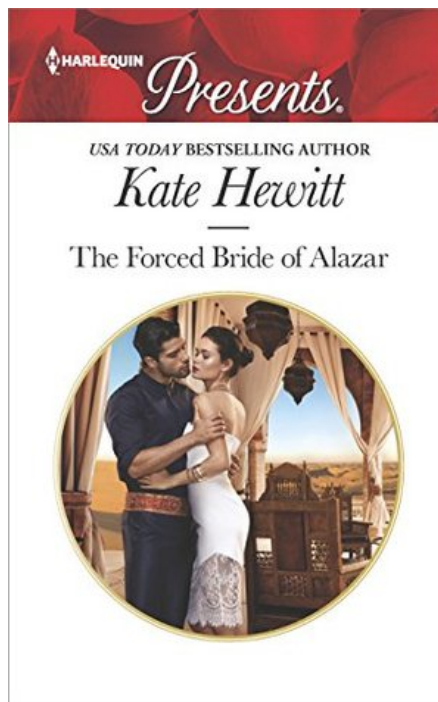




The Forced Bride of Alazar

Kate Hewitt

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Claimed for the sultan's pleasure!

Kidnapped decades ago, Azim al Bahjat stuns the Kingdom of Alazar with his sudden return. To secure his position, the ruthless royal must claim the woman who was always intended to be his—even if sheltered yet beguiling Johara Behwar resists...

No matter how secretly thrilling she finds the flashes of heat beneath Azim's icy exterior, Johara's every instinct is to run. But Azim will not be denied, and as he shows his virgin bride how intoxicating their wedding night could be, Johara soon finds herself enticed to surrender to the sultan!

The Forced Bride of Alazar Details

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From Reader Review The Forced Bride of Alazar for online ebook

Ti says

A total waste of time. Hero is a serious asshole. Even his past is no excuse. The whole story is basically stockholm syndrome. No romance. Blech.

Mary says

Very emotional. Twenty years after being kidnapped, then enslaved, Azim is back in Alazar to become Sultan. As part of his new life, Azim is determined to marry Johara, the innocent woman who was destined to marry the next sultan- no matter who he is. Johara was relieved when her engagement to Malik ended and thought that at long last she would have the freedom to do what *she* wanted to do. Unfortunately, she was betrayed on every side and finds herself married to a man who is cold and wants nothing more to do with her than to use her body to get heirs.

Again, I liked that the book had both Azim's point of view and Jahara's, so the reader understands what each character is going through. There's so much hope, yet so much agony. One thing I got impatient with was how often Johara caved or read too much into Azim's actions when he appeared to be kind to her.

Romance_reader says

Liked this one, especially how the H falls for the h - the romance developed very naturally.

Jenny says

DNF@40%

Rgreader says

Just ok. The hero took way too long to acknowledge he loved the heroine and then didn't show her his love. Lynne Graham in her older harlequins was an expert in showing the single hero being in love with the heroine. Saying I love you is not enough especially after a betrayal in the last few chapters. This happened in the Forced Bride of Alazar which is why this reader was left not satisfied upon finishing this book.

Kay (aka) Miss Bates says

When Miss Bates started reading Hewitt's Forced Bride Of Alazar, she was not pleased. Alazar's title, premise, and set-up left much to be desired, but HPs are Miss Bates reading-snack of choice, she loves Hewitt, and she persisted. There isn't much to recommend Alazar's opening. Johara Behar's arranged

marriage to Malik al Bahjat was dissolved when Malik's long-lost love, secret baby, and kidnapped older brother showed up. For a few days, Johara enjoys the possibility of steering her life her way. To date, she's lived quietly in Provence with her mother. She reads, tends her garden, and creates plant-based cures for a variety of ailments. Hewitt's Johara is a classic introvert. Her hopes and dreams of a free life are shattered, however, when her father informs her that the broken engagement has been reinstated with the new Sultan, the long-lost brother Azim. You're probably thinking, this is standard HP fare, what got Miss Bates's goat? Patience, dear reader.

Having never received it from her mother, Johara craves her father's love. She begs him to release her from the "new" arrangement, but Arif shows his true colours. Johara is only a tool in her father's lust for power and cultivation of the new sultan. Johara travels to the Sultanate of Alazar to meet her austere, cold fiancé. Azim is tall, dark, handsome, scarred, and a tyrant. He declares they are to marry next week, rejects Johara's pleas to get to know each other, and informs her she is to live in the harem. Miss Bates thought she could never, never find any liking for this hero. Things didn't look good at all.

