heroine. It made me sad and a bit sick!

As another reviewer mentioned, the hero never did understand or comprehend the depth of the heartache he caused the heroine. He shattered her, broke her if you will. Five years later and she's still not over it while he's been hooking up with anyone willing and there were a lot!

I cannot recommend!

Kaycee ❤️? says

Not Ms. Kendrick's best!

Aarann says

3.5 stars for the first book only. I skipped the second book when, after two chapters, it looked like it was about to be *exactly* the same plot.

Justina Perry and Dante D'Arrezo were once engaged to be married. Due to their mutual control issues, including his jealousy over her career and her refusal to compromise on the subject of her career, the two separated, then separated for good when Justina walked in on Dante a week later with another woman. For the record, I've seen a lot of reviewers tag this one as a "cheater" book because of how quickly Dante moved on physically. What he did was a chode thing to do, but I don't agree that it was cheating. I'm not a fan of the "We were on a break" excuse (and seriously, fuck you, Rachel Green, for introducing that vaguely worded catch-all into the lexicon of break-up language). You break up with someone and that person should be allowed to sleep with other people, whether it's a week later or an hour later. Sure, it's scuzzy, but that's what happens when you break up with someone. They pretty much get to do what (and who) they want.

Anyway, rant over with. Justina and Dante meet up again years later at a mutual friend's wedding. They have a one-night-stand, ostensibly for closure and old-time's-sake and all those other silly little things people tell themselves, and oops, nine months later, Justina looks suspiciously like she's hiding something bigger than a breadbox under her dress. Dante sees the press coverage of her not-so-immaculate conception, somehow "knows" the baby is his through some seriously convoluted logic, even though she told him over and over that she'd had other lovers since him (she was lying to save her dignity, of course, because in HP romance novels, any woman who's had sex with a man not the hero and not a husband is a total ho-bag). But whatever, he knows because Plot! and the two of them are soon trying to figure out a co-parenting plan.

The back of the book is a bit misleading. Dante actually steps up pretty decently and there isn't a whole lot of "I'll make her pay" machinations beyond the initial *Weren't you going to tell me about my kid?* confrontation. Beyond that and maybe a few angry moments, he's actually a fairly decent guy.

All in all, not one that really stepped out of the pack of cookie-cutter HP (although I was impressed that the author laid the blame of their initial break-up squarely at both doors instead of trying to shift the blame too much on one side or another) but also not a bad way to spend a few hours on a Saturday. I don't know how much I'll re-read, but I'm not sorry I bought it.

I may pick it back up someday to finish reading the second one (I read the first two chapters and didn't notice a huge difference between the overall plots of the two), which is loosely connected to the first because the hero is Dante's brother that was NEVER once mentioned in the first book. It looked like pretty much the same book, though possibly with actual cheater possibilities, and that sort of thing can be pretty cat-nippy to me because I like to see if the author can actually make me forgive the hero or if the heroine is just a spineless twit. So... maybe someday.

Dee says

3/5 stars

The first story wasn't too bad but it could have been a lot better! Some may consider the Hero a cheater but I don't. The relationship was definitely declared over by both parties and they had been apart for a week when the heroine found him in bed with another woman. An insensitive pig yes..an idiot yes..but a cheater no!

From what I can gather the second book was written a few years ago but because the man (I am not going to call him Hero as I don't think he is one!!) is the brother to the Hero in the first. In my honest opinion it should have been left out of the print as I don't think it will be well received by Harlequin readers and will pull the ratings down. I did struggle with the rating but chose to ignore the fact that it was there and had read it!

Full review to follow closer to publication date.

