



The Marriage Deal

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Jago was the only possible solution.

Ashley Landon was desperate. After two years of her best efforts as chairman, her family's business faced either bankruptcy or a takeover. Then Jago Marrick, her ex-fiance, turned up with a hardheaded alternative--marriage.

Ashley's first reaction was shock, but Jago seemed to be the company's only hope. As her husband and the new chairman, Jago's vast business experience could put Landons back on its feet.

Reluctantly Ashley accepted--only to find that he wanted much more from their marriage than she was prepared to give.

The Marriage Deal Details

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From Reader Review The Marriage Deal for online ebook

Aou says

There is almost everything in this book that i love in HPlania : Angst, blackmail, naive and virgin heroine, arrogant and jealous hero, forced seduction, evil OW and OM.

Leona says

This is a MOC where the heroine marries hero because her board lacks trust in her as a female CEO. It seems she needs the hero and his reputation in business to stop a takeover attempt. I can't really blame the board for not trusting her, because when it came to business she was definitely dumb as rocks. Come to think of it, she wasn't exactly a "brain surgeon" when it came to personal relationships either. She and hero had been engaged three years ago, but she broke off the engagement when she found him in the sack with another woman two weeks before the wedding. (*This was no mistake. He really took the woman back to his apartment with the intent to screw her, except the heroine interrupted him when she knocked on the door*) She throws the ring back at him and the next time she sees him is when he offers a MOC to save her company. She agrees to the MOC because he promises no bedroom action. (*Liar*)

Hero was a bit too rough for my tastes. He got his "rocks" off by repeatedly forcing himself on the heroine. As long as he got enjoyment it didn't matter that she refused to participate and laid there stiff as a board. The descriptions of him having satisfying sex with a board, were a bit much. After two or three scenes like that, I wanted to reach into the book and chop off his man parts. Of course, heroine eventually wakes up and decides to actively participate in the conjugal rites so things got slightly better. She probably thought, "*What the heck. He is going to do it anyway so I might as well enjoy it too.*" However, by that point I was so divested out of the love scenes that I just skimmed over them. Though frankly, I'm not sure this author ever really writes great love scenes.

I'm not totally trashing this book, because somehow SC made me believe early on that the Hero loved the heroine and was kicking himself for his past infidelity. I also felt that the whole MOC was just a ploy for a reconciliation. As typical for SC, the tension was way off the charts and just the way I like my HPs. So I decided to give this 3 stars. I think this could have been a 5 star read if the heroine had been smarter and the hero less rough.

Anuradha says

Except for the HEA in the last few pages, the guy and the girl are engaged in a mutual torture fest !! They are for ever sniping, yelling hurtful words.

He calls her frigid but goes on forcing his advances on her, without figuring out what's troubling her. She calls him a two timing #\$_@\$_!! but continues to accept his presence in her life and bed.

All in the name of - "I have always been madly in love with you, dint you know" !!

The story is something about the girl's daddy finding him a suitable successor to his business empire, and getting him engaged to his daughter. And the girl thinks hero is only after the business, not her.

She breaks the engagement as her worst fears come true, apparently. Cut to 3 years later.

Trouble in the business brings him back in picture. The girl is managing after daddy died. But obviously you need a strong male hand for these things !! So enter the hero, and the company is back in business. Of course a marriage of convenience being the condition.

I couldn't relate to their characters much. He was too sexually aggressive. She was supposedly a strong career woman, but in effect was just a prop and a door mat.

Jenny says

Cheaters, hateful characters.

boogenhagen says

Re The Marriage Deal - SC is back with another MOC story - this one has a 22 yr old h unexpectedly capitulated to Chairman of her father's company and a really quite desperate H named Jago, (a Cornish derivative of James, but it can also mean supplanter in Hebrew,) who will basically do anything to have the h.

The book starts with the h being unexpectedly called back from vacation, her father's company that she now controls is in danger of a hostile takeover. Her father's board members are pretty much hidebound misogynists (as they prove multiple times,) and the h hasn't been pulling off the brilliant financial deals that her father was notorious for.

Just to make things clear, the h is NOT a bad business person, she just doesn't have a lot of experience in managing a big company and her board is giving her a lot of problems. (Plus this is an SC book and in SC's vintage Hplandia, unless an h is a model or a housekeeper, she just isn't going to win in the career stakes - it isn't until many, many years later that an SC h will actually be successful in a career of her own.)

So enter the H, who was once engaged to the h, and he is ready to rescue the family firm by marrying the h and taking over as the company chairman. This normally wouldn't be a problem, but the h broke the engagement three years ago because the H appeared to be marrying her to get the company and because she found him drunk and in bed with another woman. The h had long admired and crushed on the H from afar, but when she turned 19 and was out of boarding school, the H began courting her. She fell head over heels, but the H's attempts at passion scared her to death.

