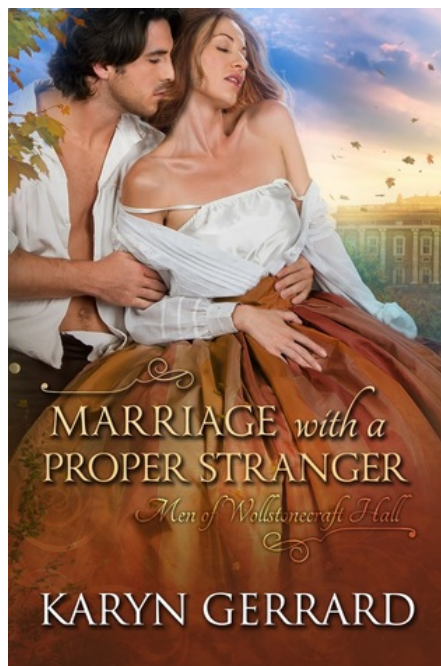




Marriage with a Proper Stranger

Karyn Gerrard

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“Build a wall about your heart.”

Riordan Wollstonecraft labors under the heavy burden of his forebears. For generations, a curse has followed the dashing young men of his family, guaranteeing the women they love an untimely death. The youngest grandson of the Earl of Wollstonecraft Hall, charismatic Riordan is quietly resigned to his fate, an educator who devotes his life to good works, and ignores any longing for something more.

Widowed and penniless, Lady Sabrina Lakeside is desperate to avoid a second forced betrothal—this time to an aged marquess. Her chance encounter with Riordan leads her to an impulsive offer: a temporary marriage of convenience that could benefit them both. His agreement is as surprising as it is welcome. Before long, Riordan’s keen intellect and kind words have Sabrina rethinking her plans of a union in name only. But her new husband is holding something back. Will giving in to their tantalizing passion lead her only to further heartache . . . or could it be the first step toward healing them both?

Marriage with a Proper Stranger Details

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From Reader Review Marriage with a Proper Stranger for online ebook

J. W. Garrett says

“Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance.” –Jane Austen

This is part of the Men of Wollstonecraft Hall series

Book 1: Marriage with a Proper Stranger: [Riordan and Sabrina]

Book 2: Scandal with a Sinful Scot: [Garrett and Abigail Hughes] estimated pub date: June 5, 2018

Book 3: Love with a Notorious Rake [Aidan and Cristyn Bevan] estimated pub date: Dec 4, 2018

Rating: MA: mature audience: explicit and graphic sex scenes, trigger warnings of violence, graphic descriptions of an abusive marriage and what she was subjected to in the bedroom at her husband's hands. He was a pig...

Does the name Wollstonecraft sound familiar? Yeah, they are distant relations to THE Wollstonecraft ladies... [Mary and her daughter Mary Shelley]. However, these guys have their own problems with notoriety... such as a generations old curse on the men. The family graveyard is full of those that have fallen due to the curse... all wives of the Wollstonecraft men. Every woman that married into the family has died... and for different reasons... either before, during, or after child birth, from complications or from other circumstances/causes. Any man that falls in love... will lose her. The Hall is full of Wollstonecraft men: we have the patriarch, Grandfather Oliver, the earl, his son Julian, the viscount, his twin sons: heir Aidan, and Riordan, and uncle Garrett [Julian's half-brother]. Each man has been admonished by Oliver to guard his heart.

When Riordan was a child he and Aidan were playing in the attic and came across an old chest full of ledgers. Riordan read of an entry back in 1704 where an ancestor had visited a Scottish sorceress and begged her to have the curse removed. She said that “only a love bond by all the living men of the family during a lunar year would break the curse.”

“A wise woman wishes to be no one's enemy; a wise woman refuses to be anyone's victim.” –Maya Angelou

Sabrina Durning Lakeside [Lady Pepperdon, widow to Charles Lakeside, Earl of Pepperdon] was finally leaving her mourning period. Her father was insisting that she marry again ASAP and his choice was another man nearly twice her age. Since her father had arranged her horrid abusive first marriage... she wasn't about to let him choose for her again. She had been forced to return to her father's house after the death of her husband. She had been the second wife and his heir had kicked her out with nothing. No provisions had been made for her in the marriage settlements in case something happened to earl. The reason for this would not be revealed until later. Her father was himself preparing to remarry in hopes of getting that son and heir that he didn't get when she was born. Plus, he needed the lady's dowry in order to pay off his creditors. He wanted Sabrina out of the house as she was in the way.

