



The Secret Wish List

Preeti Shenoy

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Does true love really exist or is it just a cliché? Can a single kiss really change your life?

At sixteen, Diksha like any girl her age, finds her life revolving around school, boys and endless hours of fun with her best friend. But one day, all that changes.

What starts as an innocent crush explodes into something far beyond her control. Eighteen years later, she finds herself at the crossroads of life. Urged by a twist of events, a wish list is born. But can a wish list help her piece back her life together? Will she succumb to the tangled mess of an extramarital relationship? Once again, Preeti Shenoy brings an extraordinary story that tugs at the heartstrings, with insight and wisdom, as she explores the delicate matters of the heart.

The Secret Wish List Details

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Author : Preeti Shenoy

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From Reader Review The Secret Wish List for online ebook

Soumyabrata Gupta says

Telling the tale of a woman

Soumyabrata Gupta

Preeti Shenoy's new novel *The Secret Wishlist* once again looks within the confines of the bedroom doors and finds out the intricacies of a relationship shared between a wife and her husband beneath the covers of the bed sheet and over a cup of tea. Stressing upon the importance of communication, Shenoy shifts the story of her new novel between two time frames as Diksha, the sixteen-year-old and Diksha, the 35-year-old married woman grapple to find meanings in their existence when they set sail against the 'norms' of society.

Coming from a traditional middle-class family, Diksha finds her life taking a turn for the worst when a harmless kiss with a senior from school, lands her in trouble. Her life gets shattered as she is withdrawn from the institution by her parents and a series of chaperoning ensues until she is married off to the suitable boy Sandeep at only 19 years of age.

15 years down the line, Diksha is but a meager housewife who lives on the whims and fancies of her extremely stringent and workaholic husband while she tries to raise their nine-year-old-son Abhay. A conversation with a depressed cousin Vibha, who has just lost her husband Mohan, however, soon forces her to take some life altering decisions when she realises that she has every right to live life according to her own wishes as well. Out of their conversation is born a secret wishlist and while a bit hesitant at first, Diksha soon finds herself spiraling into a world that she is less familiar with as she tries to find her own footing and her own individual identity amidst all the chaos..

From drinking booze, to joining a salsa class as Diksha plunges deeper into her own world, she finds herself regretting her marriage with each passing day and the entry of her once childhood crush Ankit (the boy she was caught kissing), soon culminates into an extra-marital relationship and her taking a decision that she never thought she had the courage to make. Finding her husband's lack of interest in her or their family frustrating and herself feeling separated from her him, the story follows her life as she stands up for her rights and carves her own niche in the society.

Written in an extremely conversational style, Preeti Shenoy's new offering is fluid in its narration and is an easy read. The characters in her novel are well etched from the suave Gaurav, to the vivacious Tanu, the soulful Ankit and the woman with dreams Diksha and Shenoy makes it a point of introducing vastly differing personas in order to create a stark picture where the crux of the novel gets highlighted through their differences. Shenoy's story is perhaps a mirror reflecting the lives of every woman that one sees on the street, bazaars or outside the school gates each day, confined within the barriers of their own little existence. And while not condoning the women for their chosen path (the author does mention, that perhaps communication could have had saved the marriage), Shenoy's novel shows an alternative path taken by a brave lady when everything seems to be breaking apart for her. A little bit of spice and love in her life only serves to make her resolve that much stronger.

(As appearing in The Bengal Post newspaper on March 3, 2013)

Pooja Jeevagan says

The good things first...I liked her way of writing way more...maybe it was the change of publishing house...the formatting..or God knows what...but I kind of liked looking at this way better than the others by her...it seemed a little more professional than the usual Indian novels :)

The bad thing, I don't like the way marriages in her novel break...I don't know, if I didn't hold the husband responsible in 'Tea for Two...', I feel out there in this novel, Preeti has gone out of her way to show that the husband is an out n out black person...no I don't like the husband in the novel...but I can't say I even like the female protagonist either..

Fifteen years is too long of a time before you start yearning for a break...before you start hating your husband...if he was perfect for first ten years of your life, and you made sure to make a habit of it for first ten, why suddenly someone's death make you detest your husband...it's one thing to say your husband is inattentive, it's another to realize that he is suddenly a monster...

There is a lot I didn't understand the novel...there were so many double standards in there...things contradicted so much...suddenly the person closest to you, no longer wants to talk to you...you find the love you never knew u had 20 years back...a little too filmy, a little over the imagination...

