



The Marrying Game

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The Marrying Game opens on Christmas Eve, with four sisters at home worrying about money. The setting is present-day England, and the girls' father, an eccentric aristocrat, has just died, leaving the Hasty family so impoverished that they are about to lose their splendid but crumbling house. So the two oldest sisters--Rufa, tall, elegant, and too serious for her own good; and Nancy, a gorgeous, irreverent redhead who relishes her work as a part-time barmaid in the local pub--decide that the way to redeem the family fortunes is to marry money. Surely it can't be that hard to find two very rich men and make the men fall in love with them.

Thus begins a gloriously modern story that makes us genuinely care about the whole Hasty family. As Rufa and Nancy set out to blaze a trail through London society, they find that nothing in *The Marrying Game* turns out quite the way they've planned.

The Marrying Game Details

Date : Published August 1st 2004 by St. Martin's Griffin (first published 2002)

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Author : Kate Saunders

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Judy says

I read this after reading the author's The Secrets of Wishtide and wanting more. After reading a few, I realized that Saunders is prolific and writes across a wide variety of genres. This is a non-spicy romance. I think these books may have been written earlier in her career. Interestingly, Saunders also wrote Five Children on the Western Front, a sequel to the Five Children and It series by E. Nesbit.

Jenn says

These women's wacky lives were an entertaining beach read. Loved the British-ness of the book, but each of the characters needs a little time on the couch with a professional. And why do they worship the dead and philandering Zed.

Jan says

Rather far-fetched but asininely funny and filled odd situations and fun. A good summer/beach read when you feel like doing nothing, including thinking. It's not profound.

Two sisters decide to marry for money to support their family to save them and their homestead from ruin and creditors in merry old England.

Pirate says

Sometimes your commute changes and you require a book. And your only option may be the hot pink book from the "free" area at work. How bad could it be?

The Marrying Game is self-promotingly cute, like that cheerleader at your high school. It so clearly wants to be the modern "Little Women," and makes sure to literally reference that work many times throughout the story.

None of the characters are believeable, and are all SO CUTE! You WILL love them! Yay!! What fun nicknames they have! Don't they just fit all their assigned stereotypes! And such a messy house! Such lovely girls!

The story line is textbook Harlequin except for one egregious, unbelievable deviation, and then it all ends up happy ending with pink ribbons and puppies and singing children. At Christmas time. Awwww.

Ick. Glad it was free and kept me awake so I didn't miss my station. Other than that, meh.

Karen Powell says

This chick lit has many homages to Jane Austen: the sisters worrying about their marriage prospects after their father died, the family friend besotted with one of the daughters, a sister named Lydia who married a rogue. However, this is not your dignified Austen![return][return]The Hasty name can be traced back into history. However, time has not been kind to the family, and they struggle to make ends meet. The four sisters, Rufa, Nancy, Lydia, and Selena, are still reeling after the unexpected death of their vibrant father, Rufus, also known as "The Zed." His absence from the story makes him no less a major part of it: his hippie-like stances on marriage and infidelity have set up his daughters for romance problems. Whereas the Zed was content to move his mistresses in despite his long-suffering yet patient wife Rose (who later got to install her own lover in the household), the Hasty girls try to define what they want in life and love.[return]Rufa, the eldest and most sensible, decides she and flirtatious Nancy will participate in "The Marrying Game," that is, snare rich husbands in order to preserve the family home.[return]Lydia is still coming to terms with her divorce from her daughter's father, an adulterous Zed-like man whom she still loves.[return]The youngest, Selena, is on the cusp of womanhood and trying to find her identity.[return]The events plays themselves out predictably, but with enough humor to keep things fresh. Notions of infidelity and the Hasty's unique family life may not be palatable to some, but these themes add to the singularity of the novel. Some parts go a little over the top, like how the author is constantly reminding us how hot the protagonists are (Yes, we get it, Nancy has big breasts!) but the novel has a good flow otherwise. Side characters are fun to read about, if a bit one-dimensional and stereotypical. The author's strength is the depicting the family moments, how the Hasty's care for one another. Perhaps that's why we forgive The Zed's philosophy on fidelity, because it's the family moments that count for the Hasty's.

Karschtl says

A modern "Little Women" it says on the cover. Well, it may be set in modern times, but it is still full of all the old clichés. Four sisters have to find at least one rich husband for one of them so that they can save their big grand family house. I gave up after ca. 50 pages (although this was a condensed version and had only 180p. anyway). But I couldn't be bothered to read on - life's too short for those stories.

