



A Perfect Proposal

Katie Fforde

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Sophie Apperly's family has never taken her seriously. Fiercely academic, they see her more practical skills as frivolous whilst constantly taking advantage of her. So when her best friend Milly invites her over to New York, she jumps at the chance. It'll do her ungrateful family good to do without her for a while. What's more, she's on a quest America holds the key to solving her family's financial woes, even if they don't deserve her help.

From the moment Sophie hits the bright lights of Manhattan she's determined to enjoy every minute of her big adventure. So when an evening at an art gallery throws her into the path of Matilda, a spirited old lady who invites her to Connecticut for Thanksgiving, Sophie willingly accepts, much to the dismay of Matilda's grandson Luke. Undeniably attractive but infuriatingly arrogant, he is very protective of his grandmother and seems to doubt Sophie's motives for befriending her. No match for the formidable Matilda, he eventually admits defeat, but first he has a proposal to make. He'll help Sophie in her quest to save her family from financial ruin if she repays the favour. But just what does she have to do in return...?

A Perfect Proposal Details

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From Reader Review *A Perfect Proposal* for online ebook

Kate says

Some people say that "chick lit," as a genre, resists innovation, that it's formulaic. I am delighted to be able to offer to them evidence to the contrary in the form of *A Perfect Proposal*. Its author, Katie Fforde, has done the incredible and written a romance with an actual wet dishrag as its heroine.

She gives the dishrag a name ("Sophie") and anthropomorphizes it to some extent--it didn't do that well in school, we're told, but it is charming and pretty--but these facts should not be allowed to obscure the essential radicalism of Fforde's choice. Even the boldest authors of book-form ladybait have heretofore restricted themselves to human protagonists. Fforde, by refusing to buckle to this outmoded convention, both transcends and transforms the form she is working with.

In another unprecedented move, the hero of the book is, literally, a walking, talking wallet.

Alison says

Sophie Apperley is her family's dogs-body. Looked down on for neither being intellectual nor artistic, she 'merel' cooks, cleans and generally looks after her father, mother and brother whilst also holding down a number of odd jobs (mainly waitressing and bar work), helping out others less fortunate and designing/altering clothes in her spare time. Forced by her mercenary family to look after an elderly relative known colloquially as Evil Uncle Eric, she finds he is actually quite nice (and probably only evil to family members trying to scrounge money) and he tells her about a family oil well which might produce an income if 'someone' could ever unite all the shares and get someone interested in drilling for oil. Years ago a female relative in New York tried to do just that but Uncle Eric doesn't know whether she succeeded. Coincidentally, one of Sophie's friends who works at an art gallery in New York gets her a temporary job as a nanny. At an art show Sophie helps an elderly lady who is about to faint, the elderly woman, Matilda, turns out to be fabulously wealthy, befriends Sophie and invites her to spend Thanksgiving with her and her family at her mansion in Connecticut. The only fly in the ointment is Matilda's grandson Luke who seems determined to believe that Sophie is somehow trying to extort money from his grandmother.

From the Cotswolds to New York to Connecticut to Cornwall, Sophie and Luke bicker incessantly - but is there more to their relationship than meets the eye?

This is exactly what I want from a Katie Fforde novel, an artistic, caring heroine, a wealthy hero, lovely houses and eccentric relatives.

Rebekah says

ARC received from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

What worked: A Perfect Proposal didn't work in any way for me and I actually abandoned it at 30%

What irked: Katie Fforde is one of my favourite authors, sorry, was. Flora's Lot and Practically Perfect are two of my all-time favourite women's fiction novels and I expected a book that would pull at my heart strings and have me flailing all over the place. A Perfect Proposal was a mish mash right from the beginning. Right from the get go, it seemed as if the story had been started at the wrong place. We gloss over family issues and send our heroine to a crotchety rich uncle who a few paragraphs later isn't actually crotchety. Then we're getting ready to head across the pond and suddenly we're there. It just...it was rushed, the author glosses over a LOT of sections that could have been fleshed out and the characters were left as cardboard cutouts that I couldn't relate to.

