



## The Marriage Bargain

*Jennifer Probst*

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# **The Marriage Bargain**

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A marriage in name only...

To save her family home, impulsive bookstore owner, Alexa Maria McKenzie, casts a love spell. But she never planned on conjuring up her best friend's older brother—the powerful man who once shattered her heart.

Billionaire Nicholas Ryan doesn't believe in marriage, but in order to inherit his father's corporation, he needs a wife and needs one fast. When he discovers his sister's childhood friend is in dire financial straits, he offers Alexa a bold proposition.

A marriage in name only with certain rules: avoid entanglement. Keep things all business. Do not fall in love. The arrangement is only for a year so the rules shouldn't be that hard to follow, right?

Except fate has a way of upsetting the best-laid plans...

## **The Marriage Bargain Details**

Date : Published August 17th 2010 by Gallery Books

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Author : Jennifer Probst

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Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary, Adult, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

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## From Reader Review The Marriage Bargain for online ebook

### Dija says

Terrific beginning.

Heartwarming ending.

Exciting romance.

Mesmerizing cover.

Amusing cast.

Realistic relationship.

Refreshing humor.

Irresistible hero.

Adorable but forgettable.

Gutsy heroine.

Entertaining dialogue.

Beautiful story.

Alexa = AMAZING.

Rather predictable, overall.

Grinned like an idiot throughout.

Absorbing writing style.

Immensely fun read.

Nice and short.

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### Jae says

I have to admit, the hot cover was the first thing that drew me to the book. And was I glad that the content justified it. In spades.

It all started with her and his list of Mr/Ms Right.

**Hers :**

- 1) A Mets fan,
- 2) loves books, art and poetry,
- 3) believes in monogamy,
- 4) wants children,
- 5) knows how to communicate with a woman,
- 6) loves animals,
- 7) has a morale code of ethics and believes in honesty,
- 8) a good lover
- 9) has a strong sense of family,
- 10) has \$150,000 cash available.

### **His :**

- 1) a woman who does not love me
- 2) a woman I do not desire to sleep with
- 3) a woman who does not have a big family
- 4) a woman who does not have any animals
- 5) a woman who does not want any children
- 6) a woman who has an independent career
- 7) a woman who will view the relationship as a business venture
- 8) a woman who is not overly emotional or impulsive
- 9) a woman I can trust

Alexa and Nicholas were both in deep trouble and the only solution was to get married. To. Each. Other. The thing was these two were old acquaintances and they had always rubbed each other wrong. Their constant head-on collisions were hilarious as well as sexual at times.

I loved their banters too,

*She narrowed her eyes. "I see you're the same overbearing bully who teased me about my chest size. Some things don't change."*

*"I guess you're right. Some things remain the same. Others keep expanding."*

*She smiled, "and other things remain small."*

The story was like any other typical marriage-in-name-only, but JP delivered it with her own writing style which combines hot-and-heavy with witty as well as sweet. A fun and enjoyable read. Can't wait for the next book about Alexa's BFF.

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### **Floripiquita says**

2,5-3. Tras leer los dos primeros libros de la serie Searching for de la misma autora, decidí leer el primero de esta serie, cuya temática fuera de la romántica histórica me chirría un montón en los tiempos que corren. A pesar de estar lleno de clichés y lugares comunes, así como de una sonrojante declaración de amor y un epílogo de lo más tonto; la química entre los dos protagonistas es muy buena, Alexa es un gran personaje femenino, la narración es fluida y se lee en un pispas. Es como una peli de amor tontorrona: bonita de ver en el momento, pero que se te olvida al minuto dos.

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### **Alexis \*Reality Bites\* says**

Spoiler Free Review -**Quick Review**

4 STARS out of 5

Genre: Contemporary romance

*Alexa squirmed in her seat as the silence in the BMW stretched between them. Her husband-to-be seemed just as uncomfortable, he chose to focus his energy into his MP3 player. She tried not to wince when he settled on Mozart. He actually enjoyed music without words. She almost shuddered again when she thought of sharing a residence with him. For. An. Entire. Year.*

**"Do you have any Black Eye Peas?"**

*He looked puzzled by the question. "To eat?"*

*She held back a groan. "I'll even settle for some of the old classics Sinatra, Bennett, Martin."*

*He remained silent.*

**"Eagles? Beatles? Just yell if any of these names sound familiar."**

*His shoulder stiffen. "I know who they are. Would you prefer Beethoven?"*

~Alexa and Nick

Hahahahahaha! This guy?! These two had me bent over laughing at their banter and their antics.