Keris says

This book is thoroughly enjoyable. On first impressions it could appear a little daunting, at a lengthy 544 pages (paperback version), but as soon as you begin reading you forget this and find yourself transported into pure escapist fantasy. The storyline frequently teeters on the boundary of what is believable, but that only adds to its appeal. If you like your chick lit to be

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Kathryn says

Got absolutely glowing reviews on Amazon from both customers and published authors in the genre. As one reviewer said, "Saunders has Jane Austen's psychological insight and attention to detail, Louisa May Alcott's

understanding of family dynamics, and Elinor Lipman's zaniness and saucy irreverence. Yet, Saunders is not just a pale imitation of other novelists. She has her own original voice, and "The Marrying Game" is a wonderful comedy of manners that has a great deal to say about life and love." How can I resist??? I see a few GoodReads reviewers were less than impressed. So far, I'm middle-of-the-road on this one. It entertained me enough on a cross-country flight, but failed to hold my attention once I got home.

Laura says

This is the second book I've read in less than a week by British author Kate Saunders and I loved it. Part chick lit and part romance, it is smart and funny and her prose about everyday things can be can be achingly beautiful. The book makes numerous references to Jane Austen and Little Women, which of course I enjoyed. All the characters are reeling from the recent suicide of the family patriarch, who by all accounts was a real jerk. How the four sisters, their mother, and the assorted men in their lives deal with this suicide is the crux of the book. My biggest disappointment is that Saunders has only written children's books since publishing this and Bachelor Boys.

Favorite quotes:

He put his arms around her, and felt the love she had for him, trying to beat its way through the barrier of the bargain they had made.

Mentally he shuffled the pack of truth cards, to find a configuration that would not alarm her.

She would never understand the detailed delicacy, the fine filigree of scruple, that made up Rufa's moral landscape.

Janet says

It is described as witty and whimsical. I thought it had a good premise of 4 sisters that decide, under difficult circumstances, they need to marry for money instead of love. Unfortunately I thought it was asinine, but to be fair several people in my book group thought it was a good beach read.

Jacqui says

I'm kinda sick of romance novels in which all of the romantic players are drop dead gorgeous. It would add a little spice if people were liked for their personality and perhaps one redeeming feature now and again would it not? Anyhoot this novel is very slow moving, as if in real time and I got bored so I skipped to the end and it seemed like a fairly predictable ending.

Grace says

3.5 stars

I wasn't sure what to expect with this book. I thought it would be a bit light and fluffy and fall into the category of Chick-lit. I'm happy to say that I was wrong. Who says you shouldn't judge a book by its cover?

It started out in the manner of a Chick-lit but quite soon started showing much more depth to the characters and the story. It wasn't what I initially expected and I found myself enjoying it as I wasn't sure how the story would pan out. Parts of it were a bit predictable but not horribly so. Overall it was a good book with a story that moved along at a steady pace. Definitely worth a read.

Jennifer Eckel says

The plot is perfect Regency. Four sisters strive to save the family manor that is beyond bankrupt. They have a charming ne'er do well father who has just offed himself, and they all cope with his death in different ways. They plot to head to London and make it in the social scene and marry well. Except, this is all very modern. So Regency novel, + Little Women, with a smidgeon of Austin, meets Bridget Jones, with added wit by Barbara Metzger. I want to read more of this author.

Meredith Galman says

Impoverished, beautiful blueblood sisters Rufa and Nancy Hardy decide it's their duty to marry money to save their mother, sisters, and estate from ruin after the suicide of their wastrel father. The text references both Little Women and Jane Austen, and the book has a definite Austen vibe to it -- if Austen had written explicitly about sex, drugs, and gay best friends. Still, even with all that, the story is never predictable: everybody gets their happy ending, but not without effort or learning something along the way.

Elinor says

I resisted reading this novel that I found at my holiday rental for some time because of the cover and the title, making it look like trashy chick lit. I was very pleasantly surprised. It is what I term smart chick lit, with complex characters and clever dialogue and plenty of literary references. I have been searching for an author like this ever since my beloved Victoria Clayton quit writing novels (not forever, I hope). I will now read the other adult novels by Kate Saunders, although I see that she has a more extensive repertoire of children's books. The Marrying Game was highly enjoyable.