Reflecting on A Perfect Proposal: It's a book that could have soared but crashed to the ground in a blundering mess. If you want to see Katie Fforde and Women's fiction at its best, check out Flora's Lot and Practically Perfect but not this book.

Jessica says

Enjoyable, but it was frustrating that the heroine, Sophie, never ever stood up for herself to anyone: parents, love interest, love rival etc, and seemed to spend the whole book letting everyone run roughshod over her with not a lot of growth. I liked the character, just wish she had developed a bit of a backbone at some point instead of seeming like she just let everything happen to her.

Rea Cobb says

I have recently found myself reading many of Katie Fforde books. She seems to have a easy style of writing which manages to keep your gripped. In Whsmiths at the moment you will find one of her more recent books Perfect Proposal and at the moment it is on offer for £3.99.

Plot

Sophie Apperly is the black sheep of her family, where her family are all very academic Sophie is better creatively. Her family take her for granted and soon pack her off to look after her rich uncle, which is where Sophie's journey in the story begins. While she is at Uncle Eric's she starts clearing out old letters only to find that he and some other family members have drilling rights which if they all pull together could be worth some money only thing is the member of the family who she believes has the remaining drilling rights is over in New York. It is while she is in New York on this quest that she befriends a rich elderly lady Matilda, the problem is her grandson Luke is not quite as and welcoming as Matilda. He is suspicious of Sophie he doesn't trust her when it comes to his grandma and his suspicions are only made worse when Sophie agrees to help find the old Cornish house that Matilda stayed in when she was younger back in England. Sophie is joined in England by Luke to help look for the house and to keep an eye on Sophie. Is Luke only interested in Sophie's actions when they involve his grandma or could there be more than meets the eye?

My Opinion

I have yet to read a book by Katie Fforde which I haven't enjoyed. What I found made this book different from the previous books which Katie Fforde has wrote is that half of the book is based in New York where as all of the books I have read of hers have all been based in the country all the way through. It was still a gripping book but you truly felt at home when she brings her characters back to the country it is in my opinion where her writing is the best. It was an easy read that had you gripped from the first chapter. There were just enough characters in this book without it getting confusing as to who is who. I loved the fact that there was a suspense factor to the story as right up until the last chapter you didn't know which way the story was going to go. Judging by the title I did think it was going to be a full on romantic book but I didn't find this the case. There was a romantic element to the book but there was so much more to the story than that. I found the book paced on evenly without having any low points to the book and I didn't feel at any point as if the book was being rushed.

I loved our main character Sophie as she was a very down to earth girl who many people will relate to. From the beginning of this book you instantly warm to her character. It did take me a while to get Luke's character he seemed very standoffish the first few chapters that we meet him but after a while you realise it is only because he cares so strongly about his Grandma and doesn't want her getting hurt.

I would recommend this book for anyone looking for an easy, warm, homely read. Anyone who is a Katie Fforde fan then read this book as it will not disappoint.

Also on my book blog <http://reabookreview.blogspot.com/>

Katie says

[I'm glad her terrible family stayed terrible. (hide spoiler)]

Leah says

Sophie Apperly is the unintentional black sheep of her family, she isn't an academic like them, and all they seem to do is boss her around, leaving her with little choice but to do as they please. However, after they send her off to look after her Uncle Earl, Sophie realises her family are nothing but greedy money-grabbers so when her best friend Milly invites her to New York, Sophie jumps at the chance. Sophie loves being in New York and her holiday gets even better when she unintentionally befriends a spirited old British lady called Matilda. The only person not happy with Sophie's relationship with Matilda is Luke, Matilda's grandson because he believes Sophie to be nothing more than a chancer trying to get one over on his grandmother. After Sophie is invited to Thanksgiving, though, Luke is forced to concede Sophie will be there and tries to befriend her, but not without first asking Sophie for a favour of his own...