Devastated by her father's betrayal and horrified by a future with Azim, Johara runs away to Paris, where she turns into a TSTL heroine. She accepts a "waitressing" position with a sleazy character in the midst of the Quartier Latin and finds herself in the middle of a sexual slavery ring ... until Azim shows up, in the nick of time, to rescue her. What choice does our TSTL heroine have but to surrender to her matrimonial fate? She and Azim marry, travel to his Neapolitan estate, and from there, back to Alazar for the religious one. At this point, Miss Bates was a breath away from DNF-ing Hewitt's romance. Miss Bates wonders how many HP-readers carry on with a possible DNF because of the category's brevity? She suspects, as she did for Alazar, that many of us think, "What the heck? I'm already at 40%, and I only have another 45 minutes to finish it ... " Finish it she did, dear reader, and dammit, Hewitt turned this cringe-worthy mess into a winner.

How does Hewitt bring *The Forced Bride* back from the brink of DNF-hood? As she always does, by slowing down the tropes. A peculiar statement, you might say to MissB. But she is convinced that the weakest romances gallop to the HEA, usually by making the love scenes uppermost in establishing the hero and heroine's connection. The best romance writers, like Hewitt, do the opposite, doling out the love scenes sparingly and making them unique and organic to the couple.

Specifically, Hewitt makes her narrative about redeeming the HP conventions that so marred it to start. She does so in various ways. She establishes good witty "chin" for her heroine: "Johara glared at him, the lift of her chin now seeming stubborn rather than courageous, and entirely aggravating." In this of many Johara-Azim confrontations, Hewitt humorously makes Johara go from someone Azim can occasionally indulge because she pretty and his wife to someone who will sock him one in the confrontational arena. Suddenly, he's on much shakier ground. Hewitt also matures her heroine, wiping the TSTL slate clean with: "Perhaps as the wife of the Sultan she could carve out a life for herself, do good in the world." Johara finds purpose in her role for herself, not as Azim's arm-candy, but with the hope of serving others.

Lastly, Hewitt has Johara reach out to Azim, to try to understand him and make the best of their circumstances: " 'But now that we are married, I would like to get along with you, Azim. I would like us to be...friends, at least.' 'Friends?' He repeated the word disbelievingly, everything inside him resisting such a suggestion. He didn't have friends. 'Why shouldn't we?' Johara pressed. 'We're married. We're going to share our lives, have children one day, God willing. Wouldn't it be better for both of us if we could actually like each other a little bit? Share with each other our concerns, our fears, our hopes...?' " At this point, Miss Bates could finally like and root for Johara. She was growing up and was learning to make the best of her life without compromising her integrity. Azim, of course, still needed a lot of work.

Another reason Miss Bates can't quit Hewitt is that she sure can wield a metaphor. A writer in control of her material can keep Miss Bates reading, despite the tired old tropes, evident in this little gem: "Azim's voice was the quiet snick of a drawn blade." It captures Azim's ability for finality, for the declarative, that so

annoy Johara. But Hewitt also starts the slow journey to his alpha-bad redemption with a great line establishing his decency with humorous, internal truth-telling: “He knew he was being overbearing and unreasonable, but he’d been pushed into it by her insouciant indifference.” Miss Bates guffawed! Hewitt then deepened Azim, showed woundedness and vulnerability, which he exposes only to Johara, because of how she reaches out to him in friendship: “She’d seen him in pain and she hadn’t thought he was weak. The realisation was like missing a step in a staircase, jolting him, opening him to other, unsettling possibilities.” Another great metaphor, the stair-trip showing how Azim’s marriage to Johara and Johara’s gesture allow him to become more than the cold, stereotypical alpha-male he exhibits initially.

After Hewitt ensures Johara’s and Azim’s three-dimensionality, she builds a connection between them based on “knowing” the other outside the bedroom: “He had so convinced himself he wasn’t interested in getting to know her, didn’t need to know. Now he found he wanted to, not just for mere expediency’s sake but out of simple—and growing—interest in who she was.” The stuff of romance is made of being known at the deepest, most vulnerable levels of oneself. The love scenes, as Hewitt wisely shows in Azim and Johara’s relationship, can be a source both of making this possible, or pushing them apart.

Romance is about intimacy, not sexuality, the desire to be known by one other person in the deepest way possible and to know the other in the same way: “... part of him knew he wanted to be known” and Johara’s beautiful admittance: “She wanted to be a partner. A love, a soul mate, his heart’s desire. The realisation bloomed and grew within her like the most fragrant and beautiful flower in any garden.” In the end, romance is about opening the self to the other, selflessly wanting the other to do the same, and giving to the other, putting them “above all others”. Hewitt illustrates this when Azim comes upon a much happier Johara, planting her medicinal herbs: “‘I am glad to see you so occupied.’ He was, fiercely so. He wanted her to make a life for herself here. He wanted, he realised, for her to be happy.” In the end, Hewitt betrays her narrative with a lame betrayal scene, but a necessary one for Azim to break through his emotional barriers (they are many and justified) to admit he loves Johara.

Hewitt’s *Forced Bride Of Alazar* is both flawed and utterly satisfying. With Miss Austen, Miss Bates says it is evidence of “a mind lively and at ease,” Emma.

