



The Wedding Gamble

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Sarah Wellingford would Do Her Duty -- even if that meant putting herself on the Marriage Mart during a London season she could ill afford.

Now ironic circumstance had wed her to the compelling Marquess of Englemere, a fabled gamester, who had awakened passions she was honor-bound not to express.

A marriage of convenience could be deucedly inconvenient -- even for a marquess -- when one was perilously close to loving his own wife! But that was impossible, Nicholas Stanhope knew, for hadn't his tragic past proven that women -- especially wives -- were not to be trusted?

The Wedding Gamble Details

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From Reader Review The Wedding Gamble for online ebook

Mary Craven says

What can I say, it just was a perfect Regency read. Issues with the need to marry and save a family from ruin. I handsome hero. A kind and loving heroine. Intrigue, questions of trust and best of all, love. Oh and I stumbled upon this series by reading book 2 first, made reading book one a bit more fun, knowing their future.

Michaela's Journey into Books says

Another fun quick read.

hannah says

this started off as a 4, or at least a very strong 3.5, for me purely for sarah and nicholas' interactions. i really liked how we see them actually forge a friendship before the idea of marrying each other for convenience is even brought up! where it lost is me that it dragged on far too long for my liking and the misunderstandings that were dragged out could have been easily fixed if they would have just TALKED TO EACH OTHER LIKE ADULTS.

Sarah says

A wonderful story about a marriage of convenience. Sarah and Nick (leading characters) are forced to marry, Sarah because of her fathers Gambling Debt's are about to be called in and leave her and her siblings homeless; and Nick who has promised to marry by the end of the season sweeps in and saves the day and Sarah from an abusive would be suitor/husband after his own engagement is called off with Sarah's friend. While there are no grand adventures or a grand mystery that must be solved, the author keeps you hooked with her style of writing and the tale of how two strangers fall in love despite their past experiences and much incomplete communication with each other.

I would highly recommend this book, though as stated above this is not one of mystery or murder. Simply one of love and how two people find it.

SidneyKay says

To Glom or not to Glom, that is the Question.

So, after reading Julia Justiss' wonderful book *A Most Unconventional Match* I thought it would be a great idea to read the rest of the books in Wellingford family series. Well, at the time it seemed like a good idea.

The first one in the series is *The Wedding Gamble*, written in 1999. *The Wedding Gamble* happens to be a marriage of convenience story and generally I like those. But this one also has a theme I'm not too fond of: the *I-can't-get-over-my-first-luv* theme. Ever since I was traumatized when I read *Velvet Promise* by Jude Devereux, first book in the Montgomery brother series, I have tried to stay away from this plot. Who can forget one of the biggest bone-head, jerk-face heroes of *alllll* time, Gavin Montgomery. He could just not get over his first luv. I've never really been fond of the constant moaning, groaning, and comparing which is done by either the male or female lead in books with this plot device thrown in. In this instance, it is the female lead Sarah Wellingford who cannot get over her true luv; the one who abandoned her to go off to India to find his fortune.

Poor Sarah is in desperate straits. She has no money, and she's sort of a companion to a tempest by the name of Clarissa. Clarissa, by the way is a future heroine, but in this book, she is engaged to a gentle man by the name of Nicholas Englemere. Englemere is our hero. Of course he will not remain engaged to Clarissa, especially after his eyes alight on Sarah. Both Nicholas and Sarah come with a whole bunch of baggage and some old school Romanceland themes. There's the old fiancé/true luv of Sarah's - Sinjin; there's a slimy villain, an evil mistress, a temperamental fiancée/future heroine, and just for laughs, an oblivious parent. Anyway, Nicholas wants a gentle wife but for some reason he has chosen to marry a spoiled, temperamental, shrew by the name of Clarissa. Once he realizes his mistake he does some maneuvering to break that engagement or better yet, trick Clarissa into breaking it. He then proposes a marriage of convenience to Sarah and she accepts. The story had a great beginning and the author really tried to fully develop her main characters. She moved the story along at a pretty slow pace and we were allowed to watch the couple as they develop a friendship. But I had some issues with this story which prevented me from liking it as much as I wanted to.

