



*Carol Marinelli*

THE DESERT KING'S  
HOUSEKEEPER BRIDE



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## **The Desert King's Housekeeper Bride** Carol Marinelli

Housekeeper Effie, a practical yet slightly frumpy virgin, has been summoned to the desert to serve the sheikh!

Ruthless Sheikh King Zakari had gone to seek solitude in the sands, but nights alone are not something this ruler is used to. However, with his housekeeper at his service, there's no need to allow his bed to grow cold....

After hot hours of passion, Effie's heart is near to bursting. But what she doesn't realize is that something has compelled Zakari to take her, a lowly servant, as his royal bride!

## **The Desert King's Housekeeper Bride Details**

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## From Reader Review The Desert King's Housekeeper Bride for online ebook

### MaryD says

Ooo! I hated Zakari so much, and I really don't think he redeemed himself by the end of the book. He did \*not\* grovel enough at all! I also hated that he didn't care enough to see her dressed to advantage and uncertain as she was, allowed her to be dressed to appear as the "pig" the cruel press depicted her as.

That said, there was a lot of angst in this book that kept me going, and I loved Effie/ Stefania. I loved that once she found out the truth that she didn't give in; she remained strong in herself.

I thought the ending rather fizzled, though. I think Zakari should have had to do more to find her than fly a helicopter to the desert. I wish Effie had gone to Aristo without Zakari and met him there from a position of strength. Hmmm... I originally gave this 4\*'s, but after re-reading this review, I'm downgrading it to 3 \*'s.

Book #8 of "The Royal House of Karedes" series in the volume that contains #5-8.

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### iamGamz says

Effie, plump, plain and lowest of the palace maids, found herself as the Sheikh King Zakari's lover. She expected it to be a fleeting affair until the king asked her to marry him. She believes that he loves her but he has ulterior motives.

What started as a sweet story with a king who was a right bastard turned into a wannabe fairytale with an unbelievable ending.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the heck out of the book, but at some point the author decided to take a trip over the rainbow. The fantasy she spun was a big one. An entertaining one, but still huge!

I also realized that while this can be read as a stand alone, it would have made more sense had I read the first seven book in the series first. Lol

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### Lynsey A says

Really enjoyed this book. Effie was an interesting character. At first she was quiet and a little mousish but she really grew a backbone in this book.

Zakari was a bit arrogant as Sheikh's are wont to be but he wasn't over the top like his jerk brother Kalik. I wasn't too fond of how he convinced Effie to marry him but in the end he realized how wrong he was to do it.

All in all, a great series with a few flops thrown in. I enjoyed this book probably the most. I'll definitely read another by Carol Marinelli. Especially since she wrote the book about the missing sheikh brother, Zarif!

Looking forward to that one.

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## **Mudpie says**

I have always enjoyed reading this author and this book is no exception. The reason for the low 2\* rating though, is for how far fetched the plot was...but this is Mills and Boon Land!

First an uneducated and poor lowly palace maid, thought to be illegitimate all her life, became a queen. And nothing can make me accept that Zakari tricked Effie into marriage, for the sake of the diamond two royal families had spent 8 books hunting for!

### **SPOILERS!!!**

Not sure how spoilerish this is but when I saw the family tree in the beginning of the book I went WTF?! In one fell swoop, this finale of the series, the Aristo royal princes and princesses were reduced to bastards, to put it crudely! Turned out that Aegeus the previous Aristo king HAD married Effie's mother BEFORE he wedded Queen Tia in a bigamous marriage!

Back to Zakari's treatment of Effie. I cannot forgive that once he saw the Stefani diamond, he only had eyes for it, notwithstanding her magnificent bosom! Later when he confessed his love there were attempts to prove that he loved her from the moment he made her coffee when they first met, to redeem him, but it's too little too late.

Other than this the book was well written, with a feisty heroine and angst, and their first meeting was sure memorable. It was HOT, he thought his housekeeper with benefits was here to service him, but she had run away with her latest boyfriend which is unbelievable! Like who'd give up a king for a mere mortal?! So while he was readying himself for a sexual marathon Effie walked into his sleeping area and... It was kind of funny too LOL.