The h was told by her father that men did not want passion in a wife, her school was the old fashioned kind and did not do any type of sex ed either. The h was overwhelmed by her physical response to the H's roofie kisses, but was consistently being told by the mentors in her life that response was wrong. The H wasn't very approachable either, instead of actually talking to the h about her reaction, he berates her and calls her a frigid schoolgirl. Which may have been a bit accurate, but was hardly likely to win him any type of warmer

response either.

Throw in the manipulative wife of the H's cousin, who hints rather specifically that the H and her are involved in a bit more than cordial family relations and that the H is marrying the h for her father's company but will be having plenty of cake on the side. The whole engagement is on really shaky ground to begin with - then the h finds the H in flagrante delicto and she wisely sends the engagement ring back by messenger and a note kicking the H out of her life permanently.

Three years on the h needs help and the H is willing to provide it. His cousin has died and he has the family estate, along with the cousin's wife as a permanent resident. The h will have to marry him tho, he wants her body more than anything else and he will save the family firm if that is what it takes to get it.

The h is really desperate, the family business was her father's and grandfather's legacy and she realizes that out of respect for them, she needs to hang on to it if she can. (Although if anyone other than the firm that offered for it had been the potential new owners, I am pretty sure the h would have sold it. She doesn't really like the business of property development and she really doesn't like being courted for what she has rather than who she is.)

So the H and h marry and the board members prove to be suitably disgusting once the H takes over and bans her from her own company's boardroom. (I did speculate a bit on the vagueness of the board members being able to manipulate things so easily. SC doesn't get into detail here, but I am pretty sure the h was probably the majority shareholder, the way her father was indicated that he wouldn't have anything less than a majority holding, it is part of the reason the other firm is trying to drive them into near insolvency. Anyways, that really doesn't matter for the relevance of the love story which is why we are reading this to begin with.) The h is understandably upset by the H's and board member's treatment, but she has some defiant moments of her own.

The H does attempt to lure her up on the wedding night, but the h is remarkably resistant and the cousin's wife calls and manages to interrupt the proceedings. The h and the OW are still at odds, the OW does her best to insinuate that she and the H are making up for lost time. There is also the creepy housekeeper that the h fires, but the H reverses that decision for reasons unknown. The h decides that since she is being mushroomed into darkness and bull fertilizer, she is going to do a bit of self assertion.

The H does force a seduction the next evening, after she and the H had entertained the rival firm's managing director for dinner - but the h doesn't give into the power of the lure club and the H seems to be rather chagrined that his awesome boudoir skills did not melt the h into a puddle at his feet. The h decides that she is keeping her own little flat, which the H had dictated had to be sold, and she takes it off the market.

The man she was casually dating before the return of the H shows up and while he is trying to kiss her into a fiery response, the H shows up and doesn't take the embrace very well. The h tells him what is good for the gander is also good for the goose, so he has no reason to complain. This leads to another forced seduction with the h responding this time, but while the H is gloating over his superior weaponry, the h deflates his ego by telling him she was pretending he was someone else.

So the h and H are still rather antagonistic to each other and this is compounded when the h goes to lunch the next day with the obnoxious managing director of the firm who is trying to take over her company and sees the H with the cousin's wife OW and they appear to be celebrating.

The H is furious she is out with the smarmy too charming director and the h is pretty irked he is flaunting his

affair. The h manages to get the upper hand with the rival company boy, he thinks he is wooing her into an affair and into handing over her company and she lets the man rattle on for a bit, then tells him off and dumps hollandaise sauce all over him - pretty much humiliating him and ruining his plans of afternoon h seduction.

The h and the H have a few acrimonious words and a boudoir bounce interlude before they go off to a dinner party with the h's company's chief accountant. The h is worried that the H is doing some underhanded dealings with the rival company. Earlier she found the bid tender the company was going to submit out in the open where anyone could read it and steal the figures.

Since the h has noticed some malfeasance with past bid tender figures but has no idear who is doing it, this doesn't reassure her much. The H keeps saying trust him and looking suitably soulful while saying it, but the h just isn't sure and thoughts of who is responsible for the recent company bid losses are preying on her mind. (Just to prove the h isn't totally all about the wife and domestic engineering bit, SC does give the h attempts to grow as a business person, the whole business development is a bit half-hearted, but again this a love story after all.)

During the course of the evening it comes out that the chief accountant has been selling the bid tender figures to the rival firm. The accountant's daughter had gotten into heroin and to be able to afford the treatment, the guy was selling information and being well paid by the rivals. The h and H accept his resignation and the H made sure that the company would win a the big bid tender by adjusting the figures, so it appears the company is now safe.