A good effort by the author, but how I wish, she comes up with a successful marriage story...a story which comes through the bad times of relationship and picks up from an abyss to reach the cliff...It's probably time to change the strategy :)

Kamala says

Found this book more than a little disappointing. I'd expected depth and a little less predictability. Instead, it reinforced the cliché that a woman can't survive without a man by her side. I did think that the author's understanding of a housewife's low self-esteem and the enormous guilt that she has when she tries to do even the smallest things for herself was good, but the storyline seemed just way too convenient--like one of Karan Johar's candy floss hindi movies. The protagonist walks away from a fifteen year-old marriage into the arms of her childhood sweetheart. He is unattached, handsome, rich--a Mills and Boons type chocolate box hero who still loves her desperately and not only accepts but bonds with her nine-year old son. She's slim, looks just like she did as a teenager and is sufficiently ruffled by her husband's uncaring ways to call it quits. The transition is smooth and everything is hunky-dory and curiously enough, her mother-in-law is supportive of the arrangement, especially when the son she's left happens to be an only child! Now that doesn't seem like a story--it's an impossible fairy tale! The language veered too much towards the colloquial with words like 'darn' and tired phrases like 'done deal' thrown in for good measure. And since the editor in me never switches off, the typos and the grammatical errors that are peppered liberally through the book gave me the shudders. But I guess if you're looking for very light reading, you might like this one.

Vijay Karthikeyan Srinivasan says

Oh, my God!

It's mind changing for me, personally!

This book is a must read everyone, especially for the ones who are still conservative. I was taken aback by the beliefs I had. It's a story about a conserved woman who, when realizes her pathetic situation like to live life as per her wish. But, she got stuck in her daily chores and with his very old-fashioned husband who always never appreciate her efforts.

It's the transformation of a conserved woman into an independent and confident woman. I loved reading the book. It really changed my view about women. I should thank Preeti Shenoy for the beautiful work she has done!

Shyam Sundar says

i do always have a special keen interest in reading preethi shenoy's novels ! her simple narration make me involed in it ! every character she potrays is some or the other we see in our daily lives !

Dhiksha - the protagonist , was married to an idiot at her early age of 19 ! how her life turns upside down after 15 years of her marital life is the plot ! the story narrates how dhiksha tick off all her things in the secret wish list !

for general readers - the book is more like a mini-megaserial ! the story is very light & predictable !

for preethi shenoy lovers - this book won't let u down ! especially diksha's mindvoices ! at most instances u feel like slapping sandeep ! hugging Mrs. Pandit ! u wish u had a child like abhay !

i just expected gaurav & dhiksha would make a good pair ! but preethi makes a boomerang twist in that part !

if someone doesn't get out of your mind for years , then it is true love . <3 ^_^

PS - do make your own secret wishlist before starting with it ! you'll love reading it !

D says

Finished reading it within 2 days. Overall a good read. You'd be able to relate to the character in the form of people you come across occasionally or it can be one of your friends. There are men like Sandeep who exist and take things for granted and then there are women like Diksha who are really scared of their husbands. So scared that they can't even talk to them about their interests or things they'd like to do. Society has set a pattern for a woman to live like this for the rest of their lives. Don't think or do anything that makes you feel happy. Its weird and even depressing but then we are taught to adjust so we do and accept that this is our fate and pretend to be happy with what we have and then life throws a question asking things you don't have answers to. You have a life, don't forget to live for yourself. Its perfectly fine to be selfish and think about things that make you happy. Make a wish list and start working on it because its your life. So want to write a long review but need sometime for that. I might write a blog post on this one.

Devina Dutta says

The 'Secret wish list' has a good blurb and an attractive jacket but that is all there is in Preeti Shenoy's latest novel. What started out as a promising story about a woman awakening and trying to relive her life turned into a mediocre Bollywood inspired stereotypical book. Secret boyfriends at 16, the demanding unappreciative husband, this novella seemed right from English vinglish sans the french hero and the former boyfriend'. However 'that' was likeable, this is definitely not. Throughout the story, as the heroine debated on leaving her husband or not, I wondered about finally trying to give Shenoy one more chance or not. Her last debacle, 'Tea for two...' was awful and it was only because of Life is what you make it, that I decided to give this book a try.

Although 'the secret wish list' had a certain freshness to it, it depleted and faltered right from the second chapter itself. The book has a continuous stilted narration which can seem pretty juvenile and lame if you are an avid reader.

