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It's Christmastime in London, and unwittingly Grace is swirled into the sumptuous and scandalous world of Prince Maksim Rostov. When the unworldly secretary learns he took her innocence in exchange for a business deal, she flees broken-hearted.

But when Maksim discovers Grace's pregnancy secret, the ruthless Russian drags her to his guarded mansion in snowy Moscow. There he'll keep her as his captive bride and unwilling princess....

The Christmas Love-Child Details

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From Reader Review The Christmas Love-Child for online ebook

Aayesha Khatri says

1.5 stars

This rating does not mean that the book was awful, it was in fact wonderfully written with 3-dimensional characters who make mistakes and a very well-thought out plot with lots of twists and turns and angst. It's just that I didn't find this book to my liking.

Reading this book, I found myself so confused and conflicted regarding the characters and the plot. I loved Grace's innocence and her good heart, yet I hated that she was so infatuated with her boss (*not* the hero. He was an ass, and not in the hot-possessive-hero way. He was discourteous, impolite and had the manners of a donkey. I don't even know what she saw in him.

But I also loved how she didn't allow her love for said asshole to cloud her judgment, and wasn't as blind and dense and tantrum-y as your regular HP heroine. She was practical. She was also extremely loyal, a trait I admire, however misplaced the loyalty.

I also liked how, when the hero comes along, she realises that *this* is true love and opens her eyes with no idiotic denials or plain stubbornness.

THEN when she finds the hero with OW, she runs away. *This* part I hated. She should have stayed and asked him for an explanation. Yes, she was on her way to do exactly that when she sees him with OW, but she really shouldn't have run away. There is an explanation for everything.

AND THEN WHEN THE HERO COMES AFTER HER, SHE HIDES HER PREGNANCY FROM HIM.

For me, this was the damning action. I don't care if he's an ass or if he doesn't love you, it's *his* child too, and he has a right to know! And when he *asks* her if she's pregnant, she *lies* to him! God, HP heroines.

But still. She was a lot better than she could have been.

Now we move onto the hero. I can't say that this one struck a particular cord, but I did like how he was willing to give up his revenge vendetta for the heroine. I loved that, in fact. It redeemed him in my eyes.

The rest of the story was a roller coaster of ups and downs. I liked how Grace loved him enough to let him go, hated how she didn't want to stay and fight. Loved how her love for him was so deep, hated how she lies to him and runs away to 'set him free'. Like I said, I was really, *really* conflicted.

It wasn't at all a bad read, I just didn't find it to my liking. Although the writing was great, the dialogue was superb, and the little details the author added made the book seem very realistic. Another point in favour of the author - her characters were flawed, had their own growing up and grovelling to do, were less-than-perfect and completely unlike regular HP characters. But I suppose that's why I didn't like the book very much - I like rainbows and unicorns and perfection. It's the reason I read romance.

Emona says

[For Prince Maksim it's all about revenge against the man who stole an important merger for him. He plans to u

Lu Bielefeld *read.laugh.love* says

good

Booklover says

Good read, it was intense emotional full of tension, the story was good but I had problems with characters, I wish Grace was shown to be a little strong character instead of such a doormat. Maksim's cruelty and cold behaviour sometimes was unreasonable, yes Grace insulted him and did not believe him but how can he be angry at her, he lied and when later things changed for him he should have come clean but he never did which resulted in so many misunderstandings. But in spite of all the hurdles they manage to get their HEA.

MelissaB says

The heroine was a twit with no self esteem and the hero was an ass. Parts of the story were okay but others were kind of dumb and could have been written better.

