



The Wedding Season

Su Dharmapala

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Meet Shani - she's thirty-two, single and has a job to die for. And she likes her life just the way it is, thank you! So why do her family and friends insist on trying to convince her that the only way to the perfect life is meeting the perfect man?

When Shani's horoscope miraculously reveals that now is the best time of her life for marriage, her mother decides to take control. As the Sri Lankan wedding season opens she turns a deaf ear to Shani's protests and arranges a parade of 101 potential grooms, in the hope that her shamefully unmarried daughter will salvage the family honour by finally finding Mr Right. But true life, like true love, can get very complicated. Amidst a riot of hilarious dates with would-be husbands, Shani has to cope with a minor Machiavelli at work, a house that is literally falling down around her ears, and a neurotic mother with serious cultural baggage. Worst of all, her best friend, who seems to have it all, is sliding into depression, and Shani seems powerless to help. Through a flurry of curry, cricket, sarees, and sumptuous ceremonies, Shani comes to learn that love comes in many disguises - and degrees of satisfaction - and that life is a one-shot game, even if you do believe in reincarnation.

The Wedding Season Details

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From Reader Review The Wedding Season for online ebook

Samurdhi says

I never felt so connected to a character in my life...maybe because I'm a SLn and unmarried and going through the same process that Shani went through. There was of course a little bits of orientalism dragged into the book and hyperbole in term of introducing the culture but the things that happened with Amani's Mother and Shani's mother and her constant nagging for Shani to get married is true to word. Of course (Thankfully) my mother doesn't believe in horoscopes that much. Amani's incident really shook me to the core. I also do not get how Shani's mother would've come to accept her situation in the final chapter. My mother would kill me if I suggested something like that to her. BUT all in all, I loved the book and it made me cry at the end. I've read Saree before and it didn't disappoint me and this certainly didn't.

A definite read!

Catherine Heloise says

I won this book in the 2014 Australia Day Book Giveaway Blog Hop, and I am terribly late in reviewing it, since I read it months ago, so this will be brief.

The Wedding Season tells the story of four women, close friends from Melbourne's Sri Lankan Australian community. The story starts off on a Bollywood-like, cheerful, comic note, with friendly banter, synchronised dancing, much discussion of wedding attire, and Shani's mother using a rather terrifying phone GPS app to ensure that she meets 101 bachelors during the four months that her horoscope claims is the optimum time for her to find a husband. But things quickly start to unravel. About halfway through the story, tragedy strikes, and after that, the book goes to a much quieter sort of place. I'm not sure how well the two halves mesh, but I enjoyed the setting and characters so much that I was happy to go along for the ride.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The relationships between the four women at the centre of the story are lovely, and I also enjoyed the many descriptions of food, the Melbourne setting, the cricket references and the sense of colour that pervaded everything.

This book is likely to be enjoyed by fans of Looking for Alibrandi, or My Big Fat Greek Wedding, for its similar depiction and celebration of one of Australia's many immigrant communities.

Lily Malone says

What a wonderful surprise this book was! It was part of a Simon & Schuster book pack that I won as part of Shelleyrae Cusbert's Australia Day Blog Hop earlier this year. Judging by the cover, I really wasn't sure it would be a book for me, but the blurb convinced me otherwise - and having finished it in two days, what can I say?

I loved this book. It's chick-lit with cricket!!!! (Yes - this deserves a gazillion exclamation points in my book of perfection!)

It certainly helped that cricket-tragic that I am, I understood every cricket joke, e.g.: "She still had enough

facial hair to be confused for Merv Hughes."

But it's such a fun story. The dialogue is wonderful - so natural between the four friends and their partners.

The scene when the four friends are driving to Dandenong on a saree hunt early in the book had me in stitches, and went most of the way to making me love these characters through to the end.

All that said, it's not a book without tragedy - so there were tears for me too, but nothing that a good cricket reference couldn't snap me out of, like: the way all the blokes at these Sri Lankan gatherings sneak around with ear-pieces in so they can listen to cricket; and Shani's father disappearing to hide in the garden so he can catch the "last five overs in peace."

It's so nice to open a book with no expectations. I hadn't heard of this book or the author and I can't recall seeing any reviews of it by bloggers that I follow. The cover didn't tip me off about the content of the book either, and so my whole experience with *The Wedding Season* was refreshing.

One warning. Don't read it hungry! If it wasn't talking about cricket, it was talking about food. Particularly the most mouth-watering descriptions of curries you can ever come across!

I spent time in London years ago with a Burmese family and the mother there was the most amazing cook... this book took me back to those times in her kitchen in the most wonderful way. I'm all set to bust out my curry cook books and my mortar and pestle, and crush me up some cardamom pods for authenticity!