ARC kindly provided by Harlequin via Netgalley

H.L. Laffin says

This was one out of the many novels I have read by Sharon. And once again it was fabulously written with the characters miscommunication. This is something that happens all to often in reality. So when they break up and she comes back to see her ex sleeping with another, it makes her furious. To have this story carry on with a growing elephant in the room, makes for an interesting read. While they are still physically attracted to each other and underneath it all still in love. They must Master their communications first before moving forwards! Loved how the media was played in the story too. A great story to sit down by a fire with a hot cup of tea :)

Hsiau Wei says

This book consists of two story; with a celebrity and a member from D'Arezzo of as its main character. In A scandal, a Secret, a Baby Justina met again with Dante at Justina's ex group member wedding after five years being separated. Justina found herself still attracted to him and so is Dante. They spent a night then and as a result, she found herself pregnant. Seven months down the road, Justina found herself confronted by Dante. Dante is furious for her not telling him about his baby. He want to play a part in the upbringing of their child. There is issues between Justina and Dante which remained unresolved. Justina caught Dante with other women in bed few days after she called off their engagement and she is unable to forgive and forget Dante for it. Dante, on the other hand, is unable to control his possessiveness over Justina and his jealousy seems to played havoc in their relationship.

In Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby!, it is a story of Jennifer and Matteo, both involved in the entertainment industry. They have been married but found themselves drifted apart as days passed. Jennifer have filed for divorce and Matteo, on rebound (seem like that to me), got involved with another women which infuriated Jennifer further. They met again after 6 months and as a result from the meeting, Jennifer is pregnant. She doesn't want to deny Matteo's right to know about the child and decided to tell him the truth. Their marriage have issues which both of them needed to tackle and with the baby on the way, it is the crucial time for them to do just that now.

Both the books carries the issues of trust between the main characters and with the baby on the way, they were force in a way to tackle the issues. And it is worth noted that despite the separating between them, one would have been to see that they still loved each other very much

Tiffany says

Bother books are short, entertaining and filled with angst goodness.

shms says

A Scandal, a Secret, a Baby
(on re-reading)

2.5* - Reading the other reviews, people hate reading about cheaters. me? not so much. I like a good cheating tale, well let me be clear, cheating by the hero. The good old double standard lives in me because I can't read about cheating heroines. Not sure why but I'm not here to explain my psyche.

Technically it wasn't cheating as they were broken up, not even on a break. Was he a douche for moving on so quickly absolutely, the fact that it happened 5 years in the past does give some emotional distance to it. The tale started with a bang but kind of whimpered out after their one nighter. I didn't think the H ever got a handle on how much damage he did to the h or the issues she was dealing with. In the end, some words were spoken but that's the quick wrap up that supposed to make it all alright. Oh and as usual the h was in deep freeze while the H made merry.

Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby!

2*

Read the marriage scandal, showbiz baby. There was something quite raw about this and I loved how the cheating was handled. The h loosing her cool in the lift, great. Non of this stiff upper lip rubbish. It was short but engaging.

(on re-reading)

Another one, where the H cheats...in this he DOES cheat as he is still married when he steps out on the h. Again the beginning was good a and pulled me in. the h's meltdown when faced with her husband after a 6 month separation was angsty goodness. If only that intensity had been sustained or some level of it through the rest of the book. It picks up towards the end again but too little too late.

This couples' problems aren't really addressed.

Goobledybook says

I found myself preferring the first book to the second novella although neither stories were great. The difference was sleeping with a woman shortly after breaking up or making out with a woman while married. For me the non-cheater will always win out. Neither were great reads for simple reasons. Reasons I'd like Harlequin writers to make note of. First, when a relationship fails, both parties are usually to blame. That is a poor excuse for cheating though. The woman always apologizes for her failings as a wife when the man apologizes for cheating. What year is this? Women are still being held responsible for cheating partners? Harlequin hasn't gotten the memo. The second reason these books weren't great were the men. There wasn't anything endearing about them. No life struggle to really account for their selfish, thoughtless behavior. The first book, the guy married a professional, touring musician, then became resentful when he didn't become the stay-at-home wife he wanted. The second book involved an actor, who never stopped working, blaming his wife for being a non-stop actress. In the end it was both men getting what they wanted. Again, what year is this?

I started with 3-stars, then 2 halfway through the review, but now...1-star.