Dianna says

PA Grace is returning from a lingerie shopping expedition when she has an unfortunate adventure. She ends up drenched in slush, and the lingerie is ruined. It's run over by a bus, oh no! That lingerie is the most expensive lingerie in the world from a posh London shop. And it was to be a present from her boss to his new fiancée, and it just destroyed Grace to buy it because a) she is a pure virgin person, and b) she considers luxuries the devil's work and c) she has a huge crush on her boss. He will never love her because she is plain. He doesn't remember the time he snogged her at the Halloween party before he collapsed in a drunken stupor, but she loves him anyway! He's not paying her commensurate to her responsibilities, and therefore her family are about to be destitute, but she loves him anyway! He makes her do all his work, and errands, and she lives in his basement, and she pays rent, and he's going to marry someone else, but she loves him anyway!

Grace is a ninny.

Fortunately: Prince Maksim. He's the most handsome Russian billionaire in the world. He makes her insides go funny. But he's also her boss's fiancée's ex, and her boss's business rival, so she should probably have nothing to do with him. Except: he's so nice. He takes her back to the shop and they have a Pretty Woman moment, and he buys the lingerie (and later surprises her with other fancy clothes, just for her), and he commences the assertive wooing.

Maksim is not a nice man. He's dragged himself up to an insanely large fortune on the backs of his father and his grandfather's profligate spending. They left his family destitute and freezing in Philadelphia! He will never be poor again, and nothing will stand in his way. And he won't lose a nasty red-head and a big oil deal to the lesser lifeform that is Grace's boss. That's not how the world works. Lucky for him, on closer inspection Grace isn't as plain as her ugly clothes suggest. She has a nice rack and a good head of naturally blonde hair. And she's a down-trodden ninny. He can definitely work with this.

So Grace is wined and dined and kissed. Her appearance is transformed by a 10,000 pound black shearling coat, and her cheeks attain that beautiful glow that comes, not from a \$300 jar of moisturiser, but from turning down expensive jewellery and Maseratis.

She even works up the courage to ask her boss for the back pay that will save her family from the streets. The back-story here is that Grace's dad died of cancer and Grace left college at 20 to get a job. Her mother and three brothers (12 – 17) have been living on the dad's life insurance for three years, but now the mother has suddenly realised she has no money and needs \$10,000 to make the next mortgage payment, and then money to buy Christmas presents and Christmas foods. Whatever with this family. There is nothing adorable about how a teenage boy will maybe cry because he has to return his new guitar. Teenage boys smell, and could have gone out and got fast food jobs, or joined gangs to buy their own guitars. Get into the right gang, and maybe you can buy yourself a Stratocaster!

Her boss agrees to the salary stuff, and also lets slip that his engagement to nasty red-head Lady Francesca is fake. Francesca had a dummy spit because Maksim wouldn't ask her to marry him, so she orchestrated the whole thing so that Maksim would lose the oil deal, because she knew just how much this would get up his aristocratic nose.

Grace keeps dating Maksim on the sly and they go to his empty country house and there's a big roaring fire and a thick blanket to lie on, and Grace lets slip both her hymen and the fake engagement story.

And even though Maksim isn't nice, he decides to be noble. Honour is in his blood, after all, and Grace is cuddly. But it makes no difference because Grace's boss loses the deal and sacks Grace, and when she runs to Maksim, he's cosyng up with Francesca, so off she tearfully flies to California, to spend a guilt-ridden Christmas not telling her family that there is no money.

Then, Grace takes a pregnancy test and Maksim shows up to explain that he didn't betray her, and to discover that Grace is pregnant and had no intention of telling him. He's cross. She's cross because she didn't really believe him, and when he made his bid for reconciliation his offer was a job as his secretary in Moscow, which Grace turned her nose up at. She doesn't want a job, she wants a declaration of undying love! But now 5 seconds of secret baby have blighted any chance of love between them, and they must get married and move to Moscow so that Maksim can keep Grace a prisoner in his big mansion. He will overwhelm her with luxury and body guards!

Sure it's controlling and if she'd been a dog he would have microchipped her, but it's not like Grace was doing much with personal freedom anyway. Her future plans were crashing on a relative's couch until she was inevitably thrown into the streets, and then to have her baby in a gutter and weep, etc so sad.

