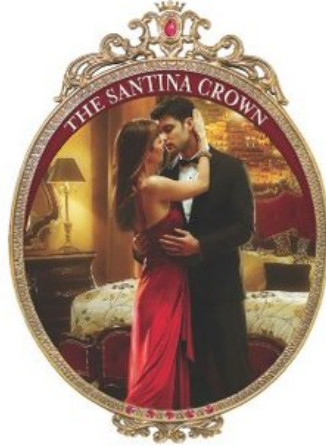


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PLAYING THE ROYAL GAME



## Playing the Royal Game

*Carol Marinelli*

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# Playing the Royal Game

*Carol Marinelli*

**Playing the Royal Game** Carol Marinelli

STOP THE PRESS: THE SANTINA-JACKSON ROYAL FAIRY TALE—FACT OR FICTION?

It seemed like every girl's dream: fall in love with a prince and be whisked off for your very own glamorous happy-ever-after—a royal fairy tale for Allegra Jackson and Prince Alessandro Santina.

Allegra's headline-grabbing family hardly prepared her for a life of public duty, and sinfully delicious Prince Alessandro has always seemed virtually allergic to the idea of settling down in Santa Maria.

Out of all the flamboyant, beautiful women his name's been linked with, the heir to the throne picked ordinary Allegra with the family from hell...

Is everything really as it seems regarding the tabloid's engagement of the year?

## Playing the Royal Game Details

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Author : Carol Marinelli

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## **From Reader Review Playing the Royal Game for online ebook**

### **Jacqueline says**

Fairly decent book. A different take on the whole royal thing. A couple of things writing wise held it back for me. The sense of time was vague. I think a lot of time passed in the book but the author did not account for it well. There was a dirth of words like "three weeks later" etc. Also at the end suddenly she was using poetic phrasing like "Gone were the days in which..." "Soft was the hand that..." You either need to write the whole book like that, in which case it really doesn't fit the HP line stylistically or just don't. I vote for just don't.

The story was pretty fun. I liked that the heroine was having trouble adjusting to royal life. It seemed pretty realistic. I didn't like that it took the hero quite so long to realise he loved her. He was an ass in places and stood up for her in other places. I just wish I had gotten the feeling that he was standing up for her because he loved her. It was fun to see her shut him down sexually though. He was pretty frustrated by her.

My second book by this author. Not as strong as A Shameful Consequence, but I am totally up for more by this author.

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### **Yuli Pritania says**

The translation is so bad. I hardly understand anything.

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### **Sara HarlequinJunkie says**

Reviewd by: HarlequinJunkie Romance Reviews

Playing the Royal Game by Carol Marinelli was a well-written conclusion to the Santina Crown Series.

In this book we finally get an insight into Allegra Jackson and Alessandro Santina's hasty engagement and their relationship.

I really liked the way this book started out and way it ended.... The middle parts I felt was lacking a bit of romance and intimacy between the H/h as the story progressed....At times Alessandro came off a bit cold and disconnected.

What I LOVED about this book were the extended Epilogues, which provide an update on all the couples from the Santina Crown series after they each got their HEA.

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### **Aisha says**

This is a great finale for this spectacular series!! After seeing Alex and Allegra through all the books-and hating them sometimes, so I started reading the book with a serious aversion of these two-, I'm glad that it was really a good story for them. Sometimes I wanted to hit Alex so hard because he was some kind of jerk with Allegra. And Allegra, whom I hated after the way she talked to Izzy in "Defying the prince", was fighting for her freedom all the time. It was a really good ending for the series that I made a design of Allegra's wedding dress!! And other dresses as Elsa's silver dress(book 2), Izzy's night gown(book 5), Carlotta's lace black dress(book 6) and Anna's red dress(book 7). Outstanding finale and outstanding series.

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## **Dalia says**

The last entry to the Santina continuity

This is the story of Allegra & Alessandro. The truth behind the hasty engagement party is now revealed. Alessandro lives & works in London. He isn't ready yet to return to Santina to embrace his duties as a crown prince & marry his long term convenient fiancée. When he meets Allegra, Alex comes up with a plan : pretend to be in love with an unsuitable woman to have a reason to break up his engagement. Then, when his people reject Allegra, his parents will demand that he leaves her & no one will expect him to marry in the foreseeable future.