Fre06 Begum says

Both main male leads are weak and selfish.

Britta says

"Justina Perry was on top of the world five years ago: a member of a hot all-girl British pop band and dating the delectable Dante D'Arezzo. Now, she's just another celebrant at the wedding of her friend and former band mate..."

Read the rest of the review at my book blog.

Shannon83 says

The book comes as a standard novel and a novella. The first book was okay, I could walk away from it and pick it back up later. The novella I completely stopped reading.

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This one was a bit of a miss for me. I'm not a big fan of infidelity, and considering both titles in this book contained it, I ended up not actually finishing the second book (Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby!). Not really the author's fault -- I just didn't realize both stories had a cheating hero before I picked them up..

3/5, perhaps with a full review to follow.

Dianna says

In 'A Scandal, A Secret, A Baby' ex-girl band member and current song writer Justina runs into her ex-fiancé, rich Italian aristocrat Dante, at a friend's wedding after several years of estrangement. They snipe at each other for a bit and then go back to Justina's hotel room for sexy times. Justina ends up preggers.

In 'Marriage Scandal, Showbiz Baby' movie star Jennifer runs into her estranged movie star husband Matteo at the premier of their film at Cannes. They snipe at each other for a bit and then have sexy times in a temporarily broken service elevator. Jennifer ends up preggers.

These books are very similar. Dante and Matteo have both cheated on their respective heroines, and are angrily defensive about it. The cheating is grey area. Justina's huge issue with Dante is that they have a big fight and break up, and then she comes to see him a couple of weeks later and finds another woman going down on him.

Jennifer ended her marriage with Matteo when pictures surfaced of him kissing another woman. She initiated divorce proceedings, and the film premier is their first encounter in 6 months. Matteo admits that he did sleep with the other woman, but only after Jennifer filed for divorce.

Both Dante and Matteo have the same essential claim: their heroines neglected to put their men first, and by doing so destroyed their love. Justina was too focussed on her music and kept going on tour. Jennifer had been a small time actress before she married Matteo, but rapidly became a star and got busy doing her own thing. Women should be available to their menfolk. Also, they shouldn't go braless in music videos (Justina) or leverage their famous spouse's success in their own careers (Jennifer). These transgressions are punishable by infidelity. Neglected men get angry, angry men issue ultimatums, angry men cheat, everyone suffers.

So, both these books have the capacity to make a reader extremely cranky, because they do such a good job

of pointing out why romance heroines are better off being housekeepers and personal assistants. Admittedly, housekeepers and personal assistants still get cheated on, but their heroes aren't going to use their jobs as justification.

Dante and Matteo start the book angry-horny. They are both 'how dare she leave me, I'm not going to be anything more than barely civil, wow she looks hot, I think she needs an orgasm.' Their post sexy-times 'we made a baby' attitude is also the same. Each accuses their heroine of using them as a stud. So these boys aren't particularly blessed with engaging qualities beyond their looks and wallets. Sure, Dante's some kind of aristocrat. But it doesn't feature beyond a single mention in the opening pages of 'A Scandal, A Secret.' And yes, Matteo is the hottest Hollywood actor ever. But celebrity romances always sell this as more problem than drawcard, with intrusive media and lying 'I bonked your man' hussies.

The heroes are the best sex their heroines have ever had, and vice versa. We'll slide right past the fact that the heroines were virgins, and focus instead on how into the sex they both are. Justina pretends she's been with heaps of men, but Jennifer doesn't bother. I'm not pointing out that you have to have a basis of comparison to really identify the best sex of your life. You don't. I am pointing out that not having sex with anyone else is used in both instances to make the heroes feel better. I guess we can only push the independent woman thing so far.

The heroes turned into really supportive partners around their pregnant and later new mother heroines, and didn't resort to threats to coerce their heroines into doing what they wanted. Matteo in particular acknowledged that Jennifer would do exactly what she wanted to anyway. I pondered for a moment as to whether or not this made him any less an alpha. Is being alpha always about being uncompromisingly furious up to that one time when the hero steps off his pedestal for five minutes of grovel at the heroine's feet? Since I don't know, I'm going to call them both alpha-lite.