Over all, the book can offer respite from all the wannabe Indian Bridget Jones story that Indian authors seem to write these days. Certainly not Shenoy's best but definitely not the worst. Would really love it if she could write something that she really felt and right from the heart.

Pallavi Kamat says

I am a long-time reader of Preeti Shenoy's blog (www.justamotheroftwo.blogspot.com) and won The Secret Wish List in a contest on her blog titled Wishlist Wednesdays. Around the same time, I also had an opportunity to meet her when she came down to Mumbai to launch the book (<http://pallosworld.blogspot.in/2013/0...>)

The Secret Wishlist revolves around Diksha, Ankit, Tanu, Sandeep and Abhay. It starts off in Chennai, where, as a sixteen-year-old, Diksha is like any other typical teenager. She and her best friend Tanu spend hours and hours of time studying, discussing the latest crushes and gossiping. Enter Ankit, Diksha's elder brother's friend. Both Ankit and Diksha start liking each other and spending quite a bit of time together without the knowledge of either the parents or her elder brother. When the first opportunity for an overnight travel for a school project arises, both of them jump at it. However, things there take a turn for the worse due to which the lives of Ankit and Diksha are forever changed.

Cut to the present. In Bangalore, Diksha is married to Sandeep and they have a son Abhay. Diksha's entire day, rather, existence revolves around both of them. Right from making the morning tea, to breakfast, lunch and dinner to catering to every whim and fancy of Sandeep and Abhay, Diksha seems to not have an individual life at all. She does not seem to mind her daily mundane life either.

However, a sudden event in her cousin's life seems to jolt her out of her existence. At the behest of the cousin, she decides to try and take some control over her life and makes a wishlist – a list of things which she truly wants to do. Included in the list are items like snorkelling, getting drunk and learning salsa.

By a fortuitous turn of events, Tanu (who has been working at Gurgaon and recently re-located to Bangalore) re-enters her life and tells her that Ankit has been wanting to get in touch with her since a long time. With this conversation, Diksha's heart and mind are forced to confront whether she would really want to meet

him; if yes, what would the future course of action be, etc. How the issue is sorted out forms the climax of the story.

The best part about Preeti's writings is the time and effort spent in etching out each and every character and the interactions between them. Diksha as a bubbly teenager; Diksha as a housewife; Diksha as a housewife wanting to live out her wishlist; Diksha as a housewife imagining what it would be to go back to Ankit – all the various stages have been carved out beautifully. Sandeep's character has been shown to be a typical, male chauvinist who only cares for his well-being without giving a thought to what his wife wants. He cannot even imagine that she may have any wants. He comes across as extremely selfish and a person quite easy to hate.

Tanu has been portrayed as Diksha's best friend – someone who has her best interests at heart and who forgives her friend's faults. Ankit is the ideal guy – someone who is compassionate, caring and concerned; who wants to fulfil each and every wish of Diksha at whatever cost it entails. He lets his heart rule his mind.

The relationships and interactions between Diksha and Tanu, Diksha and her husband, Diksha and her son, Diksha and her parents, Diksha and her salsa instructor, Diksha and her mother-in-law, Diksha's brother and Ankit and finally Diksha and Ankit have been developed in great detail.

Another aspect about her is the way she tackles "difficult" subjects such as having an extramarital relationship. Sure, we all scoff at the mere idea but we do not bother going behind and understanding the reasons for it.

My takeaways from the book are:

Parents may not always have the children's best interests at heart. As parents, it is very important to be friends with your children and to really understand what is going on with them. If you are going to dictate and expect your child to only do what you want him/her to do, they are never going to be happy.

True love does really exist. You may not realize it immediately and it may take its own sweet time in reaching you. But it will eventually. Also, along the way, you may have to face some difficulties. But it will definitely be worth it. The only thing it demands is that you have the courage to accept it when it finally comes your way. Rest everything shall fall in place.

Marriage is a process of give and take. It is a process of compromising. It is not just expecting the wife to do all the work while the husband earns money. It is about realizing that your wife may also have some hopes and aspirations. It is about understanding that sometimes all one needs to do is lend a ear.

Lastly, friendship is a unique bond. You may be best friends but one act of indiscretion could cause a crack in that friendship. However, that crack could soon be mended as well. Your friend will always have your best interests at heart and will go out of the way to make sure you achieve them. Your friend will never judge you. You may not speak for days, weeks, or in the case of this book, years on end but when you do, you will catch up like there has been no break in between. That is the true test of friendship.