Now that the H has managed to save the company and gotten the h into bed, he tells her he is leaving for America and another job. The h is thinking of divorce lawyers and asks the H if he is taking the OW with him. He says he actually hates the OW and managed to buy out her interest in his family's manor house, so she is gone from their lives and the h can now fire the housekeeper and get a dog cause the estate is now all hers.

When the h saw them at lunch, it was to finalize the sale of the OW's share of the house. He also confesses that he loves the h and has always been wild about her but he knows that she doesn't love him and only tolerates him in bed.

He seems very dejected that all of his white knighting did not win him the princess and he admits he really never cared about the company. The h's father was obsessed with it and three years earlier had told the H that the h wouldn't go with him when he told her father that he and the h would be moving to America after they married. The father told the H that the h was only marrying him so that the company would have a successor to take over for her father and the H was so upset he went out and got drunk a picked up a girl and then the h found them after talking to the OW.

The H also explains that he never actually slept with the girl the h found him with, he was too drunk, but he liked the fact that she seemed to actually want him when all the h did was run off screaming after he kissed her.

The h explains that she had a very sheltered existence prior to his roofie kisses and that everyone around her told her that her feelings were wrong and he wasn't interested in listening to her. Nor had he ever told her he loved her and they did not seem to communicate very much in their 6 week relationship cause the OW had the h convinced that they were lovers and the H did not seem to be contradicting that.

That makes the H feel terrible and he then begins a huge grovel in SC terms, (it goes on for almost a whole page and pretty much makes the book - I warn those grovel addicts tho, that it isn't epic in general terms of groveling - however for an SC book, it HUGE and very apparent that the H is really, really, really sorry and takes the whole blame for messing everything up both earlier and now.)

The h confesses she loves him and doesn't want him to go and the H vows to worship at her feet for the rest of their lives and he is really sorry for not making her feel worshiped the first time they were engaged. The h is good with that and the fact that she can fire Mrs. Danvers the third and get a dog (the H did not want to irritate the OW into not selling her share of the house and that is why the housekeeper had to stay until the sale was done,) so they adjourn to the lurve clubbing for the big HEA.

I liked this one, mainly cause the grovel is pretty big for an SC book, plus the h was outmaneuvered a lot through no fault of her own, but she still did her best to make things go her way. The H had some very infatuated moments and his explanation at the end was good enough to call this one a win - if only in the peculiar exotica of HPlania.

Kaycee ❤️? says

A little too much bickering and verbal sparring for my tastes, but it was an okay read though. Perfect for a very lazy afternoon.

Julz says

4.5 stars

Wow! This one was a rush! Loved every angsty minute of it. A serious angry, cheater story where the heroine, Ashley, catches the hero, Jago, with his pants down mere days/weeks before the nuptials. Oh, but there is always more than one side to a story.

The story starts in the present with the heroine coming home early from a vacation to find out that the company she inherited was in danger of being taken over by a rival. If that wasn't bad enough, she finds out the same day that the H has just returned after a 3 year stint in the states and would be here to snicker at her predicament. If she had married the H, as her daddy had planned (H was daddy's good buddy), the company would've had a big, strong, manly man at the helm and they would never have found themselves in such a mess. But alas...

In flashbacks, we get the h's POV of how her 17 year old self was paralyzed by fear whenever the H so much as picked lint off her sweater, which led to her to freeze our studly stud out in the cold despite his trembling assurances that he would never hurt her. *Feh!* Men and their assurances. Besides, Daddy had always warned her how men wanted pure wives, willing to do their duty but with no sexual urges. She would have surely combusted and flew into a million pieces if the H had so much as sniffed her panties, so no doing buddy.

After one particular frosty episode, the H disappears from the face of the earth, so she goes on a manhunt to find out what's what. She heads over to the H's cousin's home (that the H will inherit) and talks to his evil

and malicious wife who was more than willing to tell her that good buddy, Jago, is only marrying her in order to get a stake in the company and that he's out dogging it before he gets strapped into a marriage he would as soon do without. Sounds reasonable. Of course, she sets off in a tizzy to the H's love nest and, indeed, finds him inebriated and in the company of a naked and amorous lady friend. Wow! Just...wow! Very intense scene.

Understandably, the h wants nothing more to do with him...and she doesn't. But of course, long story short, she ends up having to marry him in order to save her company. The story then delves into this back and forth between the H & h where he tries to crack her frigid shell and she works desperately to not let him in. This in turn earns her some verbal smack downs for being an ice princess to which she responds, nah, it's just him. I was quite impressed with her power to overcome the standard touch and melt syndrome. To reinforce her shield, she lets him know just how low she thinks he is and how she wouldn't allow him to touch her with someone else's ten foot pole. She's bolstered along with snide comments from the evil OW, whose husband, the cousin, has since croaked, leaving her hot on the H's trail. The H does nothing alter the conception that the H and the OW have been having a hawt and heavy affair. He almost encourages it actually.