But his plan backfires. The people just love Allegra because she is warm & ordinary. His father forces him to set a wedding date with his most unsuitable fiancée.

My heart went to Allegra in her dealings with the stuffy royal family. They are stifling & snob. They want to change Allegra, groom her. They always criticize her. They distance her from her family & father. Even Alex acts cold & uptight with her. She suffocates in her gilded prison. But at the end, she asserts herself & refuses to be changed to suit the royal image. Alex is not a very likeable hero. He is cold & aloof as a future king is raised to be. His surname " cold fish" given by his father-in-law, is very accurate. LOL.

I like CM' writing style, but in this book the alternation between the characters' POV is too fast & too frequent - sometimes even in the same paragraph - which leaves the reader a little confused & dazed.

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## **Charlie says**

[We start with a clearly deluded h who after getting groped at work walks into a private bar and reckons she can buy a bottle of Bolly for £50. She obviously doesn't live on planet Earth as that certainly isn't London prices. She should prob

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## **Maura says**

2.5

Allegra Jackson loses her job and stumbles into a club where she meets Prince Alessandro Santina, who is about to relinquish his lifestyle to take on the duties of being a prince of Santina and go through with arranged marriage. Only problem is, he's not ready yet. He's intrigued by Allegra and sees a unique solution to his problem in her - he'll pay her to act as his fiancée, which will end his current betrothal and knowing how unsuitable she is for the position, he's sure she'll be sent off in disgrace, making him a single man with

more time to live his life. But things don't go as planned. For one, the people love Allegra (sort of the Princess Diana effect...she's of the people and so real that she humanizes the royal family), despite the royal family's belief in her unsuitability. Alex begins to realize that he's trapped Allegra into a marriage she doesn't want. What's more, he also can't resist the attraction between them, the only light in the miserable situation.

So...this did not feel like a very happy romance. It's dramatic and angsty as hell, which earns all of the stars here. I also liked Allegra's turn around there at the end - she made demands, took back her identity and said take me or leave me. After an entire story of watching her self-esteem being shattered, it was a refreshing ending. But absolutely nothing, not even his pity story about growing up in his royal family redeemed Alex for me. He saw an opportunity to manipulate a situation and took it, not bad in and of itself, but when push came to shove and the situation wasn't working out as he'd planned, Alex threw Allegra under the bus and she's the one who suffered for it. Allegra suffered emotional abuse from Alex's parents and from Alex, she was isolated from her family and friends, kept locked up in the castle (while Alex gets to travel) and forced into a marriage which was NEVER part of the agreement. And what choice did she have to leave? She's emotionally blackmailed every time she decides to go. What's worse is that Alex lets it all happen and even participates in it (and also freely considers being unfaithful to her since she won't have sex with him - which doesn't help my perception of him) She's absolutely frickin' miserable throughout the entire story and Alex feels bad about it, but oh well, what can he do? Certainly not call his father's bluff, think up a different solution or just do what's actually right and set her free. No, better to ruin an innocent woman's life instead. And given this, I'd expected some hardcore grovel, but this book didn't deliver it. I did like Alex's realization of his love for Allegra and his final declaration, but there needed to be WAY MORE apology and groveling for the misery he heaped upon this woman. Gah.

Also, I kinda doubted the love here, since the two hardly spend any time together when they're not in their "worse possible me" mode, and neither of them really like that version of the other - "Prince" version of Alex is cold-hearted and emotionless, while "abused" version of Allegra is justifiably in tears all the time, whiny and desperately seeking escape. Not really the best people to be falling in love with. They claim to be in love with the "best possible me" versions of each other though, and as I said, they were hardly in these particular personalities during this book.

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## **Jenny says**

Adorable lovable heroine meets and falls in love with Prince Charming only he is not so charming. Story is about how sweet Allegra wins the beast's heart ♡?

