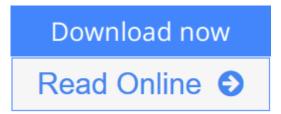


Possessed by the Highlander (The MacLerie Clan Book 3)

By Terri Brisbin



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Marian Robertson rescued a child and destroyed her reputation. Now, to keep her family safe, she must marry the stern, dark-eyed warrior negotiating a truce between their clans—and risk her heart to protect the truth.

Manipulated into marrying the exiled "Robertson Harlot," Duncan, peacemaker for the MacLerie clan, finds his new wife's courage and spirit make it impossible to resist her. But will he put his honor at stake to free her from her past—and claim her love forever?



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• Sales Rank: #273989 in eBooks • Published on: 2008-08-01 • Released on: 2008-08-01 • Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Booklist

Duncan MacLerie had come to the Robertson clan hoping to negotiate a settlement with the new laird, but instead of securing a peace treaty, Duncan finds himself returning home with a new wife after he is tricked into marrying the laird's sister, Marian Robertson, otherwise known as the Robertson Harlot. Marian surprises Duncan when she refuses his offer of marriage, though, and insists on a "handfasting" ceremony instead. Now both Duncan and Marian have the freedom to end things after a year, but the real question becomes whether either will choose to do so. A woman with a complicated past and a reputation she doesn't deserve finds herself involved with a man of courage and honor in Brisbin's latest richly emotional and splendidly sexy medieval romance. --John Charles

About the Author

Terri Brisbin is a mom, a wife and a dental hygienist (in her spare time!) and has sold more than 1.8million copies of her historical and paranormal romance novels and novellas inmore than 25 countries and 20 languages around the world.

A three-time RWA RITA® finalist and USA Todaybestselling author, Terri has been published by Berkley/Jove, Harlequinand Kensington Books. In addition to working on more historical romances scheduled for release through 2016, she has re-published her earlier books and has a new fantasy romanceseries coming from NAL beginning in 2015!

Visit her website at terribrisbin.com for more information or 'friend' her at Facebook at facebook.com/terribrisbin

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"'Tis said that her breasts fill a man's hand with their creamy fullness."

"Or his mouth!" another in the back shouted.

"I heard the tale that her legs can circle a man's girth and pull him into heaven's very grasp." This from the youngest of the group. "And her hair falls in raven waves down her back." Duncan swore he could hear an almost wistful longing in the voice of a boy on the verge of manhood.

"Nay, 'tis the palest of blond hair," called out another.

"I heard as red as...Hamish's!" said Tavis.

They laughed at that bit of overblown if confused imagery, but the chuckling quieted quickly and Duncan realized they were all thinking the same thing.

"Aye, laddie," Hamish called out then as he tossed his head, making his dark red hair flow down his back.

"And I heard the tale that her hair was all that covered the lass's charms when she were caught by her da, the old laird, wi' two men or mayhap three in her bed."

Duncan was tempted to warn them off, but Hamish began singing just then. It was a quick little tune that was familiar to all of them, but Hamish changed a few of the words and turned it into something bawdy about the

sexual delights offered by the woman in the Robertson clan called the Harlot as well as her various physical attributes. Duncan let a few more minutes of merriment to go by before he finally intervened.

"'Tis one thing to say such things among ourselves, but talk like that could ruin all my efforts to negotiate with the girl's brother," he said, meeting the gaze of each one in turn. "Discretion is one of my important tools and I expect that you will guard your tongues. She is ruined and she was exiled. There is nothing else to say of her."

The men behind him grumbled under their breaths, but he knew they would follow his orders. He'd chosen them for that very reason—he needed to know he could count on their obedience during the possibly contentious negotiations that he faced. One wrong word, one wrong act, one untoward glance even and the months of preparation and preliminary work would be undone.

The sun broke through the clouds just as the men reached the point in the path where they could look across the valley to the beginning of Robertson lands. Lands that spread for miles from here in the Grampian Mountains out to Perth near the eastern coast of Scotland. Lands that held villages, acres of thick forests, well-stocked rivers, rich farmland and rolling mountains. And thousands of fighting men who had stood at Robert the Bruce's back decades before.

Aye, the Robertsons were well-stocked and well-armed and that simply added to the appeal of the proposed alliance. For a moment, Duncan shielded his eyes from the sun and searched across the valley for the road leading to the keep.

"You can make camp here and wait for my return," Duncan said as he turned to face them. "It should take no more than three days."

"He just wants the Harlot to himself," Donald said, with a laugh.

Duncan could not stifle the curse that burst out of his mouth. The men nodded in acceptance of this new warning, except for Hamish. Damn him, he simply winked. Hamish knew too much of Duncan's recent dissatisfaction with life and with women to not make some comment, but he wisely left it at the wink.

"At midday three days hence ride to the western edge of the village and meet me," Duncan said as he turned his horse and began down the path to the village in the distance.

His men knew their duties and he did not doubt that they would have a small, unnoticeable camp set up by dark. And he would be well on his way to meet the man from the Robertson clan who provided him with details and news not easily found about the clan and their new laird.