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## **Yas says**

I read this one based on reviews from Goodreads. And it was a fun read for me. I love the H/H on this one. She is not the cookie cutter sexy heroine but she has character and grace! I love her she was a palace maid replacement. I love how they first meet. The Hero is the typical alpha, sure of himself, leader, used to getting his way guy. But oh how he falls for the palace maid. Who turns out is in possession of a treasure that he has been looking for. He plots to get his hands on the treasure but on the way he wants to have it all. Including Effie, so he claims to have compromised her.

In typical fairytale fashion the maid is being transformed into a Princess and it turns out they have a lot to work on. She has a lot of negative traits going for her. She was not bred to be royal, not educated enough, does not have the looks for Royal family photos. But I love her. She remains true to her being! GO! As the story progresses she asserts herself, finds out some truths about her being and secrets are revealed. Drama all the way. I love how they end and sort themselves out. I just wish I have a hard copy of this one. IT's a keeper.

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## Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://www.longandshortreviews.blogspot...>

I do so love those sheikhs with their heavy burdens, traditions and blinders called 'duty'. They always seem to focus on the big picture and usually get blindsided by this little thing called 'love'. Lust they can handle and they are usually well versed in its nuances but the lessons they learn from that other tender, heart effecting and life changing emotion sends them for a loop. It's fun because they often don't handle it well. Such is the case with Sheikh King Zakari and it's why I enjoyed reading *The Desert King's Housekeeper Bride*.

Ms. Marinelli set the conflict up beautifully. Effie was so innocent, trusting and loving, and most of all, accepting. She knew her place and was satisfied with the status quo. How lucky she was to have caught the eye of Zakari, the hero. Beware of stories that start off like fairy tales. Throw in a man who is arrogant and vengeful and any fantasy can turn into an emotional quagmire on a dime. That's the gist of Effie's plight.

What I enjoyed about Effie is that she persevered and survived. The woman she becomes is forged by trial. She starts off so meek, and is happy to be so. Next she's treated like she doesn't know her own mind and is pretty much treated like a mannequin. One day she snaps and the emotional conflict and plot intricacies reach a heightened level of suspense and tension. The confident and wise woman inside bursts forth and the heroine stands her ground and manages to rock the world of her sheikh and her peers. The fallout is nothing less than spectacular.

As for Zakari, he really was mixed up in his head and heart. He has some incredible baggage that affected him at a young age so I guess it's to be expected. His single minded goal, however, has consumed him to the point that he justifies everything he does in its pursuit. There is one decision he makes, however, that is totally unlike him. He wove a sand castle-type reasoning to justify it and tried to tie it into his quest but readers will eventually realize the true reason. The hero's emotional state hadn't matured at that moment. It will take the cold wash of reality and loss to understand what his brother had been trying to tell him all along. When he tried to correct his mistake he was met with a woman who humbled him, demanded respect and made him accountable for his actions – his wife.

I agreed with Effie. Zakari did turn a bit fast even for my tastes. Even though the heroine addressed it, I want to take it a step further. I think their reconciliation was too fast. I also think the scene with the big reveal could have been more dramatic. I'm not sure how the author could have done that but I was left thinking, "That's it? No blanching of the skin, no bug-eyes, no crumpling of paper, no demands questioning authenticity, no grinding of teeth?" I would expect that kind of news to get some kind of reaction other than, or in addition to, what actually did get written. If Zakari is king, I guess I'm a drama queen, because I felt that scene fell a tad flat and I wanted more zing.

That being said, when they finally worked out their differences, it was interesting. I don't mean it's lame. I am talking about how the loose ends were tied up and how all the secondary characters reacted and treated the heroine. What was said and how it was done. The most amazing thing happened in the epilogue. The author tossed out a hook that I recognized instantly. I remember what Zakari told Effie earlier in the story and Ms. Marinelli, oh so naturally, slipped in a reason to make the next book an auto-buy. In fact, I bought it as soon as I was done reading this one. That's how powerful the hook is.

The Desert King's Housekeeper Bride was a pleasant surprise because of the intricacy of the relationship. Watching Effie grow from a meek maid into the woman she was meant to be was a wondrous thing to behold. Seeing Zakari also grow as a man whom one can respect because his love for Effie matured him in ways he never thought possible was delightful. Together it was magical and the happily ever after was better than any fairy tale because their love was already tested. It survived and they became stronger, together. Now that's romance.

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### **Ritsky says**

Seriously, despite everything - especially the TITLE - it is well-written.