Sabrina had a plan and all she needed was a temporary husband. She only needed to throw off her father so she could live her life in independence and comfort. Enter schoolmaster Riordan Black [Wollstonecraft], who was not using his complete name as it spooked people and caused them to be uncomfortable. She just knew he would help her. They could marry and then have it annulled after a few months and then she could live comfortably on her settlement. Little did she know that her miserly father didn't have a settlement for her. Her first husband had paid him for her at an auction her father held to the highest bidder. Unknown to

her, her father was again offering her for a price. It was to the Marquess of Sutherhorne who had bid against her first husband the earl and lost.

“Marriage is an adventure, like going to war.” –Gilbert K. Chesterton

The rest of the story dealt with Sabrina and Riordan fighting against her father, the marquess and coming to grips with their feelings. When the truth finally came out on all their secrets... we have a distraught Sabrina... but her feelings would not be repressed. Her father caused all manner of trouble and the marquess will not relent on his quest for Sabrina. The desire of a powerful enemy has been ignited and they may not be able to squelch the flames of his anger.

“Despise the enemy strategically but take him seriously tactically.” –Mao Zedong

The story ended at 96% and was followed by an excerpt from ‘Scandal with a Sinful Scot’ the next story in the ‘Men of Wollstonecraft Hall’ series featuring Riordan’s uncle Garrett. I liked him and hope to read his story. I saw several of Riordan’s relatives eyeing the various women featured in the story. This sounds so interesting. I like these guys and I liked the women they were eyeing. I want to see what happens next.

Brenda says

Publisher's Description:

“Build a wall about your heart.”

Riordan Wollstonecraft labors under the heavy burden of his forebears. For generations, a curse has followed the dashing young men of his family, guaranteeing the women they love an untimely death. The youngest grandson of the Earl of Wollstonecraft Hall, charismatic Riordan is quietly resigned to his fate, an educator who devotes his life to good works, and ignores any longing for something more . . .

Widowed and penniless, Lady Sabrina Lakeside is desperate to avoid a second forced betrothal—this time to an aged marquess. Her chance encounter with Riordan leads her to an impulsive offer: a temporary marriage of convenience that could benefit them both. His agreement is as surprising as it is welcome. Before long, Riordan’s keen intellect and kind words have Sabrina rethinking her plans of a union in name only. But her new husband is holding something back. Will giving in to their tantalizing passion lead her only to further heartache . . . or could it be the first step toward healing them both?

My Thoughts:

This book is an interesting take on a marriage of convenience.

Riordan never plans to marry due to the curse on the men of his family.

Lady Sabrina Lakeside wants nothing to do with a second forced betrothal and marriage especially after her first marriage.

Coming together in a planned marriage of convenience these two both have their own secrets. Sabrina eventually comes forth with hers, but has her husband done the same or is he still holding his secrets in check?

I gave this book 4 of 5 stars for storyline and character development. It is possible that secondary characters in this story will have their own books.

Although a marriage conceived of convenience this couple finally gives in to their desires. I gave it a sensual rating of 2.5 of 5.0 flames.

I received a complimentary digital copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley. This in no way affected my opinion of this book which I read and reviewed voluntarily.

Maria Dariotis says

This was a real treat of a book, Riordan Wollstonecraft believes that love is a curse, if he goes by all the women that the men in his family have lost.... then it must be true. Love is off limits forever. For him giving back to his community is and will be his priority. Education is a means of survival, But when he meets the lovely widow Sabrina Lakeside he's surprised to find that he's willing to help in her plight. Sabrina's father is ready to barter her off to a man twice her age, she's desperate to find a solution. She doesn't want to be forced into another horrible marriage she just wants to live a quiet life. So when Riordan offers a marriage of convenience she accepts. But when passion develops between them Sabrina is willing to make things work but Riordan is holding out secrets that may jeopardize their newfound love. One amazing story that will have lovers of historical romance enjoying this difficult to put down this new book. I received a complimentary copy from the publisher via NetGalley for my honest unbiased opinion.