I was left wondering at the end what would have happened if Diksha had been in a happy marriage and Ankit had re-entered her life. Maybe, Preeti could re-write the book with a different ending :)

Like I mentioned at the beginning – I won this book in a contest organized by Preeti. And the post I wrote for that contest (<http://pallosworld.blogspot.in/2013/0...>) has been read by over 400 people till date. Guess, that

is the power of Preeti's blog.

Sarika Singh says

This is one of the book, I was looking to read since Long time. Thanks to Preeti Shenoy for good book. Superb book loved it much. I have not disappointed. Excellent narration from a women's point of view. Must read !

Shantharam says

One of those books that makes you think as a man, what women exactly want. Some might find the content offensive to our culture so if you are someone like Asaram Babu, refrain from reading this. Everyone else should find something that they did not knew before about relationships.

Even though my experience in relationships is as huge as earth is compared to the universe, i got some insights in what needs to be done to maintain a healthy one.

The good thing about this book, like all other books by Preeti Shenoy is that i could easily connect with the main character, feel her sufferings and happiness, which makes it special.

I am surely going to make a secret wish list and try and complete every single thing on that list. Life is short, make it large. The book struck a chord deep down in me and i am pretty sure the same can be said of many other readers.

Anjana says

Beautifully written

The narration is remarkable. It makes you read the complete book in one breath.

An Indian, Bangalore based story of a typical Indian girl. I am sure most of us would have seen this character at least once in our life's. Women who keep living their lives taking care of their husbands and kids when they are getting no care in return. Society believes it is the girls duty to remain door mats. This book just reminded that the society needs to change a lot. Parents need to believe their daughters too. Yes I truly loved it.

In short, a simple but elegant book.

Sridevi says

I really don't know what made me buy this book , perhaps it was the heavy discount offered by FLipkart . The story seemed to be a replica of "Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake " . The narration is stereotyped and the

story is highly predictable .

OK , we all know Deeksha married early at nineteen and all that , but the author needn't drill it down the readers' head in almost every alternate chapter .

Also , while the style of narration is highly personal , what surprised me was the amount of proofreading this book lacked . In chapter 13 for example , there should be "Deeksha" instead of Vibha at two places . Also the grammatical errors and typos are appalling .

I would anyday watch a Karan Johar movie instead of reading books like this because I would be at least assured of some song and dance .

Ananya Dhawan says

The story oozes innocence. I especially like the way Mrs. Shenoy has taken in consideration each subtle aspect of human emotion. An extremely engaging read,' The Secret Wishlist' can bring about a massive change in your life, can teach you how to ACTUALLY live on your own terms and how to find true felicity.

Archit Ojha says

This didn't work that well.

I liked her previous book, Life is what you make it and would say was inspiring. Unfortunately, The Secret Wish List, didn't make it.

Khushboo Sharma says

Quick take on
The Secret Wish List - By Preeti Shenoy

Stories are all around, The Secret Wishlist is kind of the story that you see in and around happening with many married women. I have read author in her blogs which is spontaneous, simple and to the point. I like it. And this is the first book I read.

After 3rd book I stopped reading Chetan Bhagat not because he doesn't write good stories but because he writes too much what I already know and see around, if to expect next is predictable I don't see reading fiction and in this one some what exactly that happens.

A secret hidden buried deep down in teenager heart, layered on top of the society and family roles responsibility and expectations. It starts in parallel track in present and in teenage past, which make it very cliché and predictable to me. Diksha , the protagonist is at first a common teenage girl, who seeks usual experience of life and as she grows being woman she seeks usual acknowledgement of her existence. A purpose is what Indian woman gets missed out by enlarge due to society and not many start up for it, that theme is essence of the story.

We see many around us like that, we consult such women too. Why don't you do this? why don't you do that ? why don't you take control of things ? but one just leaves it with suggestion but other one either carries a courage to solve or just succumb to it forever with conscious awareness of what is happening with their lives. Diksha is one such girl who is trapped, it takes her 15 long years to realize and break her shackles. Plot has all points covered which leads her to decide and gather courage to change the course of her life but I just found it coming while reading whereby my surprise elements were dying as I read on. Also, as much as emotional and sensitive the story line is, the emotions and moments of characters are rushed. Literacy wise, author is still not in the genre which dives into the life of Diksha when she walks home after meeting her lover, turmoil state, torn heart, dejected self ... I don't see her heart coming alive in story narration. It is indeed good and quick read with inspiration point in it but if you are looking forward to read classic storytelling is a step away. My take from the book I did pen down my Wish List and so it was worth a read.
