



Alice-Miranda at the Palace **by Jacqueline Harvey**

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Fans of the sweet-natured Alice-Miranda Highton-Smith-Kennington-Jones will be pleased the author has published another novel in the series. Although Alice-Miranda attends boarding school at Winchesterfield-Downsfordvale Academy for Proper Young Ladies, this story is set at Evesbury Palace where Queen Georgiana is celebrating her silver jubilee.

There's a lot going on in the storyline. Alice-Miranda has been allowed to invite three of her good friends, Millie, Jacinta and Sloane, to join in the festivities at the palace. Unfortunately, spiteful Caprice tags along with her mother who is catering for the grand event. The friends also have to deal with the Queen's obnoxious twin grandsons who do their best to ruin the celebrations.

Most intriguing of all is the kidnapping threat that the security team are trying to thwart before the evil plot forces the Queen to abdicate. Who are the villains, and who is the mysterious woman living in the hidden cottage? It's a complex tale with many twists and turns.

There is a large cast of characters with a list at the end of the book explaining their various roles. However, it would have been better to place the list in the introductory pages so readers know it's there and can refer to it.

Palace protocol is an odd mix of courteous behaviour, eccentric royalty and lavish hospitality combined with unruly, wilful children. Hectic at times, but it all works out well in the end. Good fun.

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Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

