



## The Secret Bride

*Susan Mallery*

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**The Secret Bride** Susan Mallery

*The Desert Rogues will capture your heart . . . A fan favorite from #1 New York Times bestselling author Susan Mallery!*

*Originally published as The Sheik's Secret Bride in 2000.*

Single mom Liana Archer has read her share of romance novels, and she knows her life is nothing like the stories she loves. So she's astonished when sinfully handsome Malik Khan, Crown Prince of El Bahar, takes an interest in her. Why would this sexy prince want a passably pretty schoolteacher from San Bernadino? And does she dare to entrust her daughter—and her heart—to this man?

*See Liana's daughter all grown up in A Very Merry Princess, a Happily Inc novella!*

## The Secret Bride Details

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Author : Susan Mallery

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## From Reader Review The Secret Bride for online ebook

### Susan says

Oldie but goodie. Besides the fact that Susan Mallery is one of my favorite authors, I discovered that the little girl in this book grows up to be the main character in A Very Merry Princess, one of the Happily Inc. series of books. This book starts out with a bang, as Liana and Bethany witnessed a staged romantic desert kidnapping, though they didn't know it was staged at the time. One of the participants was Crown Prince Malik Khan, who made quite an impression on both Liana and Bethany. Unbeknownst to them, they also had quite an effect on him, to the point where he practically kidnapped them and brought them to his palace.

Liana is in El Bahar under a two-year contract to teach math at the American school there. The job will help her provide the future she wants to give her daughter. Though life has made her very practical, she also has a romantic side that is fascinated by the handsome prince. However, her very practical self tells her that there is no way that he could return that interest, in spite of the attention that he pays her.

Malik is a man who has been raised to be the next king. He lives his life for the benefit of his country and feels his responsibility very deeply. He is intrigued by the woman who doesn't seem at all intimidated by his royal consequence. He is determined to get to know her better and rolls right over any of her objections. He is also captivated by Liana's daughter and spends a lot of time with her.

I enjoyed the development of Liana and Malik's relationship. From the moment they met the attraction between them was intense. That intensity freaks Liana out and she resists giving in to it. Malik doesn't know quite why he is so determined to keep her with him, but he doesn't want to let her go. When Malik invites Liana to a ceremony with one of the desert tribes, she is intrigued and excited. Upon arrival, Malik is dismayed to discover that the nature of the ceremony has been changed and there is nothing he can do about it. But he makes the mistake of not telling Liana until after they've given in to the passion that built between them. To say that she was angry that she and Malik were married without her knowledge or consent would be putting it mildly. I thoroughly enjoyed Malik's confusion when she wasn't honored by his having married her, and his dismay at her determination to leave at the end of the required thirty days. I also ached for him because he had no idea what was wrong. Because he was put in training to be king when he was four years old, he had no experience in relationships or love. He saw what his brothers have and envied it, but believes that love is something he doesn't need.

Malik knew that to get Liana to stay, he had to get her to love him. It was funny to see him take advice from Bethany on how to do it. His efforts were pretty amusing, especially the parts about her ankles. And though she was willing to wait and see if he could return her love, she could not accept it when his inability to express his love hurt Bethany. I ached for all of them when Liana told him they were leaving, but especially for Malik who could see the emptiness of his life looming before him but didn't know what to do about it. It takes both his grandmother and his father to make him see the truth. I loved his big moment at the end, as he made his peace with both Liana and Bethany, and opened his heart to both of them, in a very impressive way.

I enjoyed the relationship between Malik and Bethany. She is a sweetheart of a little girl, with just as big a heart as her mother has. Like her mother, Bethany isn't overawed by Malik's title; she accepts him for the man he is. I loved seeing her wrap him around her fingers, and he had no way to resist her. Though Malik believes that he cannot and will not love, it's very obvious that he loves Bethany. I loved the way that she confided in him about her father and the fierce protectiveness that Malik felt at the way she had been hurt.

This made his later actions that much more painful, though, in the end, I believe it was Bethany who taught Malik what love means.

I liked the secondary characters of Malik's family also. His brothers were just as handsome and full of themselves, but their wives kept them from being too obnoxious about it. I loved their wives who, like Liana, were Americans. They understood what she was going through and made her feel welcome. Malik's grandmother was an interesting woman. There were times I disliked her a lot, such as when she tried to tell Liana how to feel, and for her part in taking Malik from his mother so young. But she redeemed herself quite well at the end when she tried to make Malik see what an idiot he was being. Malik's father was another one that had his good and bad sides, though the good outweighed the bad. I loved the talk he had with Malik at the end when he confessed his sorrow about what he had done, and also told Malik about his love for his wife.

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### **Vivien Tsang says**

For the 1st time we see Queen Fatima being a bitch when she doesn't get what she wants. I hate bitches.