Nicholas Ryan is a billionaire looking for a wife so that he can fulfill a requirement made in his uncle's will. By doing so he can have complete control of the family business. The will states he must be married for at least a year. No problem right? Thing is he does not want to marry his supermodel girlfriend Gabriela, he senses that she is falling in love with him. And he does not do long term. So, she is off the list without even knowing why. And she is none to happy about it either.

Alexa McKenzie needs one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars cash in order to save her parents home. And she needs the money *NOW*. Nick may not be at the top of her list when it comes to what she is looking for in a man. But his bank account is.

These two come together making a deal that should settle both of their problems. And it does. They just never expected to fall in love in the process.

### Thoughts

This was a fun quick read filled with plenty of witty banter as well as some steamy love sessions. I totally recommend this book to romance lovers who enjoy a nice balance of steam and laughter. The hero has some mommy and daddy issues but the author chose not to delve in too deep. Making this a light fun read.

### **Check it out!!**

#### **My Ratings**

Characters- Lovable and Witty

Writing Style- Good

Plot/Storyline- Good

Steam Factor- Medium/Moderately Steamy

Overall- I liked it! Check it out!!

### **Now go forth and read, Then come tell us about it on Goodreads!**

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### **Elena says**

LOOOL

She gave an unladylike snort. "You want a Stepford wife without the sex. Haven't you learned anything about women since you were fourteen?"

"I learned plenty. That's why Uncle Earl had to force me into an institution that favors women in the first place." She gasped. "Men get plenty out of marriage!"

“Like what?”

“Steady sex and companionship.”

“After six months the headaches start and you bore each other to tears.”

“Someone to grow old with.”

“Men never want to grow old. That’s why they keep seeking out younger women.”

Her mouth dropped open. She closed it with one quick snap. “Children...a family...someone who will love you in sickness and health.”

“Someone who spends all your money and nags you every night and bitches about cleaning up your mess.”

“You’re sick.”

“You’re deluded.”

She narrowed her eyes. “I see you’re the same overbearing bully who teased me about my chest size. Some things don’t change.”

He focused his attention on the dip of her dress. “I guess you’re right. Some things remain the same. Others keep expanding.”

Her breath caught at the jab, but she surprised him when she smiled. “And other things remain small.” Her pointed stare settled directly on the bulge in the center of his pants.

I like this book, quite a lot, I love Alexa and Nick, their clash of will, their humor (“Do you have any Black Eyed Peas?” He looked puzzled by the question. “To eat?” She held back a groan). It was a sweet romance, although too short for me.

I would love to read Maggie's story.

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## **MBR says**

All romance lovers out there, make way for the superbly talented Jennifer Probst who has succeeded in earning herself an auto-buy spot on my already long list of authors whose books I wouldn’t hesitate to purchase. Not only do I immediately purchase Jennifer Probst’s books, but I stop everything I am reading at the moment and plunge into her books with an enthusiasm that tells a story of its own.

27 year old Alexandria Maria McKenzie (Alexa) is in a bit of a dilemma. She needs a husband, preferably with \$150,000 to spare and she needs it fast. Brushing aside her ideals and her image of the perfect husband to share her life with isn’t easy for Alexa. But she will do it because she is willing to do everything in her power to rescue her family home. And so Alexa casts a little love spell, all the while feeling a bit silly but nevertheless hopeful that Mother Earth would send her way, a man who would meet all those qualities that she wants in a man together with that wad of cold hard cash to give as well.

30 year old Nicholas Ryan (Nick) is in a bit of a fix as well. Nick has a fortune at his fingertips, but his Uncle Earl had changed all the rules of the game at the last minute and left him hanging. His dream of owning Dreamscape, the architectural firm that brings out all his emotions and creativity in one stride would belong to him, only if gets married before the stated time is up. Nick is a man who doesn’t believe in happily ever afters, large families and the strength of a love between two people that defies all odds and logic. And he is certainly the direct opposite of what Alexa envisions as a husband for herself and nor is he too thrilled to know that his only viable option of a wife for a year is none other than his childhood tormentor Alexa

herself.

14 year since that humiliating experience that had broken Alexa's heart, she meets an altogether more controlled and formidable Nick, whose cold and hard way of looking at a marriage leaves a lot to be desired. But Alexa is desperate enough and thus she enters into a bargain which would give them both a marriage in name only, merely a business transaction on both sides, cold and aloof right from the onset until the 1 year period is up and both parties go their separate ways. But neither Alexa nor Nick thinks of those messier emotions that could botch things up, or those tendrils of desire that slowly erupts, leaving them both wanting more and brings in the possibility of that elusive thing called love that could last a lifetime.