This is all very crazy and over the top and I loved the plot. I thought Maksim was a lot of alpha fun, and I enjoyed cheerfully hating on Grace. She ticks the heroine boxes I find most irritating. She's a virgin, and she fetishizes that status herself: on several occasions she accuses Maksim of taking her innocence, like it's some big thing and he should apologise. Woman, please. Own your sexy times. Learn that a sex thank you is an

orgasm, not a promise to eternally bow to your purity and honour.

She also does that thing where she consistently refuses luxury gifts so that Maksim can eventually put it together that she's a good person because she's not after his money. Not that he'd really committed to the idea that she was after his money? He hadn't really thought about it until she'd been really blatant about not spending his cash.

The 5 seconds of secret baby is fine. Grace gets a pass because she could have maybe come to her senses, and it's pretty traumatic to discover you're pregnant and then have the man you never want to see again just show up. I'm less comfortable with her blurting out her boss's fake engagement after sexy times, and believing that it's all Maksim's fault when she's sacked. I don't care if he's made a blood oath to not use their relationship to his advantage, if you're going to blurt something like that out, you should at least feel that it was a bit oopsie on your part.

I'd been desperately hoping that we'd get an encounter with Francesca, since everyone in the book talks about how beautiful she is, and how she's such a bitch. It happens, and although it's pretty late in the book, it's fun. Francesca turns up at the Moscow mansion on the night when Grace is to be introduced to society as the Princess, and pulls out her cheque book. How much does Grace want to divorce Maksim?

Of course, Grace is an idiot about it. She leaves a note telling Maksim that she faked the pregnancy, and he shouldn't try to find her. She then takes a train to Siberia. I give her total props for being a drama queen, because although she'd set up that she'd always wanted to take the trans-Siberian railway, it's just so fantastic that she symbolically takes herself through this beautiful and snowy landscape full of prisons and death, and it perfectly reflects the desolation and heartbreak she's experiencing. She is a ninny, but an entertaining one.

Although, I do kind of wish she'd laughed in Francesca's face. I mean, she's a princess, she's preggers, and there's no pre-nup. Such a missed opportunity! Does Francesca know how many zeros there are in 500 million? Of course, Grace will settle for 200 million, she's not greedy. And this doesn't negate Maksim's divorce settlement, maintenance and child support because: suck it rich people. How about you both make some insane payouts that might cause you a little twinge in the pocket pain for your Grand Romance?

Then, to really stick the knife in, Grace can invest it all in clean energy and any other causes that exist solely to annoy aristocrats.

This is my fourth Jennie Lucas, and I've been reading her on Emona's recommendation. I'm not sure I'll ever manage to find her ninny virgin heroines likable, but I do enjoy despising them. And Maksim is alpha and does a great smoulder and he's entertaining and the plot was a lot of fun.

Alex is The Romance Fox says

I loved this story.

Well-written, great story line and fabulous settings.

Whilst I felt at times that Grace was a bit of a twit and Prince Maksim a bit of a twit as well.....I did like them.

I am not a huge fan of Russian heroes but Prince Maksim was more than just the usual brooding, dark and over the top domineering billionaire. He turned out to be a really lovable guy.

And even Grace, the heroine, falls under his spell despite thinking that she's in love with her boss, who is actually Maksim's arch enemy.

Okay, you get where the story goes..right??? Revenge....but falls in love with beautiful and innocent heroine and off they go into the sunset ...HEA!!!! Of course.

Another great read from Jennie Lucas.

Chantal ♥? says

This was an awesome story. The hero was jerk almost all the way but some moments he was sweet. The end has them both coming together in a scene that was something out of a classic movie except she does not leave on a plane. Wow she was so strong and he was so confused by his emotions. I loved it another winner for Jennie.

Janie says

Rating: 5 stars.