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### **Chitra \*CJ\* says**

One of the nicest, sexiest, and most passionate special editions to be ever written; a love story between single mom Liana who is kidnapped by broken prince Malik and how they find their HEA. Her daughter Bethany is adorable, and the whole story is worth the read. I love single mom plots; and that mixed with an obsessive sheikh was a good cherry on top. Totally safe  
4.75/5

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### **Ly Eri says**

Una historia bastante cliché, una mujer común y corriente y pobre se enamora de un hombre rico ( en este caso, un rey) literalmente antes de la página 30, pero él tiene problemas de confianza por malas experiencias pasadas y no corresponde de inmediato al amor de la protagonista. A pesar de esto, el libro no me desagradó, tal vez porque la autora supo presentar muy bien la trama no es una historia larga y los protagonistas si bien pasarán a la lista de "inolvidables" cumplen su función, aunque por momentos la historia pareció demasiado fantasiosa es buena para pasar el rato.

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### **Riverina Romantics says**

3.5 STARS

Another great story by Susan Mallery, but not quite as good as the others I have read by her recently.

I enjoyed most of it, but there was a lot of little bits and pieces that annoyed me at times. I won't go into

detail because they are too tiny to even bother mentioning, but the one thing that did make me sit up and say "Hey, hang on a minute" was when Givon spoke of his late wife.

I accidentally read these out of order so it probably wouldn't be as evident reading them in order, but (view spoiler)

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## **Cs says**

I'll start with the bad first:

- Malik the male protagonist is overbearing and starts out the book by trying to induce Stockholm syndrome in Liana by indirectly threatening to keep her at the palace
- He then tricks her into getting married. What the hell man?!
- Bethany, Liana's daughter, is both annoyingly selfish at times (to be expected from a nine year old, I guess) and unrealistically immature at others.
- Fatima, a side character that was pretty cool in the first book of the series, gets unfairly pissy about Liana not being in love with Malik at some point, and nobody calls her out in it.

Basically I think Malik's behavior is pretty disqualifying for a romantic lead. That said, there were also some good parts to this book:

- A hilarious side thing involving Liana's ankles. You have to read it to believe it.
- A properly satisfying and feel-good ending, with realistic lead up to conflict and subsequent resolution.

I've read the first three books of this series within a short amount of time, and I have to say, the first book was the best. The male lead was also the least obnoxious. That said, if you're looking for a trashy happy read, this probably fits the bill.

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## **Mary says**

A decent story, but I really get irritated at all of the royal princes, Malik especially since he is crown prince. It really bothers me that he deceived Liana and in essence betrayed her welfare and her self-worth.

Re-read 7/2/2018

Upon second reading, I liked this a lot better, thus the change from 3\* to 4\*. I saw so much more how Malik's upbringing affected his inability to allow himself to love, and thus the HEA had a lot more impact on me this second time around.

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## **Barb says**

Single mom Liana Archer has read her share of romance novels featuring dashing, passionate Sheiks. Despite her fascination with the genre, she is astonished when sinfully handsome Malik Khan, Crown Prince of exotic El Bahar, hijacks her and her young daughter off an airliner and into his lavish desert palace. What does this sexy prince want with a passably pretty, slightly overweight schoolteacher from San Bernadino? Liana finds herself Malik's royal bride after he tricked her into an intimate desert ceremony. When she learns

she is in fact legally married, she must face whether she can entrust her daughter, or her heart to a man would give them everything...except his love.

My favorite character in this book is Bethany, Liana's 8 year old daughter. She is 8 going on 38. She says the right things at the right time, and has intuition beyond her years. She is cute, funny, loving, idealistic, and smart. She made the book. Both Liana and Malik lack emotions needed to form a true bond in marriage. It took Bethany to rattle them all. 5 stars.

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### **Virginia says**

Prince Malik Khan spots single mother Liana Archer when she first arrives in El Bahar and is instantly drawn to her and her daughter Bethany. In the inimitable arrogance of a crown prince, he sweeps the two off to the royal palace so that he can keep them nearby. Liana has already endured a marriage with an incredibly self-centered man and is annoyed to find her plans for a new life thwarted by another man's selfish impulses.

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Even more frustrating is her reluctant attraction to Malik. He maintains a friendship with Bethany even after allowing the Archers to move out of the palace. Just as Liana begins to make peace with her growing attraction to Malik, they are married without her knowledge or consent. He now has 30 days to convince her to stay. Malik suspects that Liana is the only woman who can help him (and his eventual sons) be a man, not just a crown prince. /

The isolation of his upbringing and the humiliation of his first marriage have led Malik to believe that giving his love would be a sign of weakness, but he desperately craves Liana's love. She wants to soothe his loneliness, but needs to feel loved and respected as an equal. I understand those desires, but her reaction in the scene where she confesses her love (and he does not) is pretty ridiculous. 1) Loving someone is not about what they can do or feel for you, and 2) you can't expect an emotionally repressed and verbally cautious person to suddenly flip a switch and profess their love when you give them the first indication of commitment. She spent a lot of time declaring that she was going to leave - he has reason to be guarded. But at least she didn't immediately run away, and for that I respect her. I also respect her for leaving when she did, and the ending was very satisfying, except for the random foreshadowing of the last paragraph. That was kind of weird.