Jennifer Probst surprised me with The Marriage Bargain. I was already in high anticipatory mode when I started on the book, knowing that Jennifer would not disappoint me. What surprised me, and all in a good way I must add, was the thread of humor that was introduced into the book right from the very beginning. Humor and red hot passion is an unbeatable combination in any romance novel and I was a goner from the first chapter itself.

Alexa was a character I loved right from the very beginning. Her sense of humor, her loyalty and kindness, the way that she gives everything she has got with no expectations of gaining anything back in return were some of those traits that drew me towards her in the same way that Nick continued to be as the story progressed. Alexa is a woman who is comfortable with who she is, a woman who is helplessly drawn towards her husband as she had been when she was much younger and more naive, already in love with a man who had no illusions about love and happily ever afters. And Alexa's well rounded family certainly makes for a heartwarming addition to an already character driven story that proved to be of the unputdownable kind.

Nick \*sigh\*, Nick is a character I am going to be remembering for a long, long time. He is a man torn between the desire he feels for his altogether too alluring for her own good wife, a woman who confuses and befuddles him as no other woman ever has and his need for control that remains to be a thing of the past when Alexa steps into his life. He has no intention of staying around after the one year period is up to see where their relationship could go, already convinced that he would never make a good husband, a conviction born out of a childhood that had seen the endless battles of war waged between his parents.

The sexual tension that Jennifer so cleverly weaves into the story is of the scorching variety, the tingles and jolts that the reader experiences right along with Nick and Alexa one of the best parts of the story. Jennifer has a talent for building up the tension until it is an either do or die impasse that the characters reach, and the reader cannot help but be drawn towards the magic that unfolds that just left my throat parched, in dire need of a cool, tall glass of iced water to smooth things over. Without gushing further on this aspect, I will just let my quotes section do it for you.

And don't let me forget the verbal warfare between Nick and Alexa, Nick finally meeting his match in every way. A woman who doesn't back down, a woman who brings those little bits of color to his otherwise stark and empty life, showing Nick that life as he had known it is no longer an option for him. It is Alexa's patience when it comes to Nick, the way she draws the inner soul inside of him that years to embrace those emotions which Nick is afraid to name that just makes this one of the best romances I have read in a long while.

A passion that is explosive as the love that unfolds is tender, a beautiful happily ever after that encompasses everything; Jennifer Probst delivers a fiery and wild romance that goes straight to your heart.

Highly recommended!

**Rating=5/5**

An outstanding 5-Star Read! Loved this.

Quotes included below!

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**Mags~CVAddikt~ says**

This book unravels the mystery of every girl's fantasy!!!!!!!

What every girl wants:

1) To look hot (skin and clothes)!!

2) Marriage!!!!

Wait!!! No!!! My mistake!!! A great wedding with a hot groom!!!!

3) Marriage + Hot Husband + Money!!

4) Ohhh but the marriage will last forever and the hot millionaire guy has to really really love you ...and you know ... **babies!!**

5) Of course there is the supermodel ex-girlfriend

But ... she doesn't have the spark and the husband prefers the girl with boobs!!

And then **HEA**

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## **Kainat ?HUFFLEPUFF & PROUD? says**

0 stars!

DNF 38%

This book was so stupid!! Who says shit like this?! Can I have my 5 dollars back? Ugh, if not, could I somehow give this negative rating? This is me on my contemporary horse. A few more to come.

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## **Nissa | Of Pens and Pages Book Blog says**

I liked it, but I'm not sure if I loved it. Will sleep on it first. 3.5/4 stars so far.

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## **Lisa says**

### **4 Stars**

This was most definitely an enjoyable and fun read. I found myself laughing out loud quite a few times at the banter between Alexa and Nick, the two main characters.

*She narrowed her eyes. “I see you’re the same overbearing bully who teased me about my chest size. Some things don’t change.”*

*He focused his attention on the dip of her dress. “I guess you’re right. Some things remain the same. Others keep expanding.”*

*Her breath caught at the jab, but she surprised him when she smiled. “And other things remain small.” Her pointed stare settled directly on the bulge in the center of his pants.*

*“Maggie says you have a fish.”*

*That remark rewarded her with a chilling look. “Yes.”*

*“What’s his name?”*

*“Fish.”*

*“Do you have any Black Eyed Peas?”*

*He looked puzzled by the question. “To eat?”*

*She held back a groan.*

## **LOL**

This book is extremely well written and is poignant, charming, and simply an easy and smooth read. It is the type of book where you grab a blanket, sit in your most comfortable chair (or where you love to read), perhaps have a glass of wine and just sit back and enjoy.