This is my most reread Harlequin book to date. Since 2011, I always read the from chapter 9 and onwards. I would read this at least 4-5 times a month! And before that, I would read it every other day. Why, you ask? Well, chapters 9 and onwards are where most of the angst, jerkiness and pain filled moments are in. By Chapter 10 and 11 the waterworks have started and tears really flow. This shows how great this book.

Grace was a wonderful, sweet and self sacrificing heroine, the type who will inflict pain on herself rather than the hero. Her love for Maksim really endeared her to me. Over and over again she had begged for Maksim's love, something that she had earlier in the story, but had 'lost' after he felt betrayed. It was beautiful.

Maksim on the other hand.. He was an almost sweetie at the start of the book, but that quickly changes after chapter 9 and onwards. But the pain he dealt Grace gave me a beautiful ache in my chest and made me tear up. It still does!

I won't go into anymore details about the book, as there are many wonderful reviews about it, but all I want to say is that the book is worth a try.

Vintage says

Oh dear. Martyr alert.

We have a sweetheart on our hands. A sweet little rabbit with a big bad Russian wolf at her door. To make matters worse, Grace the h isn't even love with him (yet). She's in love with the other asshat in the story; her boss and the Russian wolf's ache enemy and stealer of trophy fiannees. The asshat boss that Grace loves has her live in his basement so she's available to fax 24/7, and still has her pay rent. And listen Grace, clothes count when you are an Executive Assistant to tycoon. You are in London, for crying out loud, go find yourself a good consignment store and buy something decent.

Update 1:

Hallelujah, there is a God! The worm has turned and our little sweetheart has not only grown a spine, but sharpened her brain. A night out on the town with the Russian wolf who treats Grace like a princess, nope a Czarina, not to mention a smarm attack from her asshat boss makes Grace realize she is worth something, and she asks for a raise.

PLOT:

Grace has been in love with her skeezy user of a boss. She also has major financial commitments back home. When Maksim, our Russian hero, sees her he thinks she is ripe for the picking as her boss has stolen his oil deal and his fiancée. Grace, as stated before, is a sweetheart but more than a little clueless. You can practically see Maks twirl his evil villain mustache as he tries to decide if he should bribe her or simply seduce her. To misquote *Fiddler on the Roof*, "She's pretty. She's young! Alright, she's 22, but she's a nice girl, a good catch, true?" True. On her own, Grace vacillates between martyred doormat and 21st century woman, 21st century virginal woman.

She succumbs to Maks as we all know she will, but she keeps her integrity intact. Through a slip of the tongue she gives Maks the info he will need to gain control over the oil deal again. His moral dilemma is should he use it as the cold-hearted bastard that he is or keep true to the ideal that Grace sees in him? (view spoiler)

Failure to communicate and a big misunderstanding tears the two apart for about 24 hours. This is when it went off the rails for me and dropped to two stars. Up until this point, the two characters were so sweet together. He's a great, big cold Russian wolf who thinks of nothing but money except when it comes to his beloved little sister, or when it comes to protecting Grace as Maks realizes how innocent, sweet and honorable she really is or...whatever. He's big marshmallow when it comes to Grace. In the other corner, is Miss Sweetness and Light, I mean really she is. She takes nothing from him, but opens him up to the possibilities that life can be good.

(view spoiler)

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Wow. A really good Harlequin Presents novel is a great tension-releaser for me. This one counts on my list. Plus, brownie points for the sexy Russian hero. Okay, he was a jerk at times, but he was a jerk who fell in love, had to deal with his conscience kicking in after twenty years, and manned up when he was supposed to. That's my kind of jerk.

I've noticed that Ms. Lucas has the heroes who are really into the whole, "I'll fix you. I'll marry you and make you pay," school of revenge. Okay, I think that's hilarious. Why would you want to marry someone you can't stand to make them suffer? Because you're totally in denial and you want her to be yours, but you're having a temper tantrum until you get over yourself. Yup, that was Maksim, alright.