Kate Hewitt’s *The Forced Bride Of Alazar* is published by Harlequin Books. It was released in April 2016 and is available at your preferred vendors. Miss Bates received an e-ARC from Harlequin Books, via Netgalley.

Esther says

ARC provided by Netgally and Harlequin for an honest review.

DNF 40%

This was so dry and didn't engage me at all.

The story line was flat as well as one dimensional characters.

First DNF in a HR in a while.

Liba says

Johara (just how old is she ? early 20s?) grew up in France, living with a mother fighting depression. Her Alazari father visits them from time to time. Johara has no close friends, prefers her herb garden and stillroom. For the last 15 years she was the intended bride of Malik, the next Sultan of Alazar. Suddenly he ends the engagement and Johara feels free for the first time in her life...but then her father tells her there was a change: Malik is no longer the heir. Azim, his long-lost older brother is back and expects to marry her ! Johara tries to get out of the new engagement and fails.

Azim (34) is a strange man. We know nothing about how, when, why and by whom he was kidnapped at 14 (perhaps it is mentioned in the first book, The Secret Heir of Alazar?). There are snippets of information about his enemy, Paolo Caivano, and his previous life in Italy. He is cold to his bride, isn't interested in getting to know her. So Johara runs away to Paris, only to fall into the wrong company.

Azim distrusts people, even Johara. To him, love is a weakness.

Although both have lived for many years in Europe (she in France and he in Italy), Alazar is still a very Arab tribal country and Azim must comply to the rules. Thus Johara finds her in a hijab and living in a harem..alone.

Malik appears in the book, as does his lover/fiancee, Gracie.

Danielle says

This book had some of the most sensual scenes, which I wasn't expecting. It was such a good surprise. That scene where she was helping with his headache was beyond steamy yet very romantic too. There was an intimacy in that scene, which really brought them closer. I loved seeing that intimacy between them. Their first time scene was really good too and again very sensual but very romantic too. The setting was lush and very descriptive so I had a very clear picture in my mind. But the scene was also a very emotional one too because they were really opening up to one another and allowing the deeper emotions flow. All the love scenes were like that, and I really enjoyed that aspect and enjoyed it. I loved the romance here.

There wasn't a lot of angst in the book which was a little disappointing. There was tension between them and a lot of back and forth between them, which was entertaining though at times it got tiring seeing him push her away. It seemed like ever chapter he did it and it made me want to shake him. It was mean and cruel of him to do to her. Really it was unfair.

I did like the build up in the book. It was a nice steady pace that just built over time. I liked how much she wanted to get to know him and become friends and not just accept having just a loveless marriage. I liked how she wore her heart on his sleeve. I didn't like the fact she kept getting hurt by others around her, but I liked how sweet and open she was. I loved seeing her really fall in love with him. I could see it and feel it. And that was all about the build up.

I didn't like the ending because it was kind of abrupt and I felt was rushed. I felt he could have done more to make up for what he did with his misconceptions. I needed more groveling from him. He needed to make up big and he just didn't. I was okay with the story up until that point then the ending kind of fell flat.

Overall I did like and enjoy it. It was very romantic and sensual story that was really the highlight of the book. It was sweet and tender with lots of beautiful moments thrown into it that I really liked. It was very intimate too which was awesome. I wish there was more angst and intensity that I felt while reading it. There just could have been more there. The number of times he pushed her away was kind of ridiculous and after awhile it got to be a little too much. He did a lot of boneheaded moves yet he didn't really make up for it. He needed a grand gesture to show her how much he cared about her. That would have taken the cake for me

and put it over the top and I think I could have overlooked some of the other flaws in the story. It was a good story though and for most part I did enjoy it.

Maria Rose says

The Forced Bride of Alazar by Kate Hewitt is the second book in the Seduced by a Sheikh series. The desert kingdom of Alazar is the backdrop, and the ruling al Bahjat family straddles the line between traditional expectations of the Bedouin tribes and the realities of modern life. Azim al Bahjat, kidnapped as a teenager and thought dead, has returned to claim his rightful place as heir. A marriage arranged with another royal family, the Behwars, means that the beautiful and innocent Johara is destined to be his wife. Strangers forced into a marriage of convenience, can their duty to their country lead to a love match?

For more of this review please visit Harlequin Junkie: <http://harlequinjunkie.com/review-the...>

Note: a copy of this story was provided by the publisher for review.

Diana McVicker says

Great book highly recommended.

Laura says

I liked the book. I wish there was a little more detail on who kidnapped Azim and why.

Izzie d says

An arranged marriage.

A cold groom who is emotionally damaged and a woman who just wants to make her own decisions in her life.

Anabel says

A very heartwarming sad story with a happy ending

The H has had a gut wrenching disturbing past that has left him bitter and broken. Will the h's love heal his emotional wounds which run deeper than the horrifying physical ones? I truly enjoyed the story in its entirety.

Terri Hebert says

Really enjoyed this series. Highly recommend it !!!