About two-thirds of the way in, the H finally has his wicked way, but has to endure Siberia for the privilege. But once he got an in, it was all downhill for his little friend from there on out. But it's not the end of the angst or the h's determination to maintain as much emotional distance despite her realizations that, *gasp!* she was still in love with the H! Yes, I was surprised too.

Finally, Finally! At almost the end, all those loose ends that you could actually pick up on throughout the story get tied together. The threat to the company is extinguished and we get the heartfelt confession of how much in love the H had been with the h but was just *destroyed* by her indifference and icy ways. The night of the big uh oh (view spoiler) I totally got it and actually understood where the H was coming from at the get-go. So unless you're of the opinion that there's only one side, her side, then you can find yourself forgiving the H pretty easily. He was indeed nasty, but she let him have it with both barrels herself. It was great!

Definitely one of the better angry, angsty, alphahole, cheater stories with a legitimate HEA. My opinion, of course.

Roksana says

.Jesus Christ what i just read?

This book is a hell of a ride...the author's writing is unapologetic and punch you in the face! Its so direct and frank you are completely at a loss of words.....

The hero is rough and cold..but at the same time his frankness was somewhat captivating..no bullshit kind of thing..ultra alpha a 100%

I like the heroine better..she was strong and sharp and certainly i like the fact that the author make the hero very jealous of her after his cheating..YES he suffered too....

But no mistaking this book is not for everyone its angsty and full of tension that keeps you on edge at all the time!

MaryD says

I have some very mixed feelings about this. It was very emotionally intense, so much so that I needed to something else to calm down, but at the same time, it made me squirm sometimes. Ashley was a very innocent, repressed young lady who had been told by those she trusted that modern men didn't want their women to be anything but pure, so she always felt that she was abnormal when her fiance, Jago, would set her on fire. Jago had no idea what was going on and rather than talk to her or reassure her tried to force the issue.

Not much has been said about the woman Jago picked up in a bar after Ashley ran away from him. Some excuse him by saying that "nothing happened". However, the only reason why "nothing happened" was that he was so drunk he passed out. If he hadn't, he would have been- and tried to be- unfaithful to Ashley.

After they were married, Jago still didn't try to take care of her feelings, making it seem as if the marriage was all about 1) the business and 2) getting physical with his wife- no emotions involved. That is *not* the way to reassure your wife that she is important to you.

The "grovel" was good and I'm glad he said "ILY" first, but I never would have known it through his actions, especially when he was making her feel inferior as a woman, wife and business person.

The writing *was* good and it kept me involved all the way through, but I wish there had been some sign earlier that Jago had cared for Ashley.

KatieV says

[H/h meet in some way (usually around 3 years before the book starts). Wh

Julz says

My review is here: The Marriage Deal

Nerissa says

predictable

Romance_reader says

2 and a 1/2 stars rounded to 3. This book featured an ice princess h and a (supposedly) cold hearted and ambitious H trying to get together against the backdrop of some very dirty office politics. The angst was there, but their chemistry wasn't all I hoped it would be and their HEA wasn't very believable either. However, SC's writing style always wins me over, so I managed to overlook most of the flaws in the story. But would I recommend it? probably not.

Kiki says

I don't particularly care if he ACTUALLY went through with the act of cheating or not, but he picked up a random woman to have sex because he wasn't getting any from his fiancée. He didn't go through with it NOT because of morals but because he was TOO DRUNK to do anything meaning if he was sober he would have completed the job and this is while engaged to the h.
This is black and white cheating to me.

StMargarets says

Sara Craven keeps up the intensity in this second chance novel. There are a lot of great reviews, so I won't go into the plot.

Warning: the heroine broke it off the first time when she shows up at the hero's flat to find him drunk in his bathrobe with a blonde cupcake coming out of the bedroom. We later find out he didn't go through with anything - he was feeling down about the heroine continually rejecting his touch during their engagement. He takes full blame for his misjudgment. From what I can tell, he didn't have anyone in the three years they were apart.

So what I liked:

1. The injustice shown toward the heroine by the board members, the hero, the wanna be OW, the housekeeper, her own father. It was all very intense. I don't mean to say I like injustice, but this heroine suffered at the hands of a lot of people and the hero acknowledges this at the end.
2. The heroine really didn't care how she looked most of the time. She cleans up nice, but her focus was always on work. She really doesn't seem to understand her own attractiveness.
3. The hero said I love you first.
4. The heroine wasn't the least bit interested in the "Robert Redford" look alike and could see through his act easily. She had some good comebacks to him.
