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From the issue dated April 3, 2009

A Proposal by the Book

By MEGAN ECKSTEIN

The first response to Peter T. Leeson's new book on the economics of piracy is in, and it's a positive one.

Mr. Leeson, an economics professor at George Mason University, bravely decided to pop the question to his girlfriend in the pages of his forthcoming book, *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates* (Princeton University Press).

"Ania, I love you; will you marry me?" reads the dedication. Mr. Leeson offers a light-hearted explanation in the book's preface: "If I've succeeded in hiding my plans from her since writing this, she should be very surprised. I hope she says 'yes.' If she doesn't, I might have to turn to sea banditry, which would be tough since I don't know how to sail (though I've tried to learn)."

Keeping the secret from his fiancée-to-be, Ania Bulska, for more than a year was no easy feat. Mr. Leeson, who teaches the economics of anarchy, had to enlist the help of his publisher and friends.

The big moment came during dinner on the first day of spring at the Washington, D.C., restaurant Citronelle. Instead of bringing dessert to Ms. Bulska, the waiter gave her a treasure chest, and Mr. Leeson handed her a key. Inside was the book, the dedication page marked, and a ring concealed beneath, in a compartment that one of Mr. Leeson's friends had crafted.

The night went perfectly, Mr. Leeson and Ms. Bulska agree.

The pair met in 2004 when they lived in the same hall at Harvard University, where she was working toward a master's degree in architecture and he was a visiting fellow. "She rebuffed me" at first, says Mr. Leeson, but eventually the two bonded.

Five years later, he got to write their happy ending.

Send ideas to short.subjects@chronicle.com

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