Great job Su Dharmapala. I loved it! And I don't think you have to love cricket, like me, to get a lovely warm buzz out of *The Wedding Season*.

Sally906 says

THE WEDDING SEASON is chick lit so I knew before I even open the cover that there is going to be laughter, there is going to be a little tension and there is going to be a happy ever after! It's almost like an unwritten contract of expectation that I have with an author, Su Dharmapala did not disappoint. I loved this story; it made me laugh out loud many, many times. The blurb really covers all the basics – to give more detail would be venturing into the realm of spoilers and I don't want to do that. There is a serious/sad section in the story but it was handled very well with a break of a few years between the tragedy and the continuation of the story. Having had both Sri Lankan and Indian friends the events are not over the top. My friends are a wonderful blend of both traditional and modern beliefs, choosing to make decisions according to which belief fits the outcome they want! I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys chick lit and multiculturalism.

And some totally useless information - I had an aunty who came from India and she had many beautiful saris. She told me that the traditional folklore maintained that a test for the purity of the silk used in a sari was that all 6 meters of material could be pulled through a gold finger ring. I can remember her daughters and me pulling all of my aunt's saris off the shelf and pulling them one by one through a ring – they all went through too!!

Captainslog says

Two weeks later and I am still thinking about this book and the characters in it; it is THAT good.

This book could easily be bundled in to the romance/ chick-lit genres and left at that but it is so much more.

Fascinating engaging and also (mostly) likeable characters present a roller coaster of a story that I thoroughly enjoyed. Indeed my only negative is that I will never be able to re-read this book again for the first time (and it WILL be re-read!)

At times it seemed like a Sri Lankan/Australian version of *Sex and the City* in that it is centred around 4 modern day and women. It also deals with (hardly a spoiler) weddings, and as well the hip parts of Melbourne, family, love, loss, doubt, high flying corporate types and so much more. You'll also learn a thing or two about the interior of the BMW 5 series you won't find in the owner's manual.

I loved this book, it was brilliantly written, the story never bogged down or got tired. The dialogue is at times razor sharp and quite funny; I laughed aloud at many points. This story would not look out of place on the big screen and I'd line up and pay to see it without doubt.

Probably the book I enjoyed most this year, I give it 5 stars only because I can't give it 6.

Susan says

Multicultural Aussie chicklit complete with the usual themes of, well, chick lit. It follows the erratic path of Sri Lankan women in Australia as they navigate the minefields of multicultural Australia and Sri Lanka. There are the usual annoying mothers and aunties, populating the Melbourne landscape of successful South Asian women and men, it starts out promisingly, but rapidly disintegrated into Mills and Boon, with very predictable plots replete with evil racist bosses, conniving mothers and heartbreaking orphans.

Oh yes, and it espouses the Singhalese cause, the writers opinions reflecting the hatred of Tamils who she calls 'Cane toads'. So you can imagine, I was not overly impressed by the later addition of a half hearted love match between a Tamil and a Singhalese. Sigh, so sad when people carry their prejudices to another generation.

Joan Charlton says

Very funny book.

Ruediger Landmann says

What to make of a book populated entirely by characters who are ethnic stereotypes when the stereotyping is carried out by a member of that same community? Is it possible that this is a stage of representation that communities must pass through in their journey from being invisible and absent in fiction and media, through to them becoming almost invisible again as they permeate a dominant culture?

The community in question in *The Wedding Season* is the Sinhalese–Australian community, and the plot revolves around Shani, a 30-year old accountant whose mother is desperate to see her married off to a nice

Sinhalese boy. For the most part, standard and predictable romantic comedy hijinks ensue.

What bothers me about this book is that apart from the stereotyping I mentioned above, there's also some ugly racism and homophobia thrown in for good measure. Dharmapala portrays her protagonist holding these ideas and does not challenge or critique them in any way. Consider her views on the contributions of the British to Sri Lanka:

Venereal disease and the indentured slave labourers who went on to become the Tamil Tigers are slightly less prized by the general populace – at about the level of the cane toad in Australia.

or:

‘Hon, watching back-to-back episodes of Nigella Bites does not make you a lesbian.’

‘Maybe if I got groped by another chick it would be?’

‘Darling, if you are referring to the time you got groped at that lesbian bar, I am going to have to disagree. I’ve prosecuted Hell’s Angels more in touch with their feminine side than those dykes,’ Amani pointed out.

Beyond ideology, another problem I have with *The Wedding Season* is its structure. The book falls very neatly into two parts, (view spoiler), and the two pieces are almost like two different books with different aims and purposes.

(view spoiler)

What did I like, then? I have been connected to the Sinhalese—Australian community in the past, and I could hear the musical lilt of the Sinhalese words peppered liberally throughout. For me, it was the first time to see many of these words written down. And clichéd though the characters and situations were, I could recognise the aspects of the culture that they represent. So, this was a bit of a nostalgia trip for me.