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### **Ellyn (Mrs. Darcy in my Dreams) says**

DNF

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### **Jenny says**

Zak a playboy Sheikh spends a night of passion with his servant. The morning after he proposes marriage and soon he makes her his wife. Effie is blissfully happy that is until she finds out Zak's reason for marrying her.

OMG! What a heart wrenching beautiful love story! This is a super feisty heroine and I don't like those but I felt Zak's grovel was well deserved! He totally manipulated Effie's love for him and betrayed her trust. But she stood her ground and she really made him suffer! Best grovel ever. The angst broke my heart and I loved it. But come on I can't believe the author ended it without Effie telling Zak she is pregnant!

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### **Veronica says**

I can't remember a Harlequin romance novel that I enjoyed more than this one. It was so well done. The language was a bit flowery, but then, I can forgive that because it is a romance novel. For most, it probably was perfect language.

Zakari was the typical king, control freak, and of course, the perfect man in every way. But he had actual real flaws, such as not seeing people for a person. His justifications to himself about his feelings for Effie were pretty standard, but I appreciated that his flaws were real and true to most people.

Effie was a bit of a shrieker, I'll grant you, but her reactions in the situations she was put into were so realistic, it was impressive. She was a strong heroine without the defiant pill of a heroine we usually see in these books.

The way Zakari would learn things as though by parable, a sign of his immersion into his culture and people.

The way Effie didn't lose a miraculous amount of weight, and indeed continued stress eating showed she was a realistic woman who dealt with her issues in a way that she knew better but couldn't help, as so many of us do. There were a million things about this book that made it connect, even if it is some fairy tale, far-fetched story of a king loving a maid.

All in all, the author wove this beautiful story of unlikely love and attraction between two people that actually feel like people to me. This is the first in a long time of its ilk.

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## **Dianna says**

King Zakari has been desperately seeking some big diamond so that he can be not only king of Calista, but Aristo too, and it's all getting a bit much for him. So he takes some time out in his simple desert tent, and when he gets a bit bored, sends for his housekeeper.

Only, she's run off, so Effie gets to go instead. Effie is a bit plain and plump, and Zakari who has displayed himself naked upon his pile of cushions, is initially not impressed because when he said 'housekeeper' he actually meant 'girl with whom I am doing it' and at first glance, he doesn't want to do Effie.

Naturally enough that changes. Effie is all chatty and sweet, and King Zakari likes talking to her. And, Effie is actually rather fine looking when you take off all her clothes, and that's just lovely. I'm always pleased when people look good naked – it is right and proper that all bits are sexy bits in a romance.

This book starts out really well, in the outrageous style of girls seduced in tents in the middle of a desert. And such a tent that it is – big rooms, kitchen and staff quarters, electricity, running water. I get that you could maybe have a diesel generator or solar power cells somewhere out the back, but have they seriously run pipes from somewhere so that King Zakari can have nice long showers whenever he wants? Maybe there's an oasis next to the tent and I missed it in all the excitement of Effie getting out of the helicopter and worrying about the suitcase full of clothes that were the real housekeeper's, and into which she had no hopes of squeezing her more generously proportioned self.

I'm totally happy with the deflowering scene, and King Zakari's irresponsible decision not to use a condom. I mean, sure why not. And sure, let's talk about it with a whole lot of advisors and whoever later on, because that's king stuff, and I respect that. If you're going to have a modern fantasy kingdom, why not still run it kind of like it's 17th century France? You can basically take any royal stuff that sounds kind of neat and blend it into a royal smoothie and I think that's just great. I am not so happy with him proposing marriage when he sees that, coincidentally, Effie has that diamond he's been looking for so that he can take over the other country. I mean, he could have just asked her for it.

Effie has a miserable time being Zakari's pre-bride (there's a civil ceremony in advance of the big wedding planned for later). The servants are all rude to her because she was lower ranked than they are, and keep making her wear stupid clothes that don't suit her. When she complains to Zakari, and by this stage she knows he's lied about being in love with her just to get the diamond, and she's really sad, he tells her to sort it out herself. Which: yes. She's a grown up, and unless he cracks a fit and orders her to wear ugly clothing, in which case she can have a huge fight with him about it because he has gotten involved. In the rules of royalty smoothies, she could sort this out any time by saying 'I'm queen, and if I don't get my way I will have you beheaded. Worm!'