Justina and Jennifer are more distinctly different personalities ... although sometimes the margin of differentiation is small. Neither have particularly good relationships with their mothers, but Justina's mum edges out Jennifer's as the worst. Justina's mum was a professional mistress, and Justina learned to be fiercely independent. I liked Justina a little more, perhaps because I understood and was more interested in her defensiveness, and how she poured all her emotion and creativity into her song writing, and how she was scared about having a baby, and whether she could do it properly.

Jennifer was a lot more in touch with her emotions. She at least informed her baby daddy as soon as she knew she was pregnant. She lost me a little because she was more ready to retire from her career, but I think this is only a noticeable distinction when it's set against Justina, who wasn't.

If I was going to pick the more enjoyable outing in this plot, I'd go for 'A Scandal, A Secret.' In addition to liking Justina a little more, I really appreciated that Dante's emotional journey included him recognising that his cheating was wrong, and that music was a part of what he loved about Justina. I didn't get quite the same sense that Matteo was transformed into an awesome person, because Jennifer pre-empted him by compromising her career first.

However, I could also make a case for 'Marriage Scandal' as the better book, because it had fewer digressions that didn't make any sense. 'A Scandal, A Secret' opens oddly. Justina is at her ex bandmate's wedding to a Duke. Have these two had a book? Why was this bandmate so close to Dante that she'd invite him to the wedding because he was so important to her, but not care enough to let Justina, who she had a close professional relationship with, know? And there were these hints that it hadn't been a great split or something, and the other bandmate had gone off to America and got married to some rich guy and no one

ever saw her again. Did she also have a book?

And why was Justina in Singapore? And even more relevantly: dammit, you can't tell me that the heroine is writing a musical and then not refer to this ever again. It's just mean. I want to know more about that musical. I want there to be a book about that musical that is like the TV series 'Smash.'

Since 'Smash' was a musical about putting on a musical about Marilyn Monroe, I want this book to be a musical about putting on a musical about an iconic British woman. I want it to be about JK Rowling. I want that because musicals that are about musicals can be about people who were in musicals, but musicals as books should be about people who have something to do with books.

I want the opening song to be JK Rowling coming up with Harry Potter on the train, and I want that song to be a bit like Journey's 'Don't Stop Believing' because it is impossible for that song to ever be overplayed and over referenced.

I want the book romance to be between the director of the musical, and the heroine to be the young ingénue he chooses for the role of JK. I want that to play out like the start of 'Smash,' where you have an established blonde actress ready for her big break, and then suddenly there's this mysterious newcomer. And because (although I really tried to like her) the Katherine McPhee character was so awful, I want the heroine to be the disgraced former member of a K-Pop band. I think disgraced former members of K-Pop bands have huge untapped potential in the romance genre.

I want there to be numbers about JK Rowling pitching Harry Potter and getting told that no one reads boarding school books, and that she'll have to add a scene where one of the characters ODs from sniffing solvents in a tenement stairwell. I want a song about when JK Rowling took that guy to court for copyright breach, and cried, and another about getting exposed as Robert Galbraith. And dance numbers! A dance number about being richer than the queen! But no weird stuff where she talks to the Potter characters, or blends real and fantasy worlds or some Harry Potter stuff happened to her when she was young, because I'm sick of that crap.

Siany says

Not a great read.

I am sooo over big strong, viral italian men...i really hate male characters who cant seem to hack the women having a career rather than being dedicated to them.

Things start off well until the pregnancy and these women suddenly lose their independence...and i cant help but think if they were willing to lose it in the first place, they should have just done in the beginning and save themselves the heartache...but then again there wouldn't be a book.

If you like this formula in books then no doubt you will enjoy but for me was just predictable and not overall enjoyable BUT made for a relaxing read on a Sunday afternoon.

Read and reviewed courtesy of Netgalley