Pamela says

Riordan Wollstonecraft has been taught that love is a curse. All the men in his family have loved and lost the women in their lives so Riordan determines that when he is old enough he will not face the same consequences as his ancestors. Riordan is intent on making changes in the world. He believes even the poor deserve an education so he takes up a teaching position under an assumed identity.

Sabrina is a widow who just wants to live a quiet life. Unfortunately, she is at the mercy of her cold father who will see her married off once again to a man twice her age. Sabrina has been there and done that and suffered horribly in her first marriage. She must find another candidate for marriage before her father follows through with the arranged marriage. When Sabrina happens upon Riordan and witnesses what a kind and considerate teacher he is with his students, she knows he is the one. Now she must convince him to marry her.

Riordan is appalled at Sabrina's father's treatment of her. He wants to refuse when she asks for his help, but in the end, the decision is easy to make. Riordan will marry her and they can seek an annulment at the end of a three month period, thus freeing her from her father's clutches. What neither is expecting is that they might just come to care for one another. Find out what happens in MARRIAGE WITH A PROPER STRANGER.

MARRIAGE WITH A PROPER STRANGER, book one in the MEN OF WOLLSTONECRAFT series, is refreshing. I love that the series centers around a fictional family who are an offshoot of Mary Wollstonecraft, a woman who was such a strong advocate for women's rights in a time when it was not the popular opinion. I absolutely enjoyed the idea of men championing people's rights and freedoms; trying to open the world's eyes to what is really going on around them and to see what is right and wrong. If Riordan was real, I am sure Mary would have been extremely proud of him! Sabrina and Riordan's story has its ups and downs, but together they will overcome any and all trials and tribulations. MARRIAGE WITH A PROPER STRANGER is my first novel by author Karyn Gerrard and I cannot wait to read her next masterpiece.

Lori D says

This is the first book I have read by Karyn Gerrard and I truly enjoyed it! Entertaining from beginning to end, we find two people, both who have dealt with life's unfairness. Our heroine, Lady Sabrina Lakeside has been through a lot. She was forcibly made to marry, by her father, to an aged man who treated her terribly. Now a widow with no funds, she is forced to move back with her hateful father who is marrying her off again to the highest bidder. Desperate to get away, she comes up with a scheme with the local schoolmaster to help her out of her predicament. This is where it really becomes interesting. You see, Riordan Wollstonecraft (yes you have heard that name before in exalted terms for women's rights and they are related!) is the grandson of an Earl. But he is determined not to engage his heart due to the family curse (what curse you ask? Must read to find out!). He and his family are very social oriented as in trying to change the treatment of the less fortunate. So Riordan takes a job as the local schoolmaster so he can engage some of his ideas of forward thinking to the students. Nobody knows who he really is, least of all Sabrina! Sabrina has a plan and with Riordan's help they execute a daring marriage of convenience to save her from her current forced betrothal. As Sabrina and Riordan spend time together things seem to be changing and with a lot of twist and turns and even some suspense, this story will hold you captive until the end! Cannot wait for the other books in this series!!!

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

Marriage with a Proper Stranger by Karyn Gerrard is the First Book in the new series "Men of Wollstonecraft Hall". This is the story of Riordan Wollstonecraft and Lady Sabrina Lakeside. Sabrina is a widower whose father married her off to an awful man. But now that the husband has died she is left with no choice but to return home. Now her father plans to do it all over again and marry her to another man. Sabrina tries to take matters into her own hands by asking Riordan to go into a fake/temporary marriage with her. Riordan and his family have a somewhat tragic history but they try to help those in need. Riordan keeping his family curse a secret goes forth with agreeing to marry her. But the more they are with each other the more it seems that they started to develop strong feelings that they won't be able to ignore. I enjoyed this book and it a great start to a new series.

Monique says

I believe that I either got this as a freebie awhile back, or bought it on sale. In any case, I have to say that I truly enjoyed reading this book! And I actually liked the heroine Sabrina just as much as I liked the hero, Riordan. (Generally, male characters come across better than the female characters to me). With its angst, 'Marriage' was also sweet and very sexy. I loved the author's writing style and attention to historical detail. I really love the fact that 'the men' all had very progressive outlooks for their time, i.e. women's rights, modernized education, and even animal welfare. Historically, the name 'Wollstonecraft' is synonymous with progressive reform...do a Wikipedia search to learn about the real clan! Anyway...the fact that the male characters in the book were all pretty hot - even the grandfather - was a plus. lol

I will definitely be reading more about the men of Wollstonecraft! (The 'black sheep' of the family - Riordan's twin, Aidan - should have a very interesting story)...