First of all, Sarah and Nicholas didn't communicate with each other. I know, I know, there should be mystery. Don't you know if they talk to each other, it gives everything away? To which I say, poppy-cock! Sometimes, leaving communication out doesn't build tension, it's just plain annoying. Especially, when that non-communication doesn't make sense. For instance, the evil mistress shows up at the wedding party. Why? Well, we know that the slimy villain invited her, but Sarah doesn't know that. She thinks Nicholas invited her. Does Nicholas explain? No. Nicholas is represented as being intelligent, so shouldn't he know that his mistress showing up, uninvited, might cause some doubt in his new wife's brain cells. Why didn't he just walk over and say – hey, I didn't invite her, I haven't had anything to do with her for a long time. Just that little bit of talk would have opened all kinds of plots/themes/paths to go down. But, it didn't happen. Sarah was left in the dark and because of that, her self-doubts grew. The story was littered with all kinds of non-communication which weakened the story. But the biggest problem I had was with Sarah's not being able to get over Sinjin.

Sinjin. Sinjin, as you can tell by the name is a future hero. He and Sarah grew up together; they fell in love and sort of promised themselves to each other. But because he couldn't stand up to his mother, he turned from Sarah and went off to India to make his fortune. By the time Sarah is married to Nicholas, Sinjin has raced back to England in the hopes of winning her from Nicholas. Even after she is married. Supposedly, he loves Sarah, but he makes a very dishonorable proposition to Nicholas along the lines of – “hey, after you have had your first child why don't we share Sarah.” Now, that is true luv. What a guy. Anyway, Sarah eventually realizes she loves her husband, but she cannot communicate that to anyone. She cannot tell Sinjin that she doesn't love him anymore and she cannot tell Nicholas that she's fallen in love with him. The book would have been so much better if only she would have said something. If only she would have told Nicholas she loved him or told Sinjin to take a flying leap. She continued her Sinjin-moaning far longer than she should have.

Pattern. Sometimes when you glom an author you notice a pattern. And, I did with Ms. Justiss. She is mostly a gentle writer, in the manner of Mary Balogh – just not as fully developed. Because of the gentleness of the writing, and the slow build of romance; when sex was introduced it was jarring. The whankey-woo-hoo moments didn't blend with the rest of the story. I'm not saying there shouldn't have been any, it can be done and once again I point to Mary Balogh as an example. She writes tons of sensual scenes which blend with the rest of the tale. The sex scenes in this book just didn't fit the rest of the narrative.

Overall, I liked the beginning of this story. The plot of a marriage of convenience may be one which has been around forever, and can often show just what an author is capable of doing. I thought the story had possibilities, but I was disappointed that it took so long for Sarah to make up her mind. For me it also took too long for Nicholas and Sarah to communicate with each other. This was a pleasant read, but not what I was expecting and not of the same caliber as *A Most Unconventional Match*.

willaful says

This convenient marriage romance had many good qualities. Both parties did their best to avoid being unreasonable or cause misunderstandings. The conflicts between them were mostly real -- she had a former lover she still loved, he had a mistress he hadn't yet broken with. (Though he stopped sleeping with her, so there's no actual cheating.) It was just too episodic a story for my tastes. Be warned that it gets very heavy in places.

Lady Wesley says

I've never read Julia Justiss before, but I quite enjoyed this clever marriage of convenience story. In addition to the usual, it's got a bit of a love triangle and an odious villain. Quite entertaining.

Linda says

Regency romance, a bit too much heart break for me, two people who just won't communicate and therefore suffer a lot, until the last two pages. Didn't really connect with me, i prefer a little more fluff. Or maybe i'm just having an off day =). Slow middle in the book, didn't pick up until the end and i nearly didn't finish it. Sorry to say.