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## **RLA says**

4.5 stars

A couple of the previous books in this continuity series hinted at something that is not as it seems about the engagement between the Allegra and Alex (the event that started it all!) and that really whetted my appetite, I was very much looking forward to reading their story.

But, I also have a nagging feeling that this might be an accidental pregnancy story, there is nothing wrong with that of course but I knew that the series deserved something 'more'. I'm so glad I was wrong, in fact the

plot of this book completely surprised me.

Carol Marinelli has written such a deep and provoking story that had me hooked all the way through. The emotion and almost desperation that saturates the pages when the hero and heroine first meet really set the tone of the whole story. The hero and heroine got themselves into something rather misguided only realising what a mistake it had been once they had become deeper and deeper involved. The story had a snowballing effect that is rather compelling to read.

The relationship that grows out of this comedy of errors is fraught with pain and restraint and is very moving. These characters belong together, you can see this right from the start, but everything is so difficult for them. The execution is flawless. My only complaint is that I wasn't too keen on the inclusion of POV from other characters, it felt almost jarring when it switched away from what was a deeply absorbing love-story and the inclusion of this didn't further the story at all, if anything it actually ruined the pace in my opinion.

When focused on the hero and heroine the writing is evocative and emotional with prose that feels as though it is floating.

Wonderful, and an enjoyable end to this continuity that if I'm honest had a rather shaky start!

Originally posted at <http://everyday-is-the-same.blogspot...>

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## **Missy says**

A great read and gripping ending to this series.

I really like this surprising twist to this entertaining The Sartina Crown series. We find out not everything is what it seemed on the surface and in the papers.....there is so much going on behind the scenes....like his totally hateful and snobby family but they still force them to marry as appearances are everything and love is a myth.

Playboy Prince Alessandro is sexy and so downright arrogant that you love to hate him. He comes off as a pretty "cold fish" (which just happens to be his nickname. Lol!) and is really bad using sweet Allegra for his own means..... Allowing his family to further hurt her makes him an ass. He does finally redeem himself through his love of Allegra and he becomes a better man.

Allegra is just an ordinary gal who gets charmed by this "Prince Charming" and the whole fairytale idea that she falls in love with her prince. She believes that her happy ending is just around the corner and is shocked to find out he is not what he seems.....but she still is so besotted with him that it doesn't matter. She keeps right on loving him and finally stands her ground against all the verbal abuse and put downs by everyone....he finally sees the light. I liked how she held him off sexually and got him soooooo frustrated. Lol! Lots of sexual tension.

A well written lovely read.

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## Kinga says

Jó kis lezáró része volt a sorozatnak. Az utolsó részben megkaptuk végre Allegra és Alex történetét, a párosét, akiknek már az első részben is olvashattunk az eljegyzésükről, sőt, ez volt az egész sorozat mozgatórugója, hiszen a többi páros élete onnan indult el.

Azt hiszem, ennyire meseszer? Harlequin-történeteket még soha nem olvastam, mint ennél a sorozatnál, ahol ennyi szerencsés véletlen történt, de ez egyáltalán nem baj. Az egyetlen bajom, hogy nagyon gyorsan össze lett csapva ennek is a vége. Zoe viszont kellemes meglepetést okozott, sőt Bobby Jackson is.

Összességében egy aranyos, könnyed kikapcsolódást ígérő sorozat, örülök, hogy elolvastam. :)

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## Ashley says

Full review can also be seen at [My Two Cents](#)

"Time line? Where is it? This while reading it I kept getting lost to the days, and the activities. Some points started on a certain day, with a few activities, mild conversation but by the end of the conversation time had passed it was supposed to be another day? It was confusing trying to figure it out. I don't see how it can be a Tuesday morning after brunch with the royals when a conversation in the hall starts, and suddenly when the conversation is done it is 2 days later in the evening. The time lines were way too vague in this book, when time was mentioned it was stated as a "3 weeks later" kind of thing. Used way too often, but still did little to help determine a fluid time line.