*The Marriage Bargain* was not an overtly long read and I did find myself wishing for a bit more at the end – despite the heartwarming ending. I will be continuing with this series and will pick up book 2 once it comes out.

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### **Maida»-(`v`)-» says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK!!! It was sweet, funny, fresh, fun and very engaging. A truly sweet romance. I loved everything about it except for the fact....IT WAS TOO SHORT!!! :( I really hate it when that happens...the best stories are always the short ones..WHY OH WHY!!?? I could have easily read about Nick and Alexa for a long time.....like oh I don't know 500 or 600 pages more!! I loved the story and the romance. This book totally brought on my girly-girl....and I couldn't help but swoon and drool...yes drool over Nick! What a hottie!

The most hilarious part I can't help but laugh every time I read it:

She narrowed her eyes. "I see you're the same overbearing bully who teased me about my chest size. Some things don't change."

He focused his attention on the dip of her dress. "I guess you're right. Some things remain the same. Others keep expanding."

Her breath caught at the jab, but she surprised him when she smiled. "And other things remain small." Her pointed stare settled directly on the bulge in the center of his pants.

LMFAO.....that had me laughing for a good 15 minutes!!! In fact Alexa and Nick's relationship is full of laughter, sweet moments, hot sexy moments (of course.. ;p), love, and one hell of an emotional roller coaster ride! It was fantastic! I loved how their relationship grows over the course of the story and eventually helps both the main characters overcome their life obstacles. They both found comfort in each other....and they truly were meant to be together!! I AM COMPLETELY IN LOVE!!! Their romance is hot, it's steamy and yeah it gets you hot and bothered....but that was the best part...waiting to see who gave up first! There is plenty of heat and attraction...to keep you right at the edge of your seat! YUM YUM YUMMY!!! =)

Alexa was hilarious, beautiful, witty, sassy, and a strong female character. I loved her easy going personality and her knack to annoy the hell out of Nick when she felt like it! LOL ;p The most amazing thing I admired about Alexa was that she never goes back on her word....and always keeps her promises and never gives up. It was admirable and it was one of her best qualities!

Nick....well first things first....THIS GUY IS HOT...AS IN HOT AS HELL HOT!!! YEAH THAT'S RIGHT.....just let your imaginations run wild ladies!!! I also loved Nick. Although, he was insecure about many things especially when it came to claiming a wife or having children, he was still a very determined person to make everything work out between him and Alexa....and really that's all someone can ask for! Right from the beginning you see that he is attracted to Alexa but his feelings don't have any depth....however through the course of the story...you get to not only see Nick's feelings evolve but you also get to see him grow as a person! It was simply....PERFECT!!

Overall, this was a fantastic book and I really can't find any flaws...and even if there were any...I wouldn't have noticed cause I was so hooked to the story....I read this all in one freakin day!!!! That's how much I loved it and couldn't put it down! I was very glad to see Nick and Alexa work out their kinks in their

relationship and finally end up together! And the way Nick won Alexa's heart...\*swoon\* I nearly cried at all the wonderful, and heart felt comments he said wearing a METTS JERSEY [he's a Yankees fan...and to win Alexa heart he wore her fav teams outfit]!!!! What a charmer and heart steeler!! I wouldn't mind a man like Nick! LOL ;p I can't wait to read the next installment, The Marriage Trap. This will be Maggie and the Count's story and I CANNOT wait to read this one! Maggie was such a sassy character....and the Count was just PURE HOT ITALIAN MAN...YUMMY!! This will be something to read about..hopefully its funny as hell! ;p

Ms. Probst you did a fantastic job...and completely have me hooked with your work...just hurry up with the next book.....please \*smiles sweetly\*! =)

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### **Leslie says**

An incredibly fun, light, humorous and sexy read!

Nick needs a wife. His late uncle makes sure of that, too as details are revealed in his will. There is a set timeline for Nick to marry, which will grant him his uncle's wealth, and we're talking millions, upon his death. Trouble is, Nick comes from a broken family with enormous dysfunctional luggage, and even though he's capable of loving women, he doesn't ever see himself falling "in love" with any woman, much less having a family.

Alexa is Nick's sister's best friend. She grew up with Maggie and Nick and knows a thing or two about his family and Nick, personally. Alexa also had a major crush on him all those years ago when they dated for a short time in their teens. When Alexa's parents begin showing signs of serious money problems, she is determined to help them save their beloved home any way she can. It wasn't hard for Maggie to devise a plan to help out her brother and Alexa's desperate family; all in one easy transaction: *Alexa will marry Nick...immediately.* Seems simple enough, right? Yep, you would be mistaken.