This is where I can't help but get even more spoilery, because it inevitably turns out that Effie is legitimately queen of the other country, and that's just one step too far. I love a good King and servant romance, I love a good battle with the mean servants, but when you put a heroine suddenly in charge of a country just because she was born royal, I get really antsy. This is the point where I think everyone should be questioning the validity of hereditary monarchs deciding what's best for their country. Zakari is a pretty crap king already, but there is no way Effie can magically become a good head of state five minutes after she learns she's Queen. I bet her royal training montage (which is fortunately glossed over) was mostly on how to stand around wearing a crown and what fork to use.

And then the end of the book is basically her shaking hands and waving to every other character from the previous Karedes books, and I think even if I had read more than one of them, this would have meant nothing to me. I don't care much about couples once their book is finished. They can just go on with their lives and their babies and whatever, without distracting me by showing up again. I really don't like it when they have kids and their kids get books. That won't prevent me from reading those books, but I will complain.

Also, one of the snooty servants tells her that he now thinks that she will be a good queen, but I hated that snooty servant for being crap, so him now pumping up her tyres is too little too late. Behead him! Behead them all!

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### **Emona says**

A pleasant surprise because of the intricacy of the relationship. Watching Effie grow from a meek maid into the woman she was meant to be was a wondrous thing to behold.

Seeing Zakari also grow as a man whom one can respect because his love for Effie matured him in ways he never thought possible was delightful.

Together it was magical and the happy ending was better than any fairy tale because their love was already tested. It survived and they became stronger, together.

Now that's what I call romance!

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### **AelixRage says**

[her pride and dignity wouldn't let her stand for the humiliation of sleeping with the king (well, it was a double-edged sword seeing as Zakari did WANT her as she wanted him, she just didn't believe him). Other heroines would turn

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### **willaful says**

This was a fun revenge/betrayal story. The heroine is fat and plain, and the cool part is that the hero doesn't make her over; in fact the makeover fails miserably, because none of the people involved know what the hell they're doing with a fat woman. She has to conquer her low self-esteem and take charge to reveal her true beauty.



Also, she is one of the few HP heroines ever who manages to resist the hero's seductive wiles when he's been a total bastard. An extra half star just for that!

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### **Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says**

This one started out quite promisingly. A plain pudgy housekeeper and an Alpha hot strapping Sheikh-King. What are the probabilities? Silly me, reading HPs since forever and discussing probabilities! Anyways the beginning had me gripping the armrests for a thrilling ride but halfway we lost each other- the book n me.

\*spoilers spoilers\*

A maid (what housekeeper?) airdropped to service the celibate-for-a-week ruler on his lonely desert-tent sojourn. One week enough to do some kingly pondering and for the second week it will be sex+pondering. Only the event management team got the girl wrong! So instead of the lazy but accommodating Christobel, they sent the virginal n self-effacing Effie with the former's suitcase containing skimpy clothes, makeup, depilatory creams (hurray?) and condoms (more hurray but that's another story) so imagine the fun! And then she enters the tent to behold the 'most beautiful sight' (notty Effie!) of His Highness naked against the cushions and pleasuring himself in anticipation. Oh wow, I can feel the romance already brewing. So one or all things lead to the expected. He wants to enjoy the deflowering 'naked' so no rubber and then of course his eyes bulge when he sees her breasts or rather the long lost royal diamond nestled there happily. So he spins her a fairytale of HEAs n ILY (yes the slimy rat actually says that!) and she falls like a well, just falls for it heavily.

Back to the palace for more machinations with brothers and advisors over tales of no-condom-sex n tell. She is treated miserably by one and all, made to wear unsuitable clothes n makeup etc. So all was well till after the wedding when she rears up to show her spine and claws to give him back some good. Nice n sweet n angsty till here.

But then the story gets enmeshed with the Royal house of Karedes series thing. The h also doesn't know when to give up and I lost interest.

Yes this h deserves a special mention for remaining true to herself and no mention of dieting or exercise at all. The H also deserves credit for finding her attractive from the beginning. For all his deceivings and sneerings, Zakari just doesn't come across as a louse, rather a sweet smitten H.

Best part- the first sighting of His err Highness.

Second- when she calls him 'the whore' for selling himself for gain.\*clap clap\*

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