Toula says

Historical Romance. Have it in paperback

Lyuda says

Julia Justiss is a new author for me and it looks like the story was her debut novel. Hopefully, she's improved

since then. I love MOC stories but I found this particular storytelling tedious, the characters had little chemistry and behaved pretty dumb for supposedly smart people. And I despise when the story is propelled either by big misunderstanding that could easily be resolved by communication or when the plot rely on odious villain. In this case we have both.

Dancer says

The one thing of which a reader must be aware when chosing a Harlequin title is the word count. Because of this factor, the ending is sometimes rushed. That is true in this novel, although I enjoyed the character development of both Nicholas Stanhope and Sarah Wallingford.

Stacy-Deanne Stacy-Deanne says

This is a book that quickly grew on me. At first it was hard for me to catch onto the writing style of Ms. Justiss but after I did I began to really enjoy the story. I liked all the characters. The author catches the historic banter and time of the story very well and I often wondered where she learned some of those classic words and made them fit in so realistically.

The plot was simple. Sarah marries Nicholas for financial reasons. Even though the marriage isn't a love match, it's easy to tell the two have feelings for each other. I loved how Julia set this up. She didn't have two characters without chemistry come together out of the blue. She set the romance up well from the time the two met. Sarah and Nicholas have amazing chemistry. They were true friends as well as lovers. I enjoyed every scene they had together and it's important for the reader to love the main characters if they are gonna fall in love.

The supporting characters (and there were many) were just as intriguing as the main ones. They all set a purpose. I liked the sadistic Findlay who brought some suspense into the story. The scenes with him and Sarah chilled me and it's not something you'd expect in a historical romance. I found it refreshing for the author to go against the norm and it works.

There were some issues. Some things ran too long and some subplots seemed to come out of nowhere. The beginning starts off with a bang but I found the middle to drag. Some of the middle scenes seemed pointless because they didn't have anything to do with the rest of the book. If I hadn't liked Sarah and Nicholas so much, I would have probably set the book down because the middle did get a bit slow. Once it picked up again, I was eager for the end just to see how Julia tied everything together.

I found the ending surprising and a bit predictable but it fit the story. This is a true, "love conquers all" story and you see the characters not only fall in love but grow together on their journey. I would definitely read more from this author and if you love historical romance with a twist, you should check it out.

Cherise says

Reread. I do adore this one, especially with such an honest and unabashed H.

Conventional marriage of convenience theme, but with both starting out with a warm friendship. Both have another lurking somewhere, but ended up together. Initially it is because the h is truly desperate and H feels protective of her, but as they spend time together, it grows into a deep abiding love that may not be violently passionate, but strong and enduring all the same.

The H started out admiring the h but ended up feeling a lot more. I love how sweet it is for him to crave the h's love, even going so far as to ask for it time and again. It is quite obvious to us readers that he has fallen hard, and it really is very cute that he tries so hard to do the proper thing, even though inside he is eaten up by and sickened with jealousy. He respects her and admires her accomplishments, even trusts her judgement and consults her, which is quite an enlightening attitude. His jealous streak may seem annoying but to one with his background and what he knows of hers, it is very understandable.

The h is really competent and calm, still water runs deep though. Initially she is grateful to the H and still hung up about her childhood sweetheart. I actually am quite happy to read of om in this and that we actually get to see how hard H works on winning her over. I was a bit annoyed with her placing herself in danger by the end but am glad all is well.

All in all, a very enjoyable read.

Dana says

I'm not a fan of marriage of convenience stories. Most of the time I completely lose interest in the romance after the couple marries and that was the case with this book. I liked the banter between the couple but I almost felt that they worked better as friends. I just wasn't feeling the romance here. Fortunately, there was enough going on with the plot and side characters that I still found this book entertaining even though I didn't like the romance.

Lisamarie says

I was quite surprised at the plot for this book. Sarah was such a good heroine. Nicholas was a little weaker. I was truly surprised with Sarah's ex - it's not usual for a woman who was self described as not pretty having three men pursue her. It was a good story and I recommend it to anyone wanting a good story. I did cry in some parts because I got involved with Sarah's feelings, but it was a very emotional time for her. It drew me in and kept me interested.
