

# THE MARRIAGE LIST by Ella Quinn

## EXCERPT

Elizabeth jumped off the sofa. “Zeus, Posy, come. It’s time to play.”

Madeline rose and shook out her skirts. “We know who those Danes belong to.”

Eleanor laughed. “I suppose it is only fair. We had Duke and Daisy.”

“And we will have our own dogs,” Alice added. “That reminds me. We should make a list of what we want in our husbands.”

Eleanor shot a smile at her twin. That was exactly what she had been thinking.

“What an excellent idea.” Madeline went to the desk and drew out a piece of cut foolscap while Alice and Eleanor took chairs from the round cherry table and moved them to the writing desk as Madeline dipped a pen in the standish. “I think he should be intelligent.”

“Yes.” Eleanor wouldn’t want a dim husband, but there was something even more important. “He should be kind.”

“Oh, indeed.” Alice nodded. “I agree.”

“I as well.” Madeline wrote down the first two qualities. “He must like animals.”

“House animals,” Alice insisted. “Most men like horses and hunting dogs.”

“And children.” Having been raised in a family where the children were never confined to the nursery, Eleanor believed allowing young children around was important.

“Like children more than just the getting of them,” Madeline wrote.

“Make us laugh,” Alice added. “It is not good enough that he has a sense of humor. Most people do to some extent, but the gentlemen we wed must be able to make us laugh.”

“And think that we are funny as well.” Eleanor was glad her twin thought of doing this.

“He must be interested in the plight of the poor and unfortunate,” Madeline added. “Ever since Dotty and Grace started the charities, the rest of our sisters and their husbands have added to them. I wish to do the same, and my husband must support me.”

“I agree,” Alice said.

“I do as well.” That was another good idea. Eleanor would not be happy with a man who did not care about others.

“Good-looking?” Madeline asked scrunching up her face.

Eleanor leaned back in her chair. “Well, I do not want to cringe when I gaze upon him. But his character is more important. Think of Byron and how handsome he is said to be, and he is a complete cad.”

Madeline nodded. “I shall write ‘passable-looking.’”

“That will do,” Alice agreed.

“He must allow me to be myself. I will not have anyone trying to control me.” Eleanor could not think of a worse fate.

“Indeed,” Alice and Madeline said at the same time, then laughed.