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### **Amy says**

I am slowly collecting and reading all of the Desert Rogues series by Mallery. And while I enjoy them, I must admit that this is my least favorite so far. I'm not entirely sure why. I liked the characters but they didn't quite ring true to me, especially Malik. I understand that as the Crown Prince he would have a certain level of cockiness and expectation about him but he seemed to overplay it at times with Liana. I usually enjoy the internal conflict that her characters go through when trying to come to terms with their feelings, but I felt like Liana was portrayed as a strong character then seemed too wishy-washy in her actions. She admitted she liked him, then she didn't. She made a stand and insisted that Malik was going to have to give something before she'd give in . . . and then she gave in anyway. The only time she truly acted in character was when she left. I've enjoyed several other of the sheik books (both earlier and later in the series) and I enjoyed this one but not as much. If you're reading the series, it's worth reading as you'll see other characters you already know and it will fill in the blank for this brother.

09/22/2017: I re-read this book and must admit I seemed to have enjoyed it more than last time. The characters didn't feel as 'off' to me as they apparently did last year. What I noticed this time, was the humor

of the book. I loved that Liana mentions the resemblance of her situation to those in the sexy romances she reads--but how reality is a lot different. I also found it hilarious that Malik turned to those same novels to try and get tips on wooing Liana--and ended up creeping her out with his ankle compliments! Very fun, tongue-in-cheek look at her own writing by Mallery.

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## **Debra says**

### **The Sheik's Secret Bride**

In this story the new school teacher and her daughter are on a plane when they see a large amount of men on horses heading to cut off the plane. Once they come inside to take away a woman with them. This is the start of a relationship with her and the mysterious Sheik. Will he be able to court her and convince her of his love?

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## **Liralen says**

I don't make a habit of reviewing romance novels, but I'm going to make an exception for this one:

When I was younger, my family spent a week or two each winter in a cabin in a snowy tinseltown. The town boasted a grocery, a general store, a couple of cheap restaurants, and a liquor store or two. The grocery was pretty basic, but it had, along one wall, a rack of books: romance novels with the covers torn off. (I didn't know, at the time, that this meant that the covers had been returned to the publisher and the books were supposed to have been destroyed...)

One of these books was about an American teacher who catches the eye of an Arab prince. She catches his eye, he (view spoiler) against her will, (view spoiler) without her consent, and then doesn't understand why she has reservations about being with him.

I have no idea what happened to that original coverless version of the book. But! Now I have one better: a few days ago, poking around in a charity shop, what should I find...but a copy of the very same book, cover intact! (The cover, by the way, is not the most impressive thing ever.)

My recollection of the story was surprisingly accurate -- yesterday, halfway through the book, I was telling my S.O. about having stumbled across it. "I'm only halfway through, but soon he's going to take her off into the desert to visit with a nomadic tribe, they'll (view spoiler)" Not long thereafter, I was reading while my S.O. finished some things up: "Aha!" said I. "'Malik studied her. "Next weekend I've been invited out to dine with one of our nomad tribes...I thought you might like to join me for the evening" [he said].'" Apparently my memory for books holds up pretty well.

Anyway. I won't go deep into discussion of this -- I rather understand the "ripped away and dropped in the lap of luxury" appeal. That said, Liana had *such* a stereotypical view of Arabian culture that even when the author knocked down some of her assumptions the book came across as a bit xenophobic. There also isn't a lot of room for strong females in the book -- I really wished one (or more) of the secondary female characters had taken Liana's side rather than saying "But look on the bright side! You're living in a palace, and look, you can be a princess!" That's a pretty simplistic view of the situation, yeah? Liana spends a lot of time

telling Malik that her life is not his to control, but it's not clear that the message ever reaches its intended destination.

I did enjoy the book. Rather a lot, actually, although I suspect that's because I have a bit of a soft spot for it (and because parts of it were so outrageous that it provided quite a good laugh)...I just wish there'd been some nuance mixed in with the opulence.

There are some serious benefits to doing much of one's shopping at charity shops.

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## **M says**

3 1/2

Much better than #1.. Still fluff, and not sure if it was worth the time.

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## **Quinn Fforde says**

A good classic romance

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## **Dina says**

The most romantic lines uttered by Malik Khan, Crown Prince of El Bahar:

*"You have slender ankles."*

*"I can wrap my fingers around your wrist with room to spare. You are a delicate flower of a woman, yet so very strong inside."*

*"Your skin is the color of cream."*

*"I want you to know how much I cherish you."*

*"You are a light in the evening sky."*

*"All other beauty pales before your radiance."*

*"I will dream of your slender ankles, your pale skin and the sweet scent of your essence."*

And last, but not least:

*"I am Malik Khan, Crown Prince of El Bahar. I am the future ruler of this nation, and I have done you a great honor by taking you as my wife."*

No wonder Liana fell in love with him. Who could have resisted such charming words? LOL



