

Aiyana Henson

Dr. Scott Grether

Marriage Contract Paper

November 18, 2020

For the past three and a half months I've been "wedded" to my current boyfriend, Zyreon over a simulated marriage contract. I've known him since my freshman year of highschool and we have been dating for almost three years on and off. I would always see him around school so one day I decided to tell him I had the biggest crush on him. I didn't have the guts to tell him in person so I texted him on Snapchat. We had a reading for class, "Mate Selection in CyberSpace" which talked about how people are now using dating sites to find potential partners. I can relate our relationship to this reading because we met each other online and often text each other's numbers. The reason I chose to do this assignment with him is because I wanted to see what potential he had in being my husband in the future. It was interesting hearing him talk about aspects he wanted in the "marriage" considering this milestone isn't too far from us because we are in fact young adults. I believe creating this contract with one other has made us become more close as a couple and I feel my feelings for him have grown as well.

During the time we were creating the contract I kind of noticed how we rarely came across disagreements. I'm not too sure if he was agreeing with me in efforts to please me or we genuinely had the same ideas. I recall when we were discussing who we would invite to the wedding he jokingly mentioned how he was going to send out invitations to everyone. I told him that if he hasn't seen the person in at least three years then they don't make the cut. He seemed a little down but I explained to him that we both have big families and I want to have all of our loved ones attend our big day. We also came across a bit of a disagreement about where we would live after we got married. I wanted to move to Texas while he wanted to make a home in

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California. Instead of arguing over something so simple we decided that we can live in Texas for a few years and eventually move to California. I was often the one to settle the disagreements in efforts to fulfill both of our desires. Neither of us were angry but rather light-hearted when coming to terms. That's one thing I love about him. We can pretty much have a big argument and still be able to laugh during it. I would say we handled our difference in opinions fairly because we want our "marriage" to be 50/50 on all decisions we make. The last debate we had was over how many kids we were going to have. If money wasn't a concept, and my body wasn't going to be affected during and after child birth then I wouldn't mind popping out a football team. However both concepts are inevitable so I settled with having two and we could consider possibly adopting a third. He wanted to have two girls and maybe a boy while I wanted the opposite. Solving this disagreement was a little different considering I wouldn't be able to control the sex of the children. It was sweet to hear him talk about how he wanted to spoil his little girls by buying them ponies and tutus but I want to cheer my boys on at sports games. It's funny because usually it's the other way around when it comes to parents gendering their children. This is related to the lecture and reading, "The Social Construction of Gender" we had for class. As an activity the class participated in a poll everywhere. Everyone had to type what words came to mind when they thought of the words "Femininity" and "Masculinity." Many words associated with femininity included pink, girly, and soft while the word bubble for masculinity had tough, strong, and man. Doing this activity allowed us to identify how gender specifically is socially constructed in the family. The reading also discussed the language and words we use when gendering children.

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I believe our contract is practical. There aren't too many inconsistencies between each section however in part six, "Household Tasks" my boyfriend seemed to believe the guidelines we had set were impractical. Since I would be the mother of the house I would be expected by society to do all of the cooking and cleaning while Zyreon goes to work. He agreed with this idea by saying he didn't want me to stress over working and raising the kids. I don't like this considering we both live in the house and I'd want a sense of independence by having a job to contribute money into the family. We've planned the contract to where we would share household tasks and contribute to half of all choices made in regards to the well being of our relationship and family. It would only be fair. One reading that was assigned, "Falling Back on Plan B" talked about how women are responsible for everything involving the family while men are "neo-traditional" and aren't capable of taking off work for the family. I find that absurd because a family should be raised by two people. (I'm excluding single parents of course because I believe they deserve the world.) Since he took part in creating the child I expect him to help take care of it too. We both agree that it wouldn't be difficult to follow the contract in real life. The only thing I can think of that could happen is someone deciding to cheat which would end our marriage. We mention in the contract that we would talk with each other about how we would never cheat but instead communicate what problems we may be having in order to fix them. If communication doesn't work then we may resort to getting a divorce. One lecture we had in class discussed the history of divorce and what it entailed. A fact that I found interesting from the lecture was that it wasn't up until the 20th century that someone had to prove fault in the marriage in order to get a divorce. So if one of us found evidence of adultery in our "marriage"

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then we would have a better chance at legally unbinding our relationship. However we would consider cohabiting to raise our children together we'd just be separated.

Overall completing this assignment was a great learning experience. I got to learn a lot about my boyfriend and myself pertaining to what we both want in a marriage. The most pleasant surprise I received from him was learning that he wanted to have kids in the future. I'd always tell him about how I can't wait to be a mother so I can fulfill my dreams of wearing a baby carrier. He finds it hilarious that I want a child just so I can wear it on my chest but I think it's adorable. He mentioned the reason for him wanting kids was to have the great responsibility of raising a loving human being that would later do good in the world. I found that very admirable. Another thing that surprised me about Zyreon is that he wasn't interested in setting an official religion for the family. We are both Baptist Christians but he suggested that we allow the kids to practice any religion they wanted. I agreed with this only because I don't want to force anything onto my children in the future. The specific thing I believe my boyfriend learned about me is that I would make keeping my kids happy and healthy my number one priority. I can also share this find about myself because I realize being a parent takes a lot of dedication and hardwork. Parenthood is challenging but I know I would be able to handle it and make for a great mother in the future. One of the many lessons I've learned about decision making is that you have to consider your options in order to fulfill everyone's needs. It can be tough at times so it's good to ask for your partner's opinion to help find a solution. My main takeaway from participating in this simulated marriage is that communication is key. Without it you don't know what problems your partner may be facing so you aren't capable of helping them. I don't believe

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this has changed my view on marriage per say but I'm aware that having great communication with your husband or wife is vital for maintaining a healthy relationship. Hopefully me and Zyreon are able to continue our relationship so that we can get married and start the family of our dreams together.