I am a huge, huge fan of Katie Fforde's books and there's only three of her books I have yet to read out of 16, which means I've read an impressive 13 of Katie's books. Even better, I've enjoyed every single one I've read; some have been better than others yes, but overall they've all been solid 4 or 5 out of 5 reads. I knew that Katie's newest book *A Perfect Proposal* was a bit different to her previous reads because it would be the first of Katie's books to be set on both sides of the Atlantic and I was really looking forward to it as I love books set in America, particularly from British writers's perspectives so I was pleased to eventually receive a copy to read!

I mentioned in my Love Letters review that Katie appears to have a tried and tested formula that she uses for all of her books; the heroine of the book manages to get herself into a pickle of some sort, usually in the form of having to save something, meets the man she's destined to fall in love with at some point, they don't get along at the start but it all ends up rosy before something inevitably breaks them apart. After all, if it ain't broke, don't fix it and 13 books in I have yet to be bothered about the way in which Katie writes her books, in fact I like the fact they all follow the same format, it's rather comfortable and at least I know what I'm getting from Katie. It might be predictable and some people might not like it but it works for me and as long as Katie keeps writing books, I will keep reading them.

A Perfect Proposal does not break Katie's writing mould and I thoroughly enjoyed the read. Surprisingly, the blurb of the book makes it seem as if the entire plot revolves around Sophie's visit to New York which isn't totally right. The visit to New York does change Sophie's life drastically but Sophie is actually only in New York for a short period of the book, around 50 pages or so. As I said, Sophie's visit to New York does change her life because she meets the lovely Matilda who sends Sophie on a quest to find a house in Cornwall. Added to the fact is Sophie is on her own quest to find out about some drilling rights that may have been bequeathed to her family years ago. Thrown into the mix Matilda's maddening grandson Luke and Sophie's in a bit of a pickle. It was great though and I enjoyed having it all unravelling and coming together.

I have to admit that it took me a while to warm to Sophie; for the first part of the book all she seems to do is act like a doormat. She meekly does whatever it is her family requests, then she sets about being some kind of servant when it comes to looking after her Uncle. She then proceeds to do this regularly throughout the book; bending over backwards to make sure the men in her life is well fed and looked after. It grates a bit but I did eventually warm to Sophie because even if she was a bit of a doormat, she was lovely especially compared to her horrid family. I liked Luke, he was a rather typical Fforde hero, himself and Sophie had lots of ups and downs and what not but we all knew how it was going to end. My absolute favourite character though was Matilda, the lady Sophie befriends and Luke's grandmother. She had so much spirit and so much vibrancy and I wish she had appeared on every page of the book. There were a few more characters, namely Sophie's family, but the less said about them the better, excluding Sophie's Uncle Earl who was a great character.

Katie Fforde's writing style is rather old fashioned compared to most chick lit authors. That's not a slight in any way as I rather love her writing style. Some words and sentences are a bit different to ones you usually read and aren't totally to my taste but on the whole I love the way Katie writes. I suppose my only problem with the book was that, for the first half of the book, I didn't feel it between Sophie and Luke. It really takes off though in the second half and I raced to the finish, desperate to know how it would all end. Katie really excels in the endings of her books, I've loved all of them so far and A Perfect Proposal was no different whatsoever. A Perfect Proposal is a must-read for all of Katie's fans, it's probably not my favourite of Katie's books (that honour goes to Highland Fling and Paradise Fields) but it was still good enough and I look forward to Katie's next offering.

Jacob Proffitt says

I made the mistake of starting this last night and then pushing on the "just one more chapter" button one too many times and finishing the whole thing in one long night. Which is a sign that you've found yourself an entertaining read.

This was a sweet romance, but I think I actually liked Sophie's bildungsroman/finding-yourself story better.