If you also have a connection to this culture, or are interested in it for some reason, this book might provide a similar nostalgia trip for you. Otherwise, I'd say there's nothing to see here.

Nisha-Anne says

I loved so much of this book for so long.

It was so refreshingly modern and relatable for a diaspora novel, very much set in the here and now of Melbourne rather than the there and then of the mother country. And for me particularly, it was fascinating and hilarious and chilling too how different and similar the Sri Lankan culture in this novel was to my Indian immigrant culture. I loved how career-focused Shani was, loved how real and direct her friends were, how three-dimensional all these girls were. I loved how much Sinhalese there was in the narrative itself, words that were only a few times explained but quite understandable in context. And I very very much appreciated the attention given to issues of post-natal depression, and marriage dynamics. That was marvellous.

I could have done without the two incidences of stereotypical characterisation at the beginning of the novel. And too some of the very careful food explanations.

And then something horrible happened mostly out of the blue. As if that trauma wasn't enough, the narrative IMMEDIATELY jumped forward three years. I wasn't even given time to absorb or recover and I had to learn these characters all over again.

I never recovered. And so the eventual love story really soured for me. Everything was horrible about that happy ending because it felt badly earned. Quite unfair and not earned at all.

I still feel betrayed, yes.

Nicola Marsh says

I write at night to meet deadlines and don't get enough sleep, so I don't lose sleep for many books. *The Wedding Season* is one book I sacrificed sleep for, unable to put it down in the wee small hours.

It's an enticing blend of multicultural chick lit/women's fiction/romance.

Shani is a 32 yo single Sri Lankan woman living in Melbourne. She has loyal friends, an interfering mother and boy troubles.

I laughed out loud in several parts of the book, and loved recognising all the landmarks in my home city.

Have to admit, I was shocked when the book took a serious twist but even then I loved how the author developed the characters' relationships.

A really satisfying read, one I recommend.

Peter Dickerson says

The Wedding Season is fun, funny, sad and interesting. I really enjoyed the Sri Lankan language, food and cultural issues. I really enjoyed the book. I will be keen to read Su's next. :)

Rochelle says

This book was such a fun read. We follow Shani, a 32 and happily single woman whose mother is desperate to have married. Poor Shani, the things her mother put her through were awful, though admittedly very funny. I was drawn quickly into her story and kept hooked by Shani and her three close friends, Amani, Tehara and Una. The bond these three shared was incredible, and I loved reading about the dynamic of their friendship. Without her friends I'm sure Shani would have suffered from a nervous breakdown with the pressure from her mother, work and the cracks sneaking up the walls of her house. All four women, along with the large array of minor characters, were well rounded and relatable. I felt as though I was part of their inner circle, sharing their lives with them. And Dharmapala's descriptions had me smelling the curry and imagining the gorgeous Sarees so vividly.

Then there is this twist, a twist that completely blind-sided me and took the book up a notch. It worked really well for the story and I enjoyed this part even more than the first.

The whole time I was wondering who Shani was going to end up with, but I had no clue who it was going to be, which I loved. I love being surprised because I'm not surprised often. And let me just say I think the choice Dharmapala had Shani make was absolutely the most perfect choice.

I love reading Australian books and it was so great to see the representation of an Australian group that you don't see much of in fiction. It was well written, funny, heart breaking and heart warming. Full of surprises, The Wedding Season will quickly draw you in and captivate you. It is a must read. I can't wait to get my hands on Dharmapala's next book, Saree.

You can see this review and more on my blog Inside My Worlds.

Sanjiva Wijesinha says

OK, this book has the typical formula of romantic fiction: girl meets boy (lots of boys!), girl falls for boy, obstacles arise and events transpire to separate girl from boy, girl gets together with boy, they live happily ever after (or at least until the end of the book).

Having said that, I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed 'The Wedding Season'. It will appeal to Australians of Sri Lankan origin - who will appreciate and perhaps even identify with some of the characters! Just imagine a JehanR video like 'Amma Points' in paperback!

'The Wedding Season' will also appeal to Australians (particularly Melburnians) as well as to the members of the vast Sri Lankan diaspora - in fact to anybody who knows the difference between Parippu and Pappadam. Highly recommended.

Chandrika says

Really enjoyed this humorous and moving ride through the Sri Lankan wedding season. With references to many Hindu and sub continental beliefs and celebrations, it will appeal to anyone living in multicultural Australia and especially those with Sri Lankan or Indian heritage (or friends). True love is illusive and life is complicated but I just love Shani and her friends. The story feels warm and inclusive, like the kind of kitchen you'd like to gather in for a chat and catch-up.

Miranda says

Hilarious, funny, reminds me of Big Fat Greek Wedding :)