Love? What love? It was a horny Prince, determined to marry a woman who clearly just wanted to go home, because he had paid her to pretend to be his fiancé. Everytime she tried to go home or call it off, he threatened to ruin her in the media, essentially black mailing her to stay. I do not see how at all this could be any kind of love, or how anything could come of it. Kidnapped is what I would call her! And though the time line is hard to determine, he apparently spent most of his time going back and forth from his island to London, where she would have loved to go, but alas she was denied and kept in the castle. If he was constantly running away, but she couldn't do anything but wonder around a castle where she was unwanted, how could any kind of relationship grow. If anything it would drive a wedge in there, and tear them apart. I'm surprised she didn't go insane, or postal and just walk out. There really wasn't much time they DID spend together, and their conversations were little to none, he ordered her around like an arrogant jerk, and she ran off locked herself in a room and cried. I don't see how love could blossom out of these circumstances, or how at any point it had even started. It was unrealistic to believe that any kind of emotion, caring, or love was there between the two of them.

I normally like the normal person to princess idea, even if it is it really is over done. This book is disappointing to me it could have been better. The drama could have been more involved, more of a -- someone trying to tear them apart just when they started falling for each other kind of thing. Allegra definitely needed to be a little less isolated. Why didn't the Queen get more involved, maybe give her lessons on how to be royal, or walk and talk about the life of a royal, something that was a little bit more deep than her crying in her room a lot. Maybe her and the Queen could have formed a better bond, which in the end could have helped the king see better too. Crying and temper tantrums was all this woman did, and it got old fast.

Loved the Jackson family the most. Great family. Good fun. Most readable, and relatable part of this book. It's sad that they weren't more involved. I didn't like the mud slinging that was done to this family. When they were involved, as in the engagement party, it wasn't engaging. They were spoken of as an after thought or memory.

The writing style was awkward. Terms like, "Gone were the days" and "For she too, felt the strain" were misplaced within a modern day story. Placed in odd spots within the book that was otherwise written in normal modern English. Though it was used mostly in the end, I suppose in an attempt to sound a little poetic, it stood out like a sore thumb.

This book rotated between the prince and Allegra while they were together, but the POV changes were awkward. I couldn't tell whose POV it was in sometimes, had to go back and re-read. POV changes would happen mid paragraph, or mid conversation, it was distracting to read one line from HER point of view and two lines later it was the Prince's point of view with no clear difference.

Not something that I would highly recommend reading, but if you are already reading the Santina family books, this is #8, and you may be interested in it. "

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### **Aayesha Khatri says**

I absolutely loved the heroine! She was amazing! I just wished that she's stood up for herself a little but sooner.

The hero was *such* an ass. Oh God, I almost cried when he says those things about the heroine to his father, the king, and she overhears him. She didn't deserve any of it, but despite all his bad treatment, she still loved him anyway. And I absolutely love a besotted heroine.

What I didn't appreciate, and what lowered my rating for this book, was the h's father. OH MY GOD, HE WAS SO OVERBEARING AND ARROGANT AND HORRID AND HATEFUL UGHHHH. Having heard my mom's problems and awful experiences in an Indian joint family with a father-in-law similar to this guy, I couldn't take it. Well, at least the hero stood up, even a little, for her. Otherwise, I don't think I could have stayed wrapped up in my cosy ol' Harley bubble. It was much too close to the real thing, and let me tell you, that sort of domination and treatment is anything *but* romantic.

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### **Penny Watson says**

How unexpectedly wonderful! This is one of the most original HPs I've read. Charming, romantic, fun...with plenty of entertaining 2ndary characters.

Absolutely on my favorites shelf. I know I'll be re-reading this one a ton.

Adored this book. One of my favorite HPs in 2017.

Grade: A+



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**Annisa Sulistyorini says**

Allegra hidupnya menderita banget, kalau aku jadi dia mungki I memilih pergi wkwkwkwkw. .

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Alessandro kalau dia lagi ngomong rasanya pengen dorong dia ke jurang... Mulutnya suka jahat. .

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Typo ada tp sedikit, alurnya juga enak, meskipun masih ada beberapa yang bikin penasaran. .

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