Sophie is such a wonderful character with both her greatest strength and greatest weakness flowing naturally from her love of other people. Sophie is a comfort to those around her, always willing to do whatever she can to make them comfortable and happy. Interestingly, she doesn't do this blindly--she isn't being taken advantage of, per se. It's just that she derives personal comfort from seeing to the comfort of those around her. Whether or not this is truly "good" or "helpful" depends rather on the other people--awful people are made comfortable at the expense of others and nice people are made comfortable in the service of others.

So around Sophie's family, she enables their worst, most selfish characteristics. And this is bad. But she is a true friend and companion to those who are truly friends and companions to her. And this is good. What I found fascinating about this, in the end, is that Sophie's solution (though not actually expressed or acknowledged) is to make choices about who it is that she spends time with--i.e. nurturing her friendships and walling off more toxic relationships.

But all of that is just an intellectualizing veneer over the fact that I just found Sophie's voice a delight. She's funny and determined and doesn't hesitate to speak her mind (even when it might make others uncomfortable). Some of her conversations with Luke and his grandmother, Matilda, were laugh out loud funny and with just a touch of genuine warmth to break down any barriers you may have about the ridiculousness of the circumstances (mostly about managing to ingratiate herself with so very rich an old widow). Sophie working so hard not to be a sponge on the generosity of Matilda and Luke was every bit as interesting as her equally diligent efforts to scrimp and make due with her own more limited resources.

There was one sour note in the later portions of the book (and a substantial portion at that)--triggering one of my bigger pet peeves: a misunderstanding that could be solved in two sentences of honest conversation between our protagonists keeping them apart. This is normally a deal-breaker for me and can drop an otherwise outstanding book to two, or even one, star. It was somewhat mitigated in this case by allowing Sophie to firm up some of her resolve in forging her own path. Indeed, on consideration the tension between them had some side benefits that I think end up making it a better story.(view spoiler)

So yeah, one of my stronger pet peeves was invoked, but the story was *so very good* that it was unable to bring the book below four stars. Quite an achievement, really...

Rezl Hernandez says

Welcome to the world of chicklit, where almost all of the female leads are kind-hearted (and conveniently beautiful) and where everyone on planet Earth can be your best friend in just a matter of minutes! And one shouldn't forget that Mr. Tall, Dark and Handsome (and RICH) is just around the proverbial corner: you just don't know where or when he'll admit that he has desired you from the very first time he saw you, falalalalala...

The book's ok, albeit cliché, but it made me feel a bit stupid. After reading this, I suddenly had the strong urge to browse through an entire encyclopedia. I kid you not. And I certainly kid you not when I say that this is one heck of an impossible novel. Come on, where in the world would anyone find a grandmother as amazing as that? If there really is someone like her, I've got to have her, and I've got to have her NOW!

Choi Tang says

There were two reasons as to why I thought I'd give Katie Fforde (and specifically this one) a go, 1)She was quoted on the back of a Georgette Heyer novel and 2)the blurb led me to believe this was going to go down the path of a convenient marriage...

A promising start, I was entertained and rightly frustrated at the treatment of Sophie by her family and her meeting with Luke was perfectly charming. However as Sophie became more and more involved with this American, I began to tire of "you're English so you must prefer it this way..."

I felt the sub-plot regarding the drilling rights unnecessary, why did Sophie have to become a rich woman too? Yes maybe to put them on equal standing and to make doubly sure no-one would think she was with Luke with his money but it should not have mattered!!

The proposal was not perfect-it was abrupt and should have been more "Oh golly!!" But instead it was sadly lacking when it should have been the most romantic scene in the book!

Mary says

Chick lit a más no poder, pero de vez en cuando se necesita un libro así.

Es una historia, rápida y dulce. Estaba indecisa entre dos y tras estrellas pero Luke al final le subió el ranking.