Joann Maggio says

Marriage with a Proper Stranger ??????????
(Men of Wollstonecraft Hall #1) By Karyn Gerrard

To be introduced to such a wonderful book that is part of new series by Ms Gerrard is an absolute delight. I have read quite a few of her books and she never disappoints.

It has been legend that the all the women who marry into The Wollstonecraft family die a premature death either by child birth, sickness or accident. It is with such a family weight that the men of this household will not find love or marriage.

The youngest of The Wollstonecraft men Riordan devotes his life to helping others by his good works. He has taken up a position as a teacher in a nearby school under his mother's name not to attract attention to this curse.

Sabrina Lakeside is a lady of distinction but left penniless. She learns lives that her abusive father who plans to marry off or for a better description sell her off to another cruel husband. It is this desperation that prompts Sabrina to search for a husband.

When the author has these two lonely people serendipitously meet the magic occurs. Although, life has been unfair to both of them through the talent of this author you hang on every word they exchange. I cannot wait to read the rest of this series.

SH says

'Marriage with a proper stranger' took a different slant on the typical romance novel with the main male character being quite noble and honourable. The name Wollstonecraft would resonate with many readers as Mary Wollstonecraft's writings and beliefs were quite controversial at the time. Riordan Wollstonecraft obviously shares his ancestors' strong beliefs and not only is he intent on providing education to everyone, he comes to the assistance of Lady Sabrina Lakeside. As a young widow, Sabrina has been relying on her father for financial support, but he is forcing her to marry again, in order for her to leave his house. Sabrina approaches Riordan in the hope that he will marry her for a short period of time before they annul the marriage. However, as Riordan and Sabrina spend time together, the likelihood of an annulment diminishes.

I enjoyed this different perspective of women's rights, seen through the eyes of the men of Wollstonecraft. I received an advanced review copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Lux Lewis says

A heartbreaking tale of a heroine who was brutally abused physically, mentally and psychology first by her abominable excuse of a father then by her abhorrent, depraved husband. I struggled to read and comprehend what the heroine has gone through. I skimmed through few chapters.

If not for The Wollstonecraft men of nobility, Gentlemen to their very bones, I would not have been able to

finish reading. The Wollstonecrafts have liberal beliefs on women's and children's rights and use their power to fight for semblance of equality or close to what they could achieve circa 1830 England.

The hero, Riordan Black Wollstonecraft, second son to Viscount Tensbridge, is all for education reform, as a teacher, his passion to educate young people resonates with me.

The heroine, widow and penniless Lady Sabrina Lakeside, was saved by Riordan from another wretched marriage to an old debauched, lewd man by marrying her himself!

Their union is fraught with deception, blackmail, kidnapping and mistrust not to mention the Wollstonecraft curse hanging over their heads but they did manage to have their HEA.

This is an eGalley copy from the publisher. This is my honest and impartial review.

Coral says

Plot: 4/5

Characterisation: 4/5

Prose: 3.5/5

How much I enjoyed it: 5/5

Claire says

I received Marriage with a Proper Stranger as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

Riordan Wollstonecraft, scion of the wealthy and progressive Wollstonecraft family, has an expansive, liberal view of the world, aside from one unchanging belief: he must not fall in love. Due to a centuries-old family curse, the women that Wollstonecraft men form attachments to succumb to an early grave. The only way for the curse to be broken, it is said, is for all the men of the family to fall in love within a year. Turning his attention away from romance, Riordan takes up a post as a schoolteacher in a progressive school, where he meets Lady Sabrina Lakeside, the widow of an elderly, unfeeling husband. To prevent her cruel father from selling her to the highest bidder, she makes a desperate offer to Riordan, the handsome schoolteacher she just met: marry her, allowing to escape her father's clutches, and she will give him an annulment and a portion of her dowry a few months in the future. Ever willing to help the lovely Sabrina out of a desperate situation, Riordan accedes, while steeling himself against falling for her. But fall for her he does, and he must reckon with his fear of the family curse and of hiding his true identity if he wants to move forward in his life with her.