The old laird's passing two years before had been the opening he needed to begin negotiations. But, it had not been without hard work, determination and the complete support of Connor MacLerie. As Duncan passed through a thick copse of trees, he followed the path of a stream as it moved downhill and onto Robertson lands. From the maps he'd studied, he knew that he would reach a village in another two or so hours of riding.

As he rode, he reviewed his plans, his questions for Ranald, and the provisions of the treaty he carried for his laird. Contingency plans and alternate demands were already prepared, for Duncan believed and had learned through experience that triumph came from planning and thorough preparation and left nothing to chance.

Planning and preparation were the keys to a successful campaign of any kind whether it be an alliance or a war. And since everyone knew that the relationship between the clans could go from alliance to war in

moments over nothing more than a word spoken wrongly, he'd spent the last months readying himself for this series of meetings.

The land leveled out before him, but the trees stayed thick, blocking most of the sunlight where he rode. Watching for the place where the stream split and each branch curved away, one making a path to the still-distant keep and one flowing farther down and off toward the east, Duncan knew he was approaching the meeting place outside the village. When the low stone bridge came into sight, he slowed his horse to a walk and approached it slowly and quietly.

By the look of it, he'd arrived a bit earlier than planned, so after he watered the horse, he took the skin of ale from his bag and drank deeply. Seeing a small break in the trees, he dismounted and walked his horse there. Searching inside the bag for his supplies, he found the wrapped piece of cheese and hard crust of bread he'd brought along. Ranald would see him well-fed, so this would be enough to keep his stomach from growling until then.

A short while passed and Duncan found himself on edge, the importance of these talks no doubt the reason for it. Leaving his horse tethered in the small clearing, he strode toward the bridge to see if he could catch sight of Ranald. Without crossing, he searched along the path that led toward the village for any sign of him.

None.

'Twas not like Ranald to be late or to miss a meeting. Duncan decided to give the man some time before leaving and returning to his men since he could not travel on to the Robertson's keep without them. Pacing near the bridge, just out of sight of the path, he waited. The only sounds he heard were those of the forest creatures and a few birds flying overhead...and the sound of his jaws and teeth as he ground them.

No matter his reputation for a boundless supply of patience when in the midst of difficult negotiations, Duncan was, in reality, a man with little of it. And, as the time passed slowly, that fact was made new to him. The scream, when it came, seemed so out of place as to be in his imagination.

Tilting his head and listening intently so as to discover the scream's origin, Duncan turned around and waited for only a moment before another one came. This one was not as loud, but he was able to locate it and began to trot over the bridge toward the sound. Turning off the path, he pushed through the trees and found himself behind a small stone cottage. Listening as he made his way to one side, Duncan crept to the corner and looked around it toward the front of the building.

Never expecting the need for it, Duncan realized his sword remained on his horse, so he reached down and drew forth his dagger. More a short sword than a knife, Duncan relied on it many times and in many scrapes and trouble. He took a quick step away from the cottage and used a huge tree a pace away as cover to find the trouble.

And there it was—a woman struggling in the arms of a man who was much taller and stronger than she.

Duncan took a moment to assess the situation and realized that the woman did not appear to be in imminent danger, but she certainly was not welcoming such an embrace. Her kerchief loosened as she fought off the man's hold and fell to the ground revealing a wealth of brown hair, but now he noticed she did not scream. Actually, as he observed them, he noticed that she purposely turned them so that the man faced the path and not the cottage.

A sound drew his attention then and, as he looked at the side of the cottage, he met the gaze of a small child. A young girl, who could have been no more than five years and who had the palest blond hair he'd seen,

peered out of the small window. He read the fear in her wide eyes and trembling mouth and tried to allay it by smiling slightly and raising his finger to his own lips to warn her to stay quiet.

Now he understood why the woman turned the man's attention from the cottage—to protect the child within. Duncan stood up and stepped out from the shadows. He cleared his throat loudly and waited for the man to acknowledge him. It took only a moment and the man took pains to position the woman between them, even as she pivoted to turn from the front of the cottage.

"Twould seem the lady wishes not for your attentions," Duncan said quietly. "Leave her in peace now." The man stopped at his warning but did not release her.

"I think ye should no' meddle in what's no' yers to hiv a concern aboot," the man called back to him, dragging her a few steps back to separate them more.

Watching the woman, he noticed that she seemed more disgruntled than fearful. A calm look of purpose filled her face and, although she did not relax in the man's hold, neither did she now struggle as before. She whispered something only the man could hear as though warning the man of something.

"Release her and go on your way," he repeated, this time moving his dagger between them to show he was armed.

This was the last thing he needed now and especially when negotiations were tentative. He would not hesitate to protect the woman if necessary, but it would raise questions about his private presence here without knowledge of the laird. Duncan hoped the man would simply believe he would not hesitate to use the weapon and hoped he would not be forced to. "Release her."

Although he looked ready to offer argument, the man dropped his arms and pushed her away from him. Without a backward glance, he ran down the narrow path and into the woods.

Duncan ...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michelle Curry:

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Shirley Arrington:

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