Even though this story was predictable, the author's storytelling kept me thoroughly interested and made me excited to get back to Nick and Alexa every chance I got! That says a lot about how this book was written. The reader is never in doubt as to what's going on in his or her head, (that's the beauty of 3rd person, if executed correctly), and I understood their fears, doubts and surging passion even more as the story continued. Oh, and the passion is **REALLY GREAT** and well timed. I was, however, slightly disappointed by the ending since it felt rushed and a tad unrealistic; although, didn't sway how much I still enjoyed the book as a whole. This is another great example of a book to grab if you're about to hop a plane or in need of a little rainy-day escape!

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### **Arlene says**

I really enjoyed this one! So much so that I have a ton of funny quips and scenes highlighted on my eReader.

In **The Marriage Bargain** two childhood “friends” (and I use that term loosely), agree to enter into a marriage of convenience. Nick needs a wife as a condition to inherit some cash, and Alexa is willing to accept the terms of the bargain for a small payout of her own to help save her family’s home. When their contract requirements begin to collide, sparks start to fly and Nick and Alexa find that this marriage bargain is turning into something they didn’t expect.

Okay, let me just say... yes there's an element of predictability to this story. I knew how it was going to end, but in all fairness when you go into a story expecting something light, romantic, funny and fulfilling that's the perfect type of predictability an author can deliver. Jennifer Probst did a great job of blending her protags to create a perfect pair that were funny and quite entertaining.

So, if you're looking for a moment of reality suspension with an ending that leaves you smiling **The Marriage Bargain** is the perfect choice

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### **?Karlyn P? says**

Almost a DNF. I came soooooo close to chucking this one, but I skimmed the last third of the book as I did want to finish. Overall this was a very underwhelming read. I love a great contemporary romance with steam, but this was too formulaic and lacked a decent story to keep me interested. The plot was just downright boring. I do like a marriage of convenience plot, but this was just too hokey as they keep going back and forth on their desires for sex. The heroine's need to lie was baffling, and the heroes sudden change of heart is a plot device so often found in bad fiction. While it had the occasional cute moments, I can't recommend this one, sorry.

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### **Katrina Passick Lumsden says**

\*spoilers ahoy! Check yourself before you wreck yourself!\*

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Right?

.....I read that.

Yeah. Yeah, I did. I remember the story. What little there was, anyway. This book wasn't even a whole book, I don't think. It was somewhere between novel length and short story. Went by like *that*. It went by so quickly that I actually *forgot* I'd read a book. The next day, I was like, *Wait....didn't I read an entire book last*

*night?* But you know, short as it was, it wasn't too terrible. It was tolerably written and had some genuinely funny bits. The female protagonist, Alexa, wasn't so bad. Sort of the antithesis of Ana Steele. Alexa was more like

I could get behind her no nonsense 'tude. I could. She was pretty cool. Then there was Nick. Here I have to shamefully admit that I've always had a soft spot for characters named Nick because it's my husband's name. Am I a silly quim? Hell yeah, but it's all good, I ain't hurtin' nobody.

Anyway, where the fuck was I? Oh, right, Nick. Well, on the outside, Nick is this cool, collected, cold hearted bastard who doesn't want love 'cause it's a myth and all that jazz, but underneath he's just all sad and lumpy. Like yogurt that's been left on the counter way too long. Only probably better looking. I *hope* better looking...

So, we already know the premise of the story; Alexa needs to marry for money, Nick needs to marry for money, so they decide to marry each other. For money. And then the inevitable happens. They fall in lust with each other

then they fall in *lurve* with each other, then all hell breaks loose when Alexa gets knocked up with Nick's baby and he freaks out, insisting Alexa only got pregnant to "trap him". Yes, Nick is a bit full of himself. Anyway, the whole thing is so predictable, you know where it goes from there. Yes, there's a HEA ending, and yes, Nick comes to his senses, and yes, there's a sad adopted dog involved.

Psst! The dog is a metaphor for Nick. If I were Nick, I'd be highly insulted. But then, I'd be a rich architect, so I probably wouldn't really care.

The ending is so romance fiction typical. He shows up at a poetry reading and does the whole eating-of-his-pride thing, and is all like

and Alexa, all pregnant and mopey, is just all tears and love and gag-me-with-sugar sentimental. There's a group hug. The end.

It was hokey and predictable and cheesy and character development be damned, but you know what?

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