I enjoyed this quite a bit. It's the first book in a series (which will detail the love stories of the other men of Wollstonecraft Hall and the presumed breaking of the curse), so there's a nice energy that can lack in later books. The characters, particularly Riordan, are very well drawn and their liberal, modern viewpoints have some basis in reality, even if those views are considered eccentric by their own society. Looking forward to reading more from Karyn Gerrard.

Robin Morgan says

I actually got a ARC copy of this book through a KINDLE giveaway for it on GoodReads, and the following is my honest opinion.

On one side you've got Riordan Wollstonecraft, the youngest grandson of the Earl of Wollstonecraft Hall, who, along with the rest of the young men of his family live with a curse hanging over their head. The curse with them loving in love, for if they do, the women they love will succumb to an early, premature death. As with all curses there is a way out, and this one is no exception, to end their curse all of the young must be in love at the same time, but for our protagonist, he's more interested in educating people regardless of who they are than falling in love.

On the other side you've got the widowed Lady Sabrina Lakeside who's already been in one rearranged marriage by her father to a man almost twice her age. Being destitute, she's fearful her father will once again force her into another forced marriage, this time with an ancient marquess. Luckily fate decides to step in and offers her a rescue – an unexpected meeting with Riordan. She tells him about the dire situation she's in and asks him to marry her in name only for a short period of time, and being the chivalric person, he is, Riordan agree to help this damsel in distress, and unbeknownst to this pair, this arrangement might ultimately be advantageous to both of them.

Naturally, Riordan's behavior towards her, after surprising her with his agreement to her plan; his acute mind and sympathetic words causes Sabrina to reconsider her original motive in marrying him. Sabrina has no knowledge of the curse hanging over Riordan, because he's kept it a secret from her, out of fear she wouldn't go through with her plan with him had she known about it. Time quickly passes, and before they realize it, there's an ever-increasing enticing desire developing between them. And with this happening, could this development result in her having some additional unexpected grief in her life, or will it result in ending the dark clouds hanging over both of them in their lives. Only time and reading this book will give you the answer.

For having given her readers and me a hard to put down story, I've given the author, Karyn Gerrard, 5 STARS.

AnnMarie says

Marriage with a Proper Stranger is the first book in the Men of Wollstonecraft Hall series by Karyn Gerrard.

Riordan Wollstonecraft is a second son, and also the youngest grandson of the Earl of Wollstonecraft Hall. The family has always been ready to help the underdog, especially underprivileged children, and the rights of women once they are married. So it's no surprise that when Riordan is asked by a woman to help her that he agrees.

Lady Sabrina Lakeside is that women. She was forced into marriage, a very bad one, by her father and when her husband died she had to move back home. Now he is trying to force her into another marriage, to an even more disgusting old man so she must use desperate measures to escape her plight. She asks Riordan to marry her, but only for long enough to get her father off her back, then they can get an annulment. Fortunately, there is an instant attraction between them, so a short time of marriage won't be too much of a hardship for either of them.

That is the basis of the story but there is so much more going on, such as Riordan working as a schoolmaster

under a different identity, rather than living off his family's wealth. His twin going missing. What Sabrina has gone through, and what her evil father gets up to. Not to mention the fact that the Wollstonecrafts believe that there is a curse on the family that means that every woman that marries into the family for love ends up dying an early death.

This book is such a wonderful read because of just how much goes on in it. Sabrina's past is so heartbreaking because of her father's machinations and I shed tears for her. She deserves the happiness that Riordan can give her, but they have so many obstacles in their way. I couldn't read quickly enough to find out if she would get her happily ever after. I loved this book and definitely recommend it. I cannot wait for the next book in the series.

I voluntarily reviewed an advanced readers' copy of this book.

Lynne says

I like this story. Its a bit cheesy and parts are a kind of dis-believable but it was a pleasant read.

While I did find some of the point it made a bit heavy handed and a bit repetitive, I understood the authors points. I also felt that some of the sentiments and language use as a bit modern for the setting and characters.

Though the focus is on Riordan and Sabrina, the plot does include obvious set ups for two further stories and for two less obvious. Would I read the rest of the series, possibly.

I received a copy of this book for free from Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review.