At times, I thought Grace was a little too wide-eyed innocent to be believed, but I went with it. This is high drama, soap opera. You have to suspend some disbelief. This is Harlequin Presentsland, where everything is larger than life. That's part of why I read these books, so I can't complain. She was a good person, definitely into self-sacrificing. I do have to admit when Maksim offered her a job, I would have said, "Hell, yeah!" Sorry for the bad language. I'm just keeping it real. Did I tell you I have a thing for sexy Russian heroes? This guy puts the Russian in sexy!

The love scenes were steamy. Not super descriptive, but very steamy. You could feel the sexual tension coming off this book in waves. High five, Ms. Lucas. Maksim was hot, in all his steely-gray eyed, hard muscled, ruthless because he was so poor that he almost froze one really bad Philadelphia winter, self. The man was always trying to buy outrageously expensive stuff for her, like oh, I don't know, a Maserati to go with her hair. He bought his sister a platinum tiara with diamonds, which she gave to Grace as a party favor. What's up with that? Reminder to self: Harlequin Presents novel. It's supposed to be over the top. Anyway, this was a hot book.

Did I mention that part of this book takes place in Moscow? Awesome! When Grace runs away the second time, she takes the Trans-Siberian railroad. How cool is that? Of course, Maksim shows up in his armor-plated SUV, swooping down on her like the angel of darkness to declare his love. They kiss at the train station surrounded by various eastern Russian peasantry. Sigh!

I really liked this one. Very enjoyable as long as you go into it remembering that Harlequin Presents novels are not real life, and they are not supposed to be. They are a few hours of entertainment where heroes give out Maseratis and diamond tiaras like you might hand your friend a pack of gum. Oh, I forgot to mention that Maksim has a Bugatti Veyron! (I didn't even know what that was before last year, but now I know that's a million dollar sports car thanks to reading *Dark Desires After Dusk* by Kresley Cole last year.)

Nice job, Ms. Lucas. Thumbs up on this one!

StMargarets says

Tropes: virgin heroine is in love with her worthless boss, who has tried to double cross the hero by stealing his evil fiancé (OW) and his merger deal. Hero targets the boss's secretary for either bribery or seduction or

both.

For her part, the virgin heroine thankfully has found a ruthless alpha to first break her heart (he seduced and then seemingly discarded her) and then to keep in her (and her family) in the manner that all innocent and defenseless creatures should be kept. She will be cossetted and loved and adored, just for being the virgin heroine that this alpha fell for against his ruthless judgment.

Thank goodness the hero is manipulative and cruel (for one whole week!) otherwise this would have been too sweet and fluffy for my tastes. But JL didn't disappoint. The H/h are the right blend of sweet and ruthless.

Even I, a Christmas Grinch, enjoyed the train station scene in Siberia on Epiphany. Just a nice ending all around.

Mou says

A typical HP.

#TSTLheroine

#HeroAssholeManipulative

#OWDrama

At the end, An average read.

Lynsey A says

Another enjoyable read by Jennie Lucas. She has become a favorite hp author of mine. Her books keep my interest where I don't want to put them down. That makes a good one for me.

The heroine, Grace was a bit of a doormat and she knew it but it didn't annoy me enough to dislike her. I didn't like her constant belief that Maksim was cheating on her with Francesca. However, she was sweet, kind and selfless.

Maksim seemed pretty hard in the beginning but he had a crappy childhood that made him bitter. I liked how Grace made him a better man.

It made me sad when they were at odds during the book after the pregnancy reveal. They were so sweet and cute together when they weren't fighting.

All in all a good, quick read.

Jenny says

This book was passionate, heart-wrenching and poignant. Yes the hero was a jerk at times but also complex.

The heroine was the most lovable sweet and honest heroine I've ever read. I loved how opposites these two were and how in the end Grace's unconditional selfless love pulled him out of darkness changed him completely and made him a better man/father. The angst, the fighting, the revenge, the heartbreak and finally the HEA had me on the edge of my seat. I didn't want it to end. Really amazing love story melted my heart!