Sophie es una joven inglesa que vive con sus padres, es trabajadora a pesar de no tener una carrera propiamente dicha, algo que su familia le recrimina constantemente. A veces es un tanto ingenua y despistada, características propias del chick lit, pero adorable. Su familia por otro lado no la aguanté!!!! Me parecieron insoportables y desagradecidos y por momento casi dejó el libro por eso.

Sophie viaja a New York, para escapar de su familia, por una misión personal y para ver a una de sus mejores amigas. Allí conoce a Matilda, una gran dama de sociedad residente en EEUU pero originalmente de Inglaterra y a pesar de la edad ambas congenian instantáneamente. Matilda invita a Sophie a pasar Acción de Gracias con ella, Sophie se siente a gusto con la toda la situación, el único problema es Luke, el nieto de Matilda.

Luke es un abogado, divorciado y un tanto engreído; cuando Sophie empieza a pasar tiempo con su abuela mayor en edad pero muy beneficiada económicamente, Luke sospecha que Sophie tiene otras intenciones y admitámoslo no se puede culparlo, yo hubiera pensado lo mismo.

Muchas discusiones entre Luke y Sophie como parte de su coqueteo, como dije Sophie es un poco torpe e ingenua y Luke es un insoportable engreído, en ocasiones me daban ganas de golpearlos a los dos. Pero luego de unos giros un tanto dramáticos en exceso y tal vez no tan necesarios viene la tan esperada (al menos por mí) conversación; que se hace esperar porque es casi al final del libro. Y ahora todo está bien, con un poco de intervención de Matilda, tenemos la "propuesta" final.

Interesante para pasar el rato cuando uno no quiere matar a los personajes o decirle que finalmente hablen entre ellos, me pareció excesivo ese alargue hasta el final que es muy rápido a comparación del ritmo que

viene llevando.

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

01/07/2013 -- This story sounded really cute when I requested the ARC. However, I've been reading this thing and it just goes on and on about absolutely nothing. I'm at the 7% mark and feels like I've been reading it FOREVER. Just not grabbing me at all. We have quite a bit of family interaction, with very uninteresting characters. I'm not sure what to do. I don't normally give up on a book so early, but seriously BORED. If you've read this book, and it worth some additional time ... help me!

Kate (GirlReading) says

2.5* A Perfect Proposal was your run of the mill contemporary romance. It was fun and I enjoyed Sophie and Matilda's characters and elements of the plot were fun but at times I felt there were too many subplots, as I wasn't entirely invested in each of them. I also really wasn't the biggest fan of the romance. There were definitely examples of language used in which it was very telling that this was written over five years ago, as there were multiple incidents when it was out dated and problematic, in terms of sexism and homophobia. Overall, this was an easy read but nothing overly special.

Courtnee says

I intentionally picked this book because I've been reading a lot of crime/psychological thrillers lately and I wanted something less intense, a palette cleanser.

I wanted to like this book but I was disappointed. Sophie was such a mess and not in that endearingly quirky British way. I found her quirks- language (golly, gee! There was a point where I actually checked the publication date because the way all of the characters talked was stilted and almost unintentionally old fashioned), behavior (constantly put upon but it's ok because I don't mind) and lack of confidence(although she is very young)off putting.

The love interest was.....ZZZZZZZ.....

I'm sorry that was me falling asleep because he was so boring. Why was the notion that he was OMGDivorced!!! So scandalous? This was another thing that made it feel dated.

This book managed to clear the murder and mayhem out of my brain but what a waste of an evening!

edited to add: her family is the worst!! I'm not sure why they were included because they were all equally horrible, except Uncle Eric. He wasn't terrible but the bar was set very low!

Ipshita says

This was a nice and quaint read, even if a bit long-winded. I did like the overall story. But the part after Sophie and Luke become romantically involved, and the subsequent misunderstanding did not add much to the story except to make them seem impulsive and rather stupid.
