



Dark Seduction (The Masters of Time Book 1)

By Brenda Joyce

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Since her mother's murder, Claire has done everything possible to make a safe, secure life for herself in a city where danger lurks on every street corner, especially in the dark of night. But nothing can prepare her for the powerful and sexual medieval warrior who sweeps her back into his time—a treacherous, frightening world where the hunters and the hunted are one and the same. Claire needs Malcolm to survive, yet she must somehow keep the dangerously seductive Master at arm's length. For Malcolm's soul is at stake—and fulfilling his desires could prove fatal...

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Dark Seduction (The Masters of Time Book 1) By Brenda Joyce Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Bestselling author Joyce kicks off her Masters of Time series with a master's skill, instantly elevating her to the top ranks of the ever-growing list of paranormal romance authors. Her strong, smart heroine, Claire Camden, is a woman damaged by the violent deaths of her mother and cousin; her life revolves around her dreams, her beloved bookstore and her efforts to keep safe. Those efforts prove less than successful when her apartment is invaded one night by a band of warriors from the past who make strange, threatening demands. Soon, Claire is catapulted into 15th-century Scotland (a land she happens to have studied for years) with the help of a handsome medieval warrior named Malcolm. Malcolm is a Master, charged with protecting Innocents (a group that includes Claire), but he hides a secret that could lose him his soul. His quest is to defeat the evil Moray and retain the safety of his land and people; of course, unbeknownst to Claire, he can't do that without her. Steeped in action and sensuality, populated by sexy warriors and strong women, graced with lush details and a captivating story, this title may not set a new standard in the paranormal/time-travel romance genre, but it certainly qualifies as a superlative example.

(May)

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The Present

Claire was afraid of the dark.

It was dark now—and something had just thudded downstairs.

She stood absolutely still in the bedroom that was above her bookstore. Claire sold old and rare books and manuscripts, as well as the occasional used but rare tome, and because of the quarter-of-a-million-dollar inventory she kept downstairs, she had a state-of-the-art security system, a Taser and a gun. She knew she hadn't left a window open, as it was sweltering in the city in July, and she would never leave a window open anyway. It was too dangerous. Crime was out of control in the city. Last month, her neighbor, a wannabe model, had been murdered, and although the police weren't saying so, she suspected it had been a pleasure crime. She strained to hear, debating getting her Beretta from her bedside drawer.

But she heard nothing now. As she stood there, clad in a pair of cotton candy-striped boxers and a thin ribbed tank top, her bedroom looking as if a tornado had cycled through it, the stray cat that had appeared earlier that day wandered in from the hall outside. She was flooded with relief. The cat had knocked something over! She shouldn't have suspected the worst—after all, her motion-detection sensors hadn't gone off—but even after all these years, she hated being alone at night.

Terrified, the child crouched by the door, as a dark, deathly shadow drifted by.

Claire scowled at the handsome black cat, refusing to allow a single thought of her mother's long-ago murder to invade her consciousness now. "You! I shouldn't have fed you, now, should I?"

Purring, the cat slithered between her ankles, rubbing sensually there.

Claire scooped him up, the first time she had done so, holding him tightly to her chest. "Rascal," she whispered. "I need a dog, not a cat, but if I didn't know that someone was missing you, I'd keep you."

The cheeky creature actually licked her face.

Claire wiped her chin, dropping the cat to the floor, knowing she'd have to post some Found notices in her Tribeca neighborhood before she left for the airport tomorrow. She was in the midst of packing for a long-overdue vacation. Tomorrow, she was bound for Edinburgh, and on Friday she would be driving across the Highlands. This time, her first stop would be the starkly beautiful island of Mull.

Excitement filled her. The cat had made himself comfortable on her bed, and Claire stepped away to return to her packing. She went to her antique bureau, purchased on a previous trip abroad in Lisbon. She traveled extensively for her business. Smiling as she tossed her dark auburn hair over her shoulder, she pulled out a pile of tanks and tees. She was twenty-eight years old, soon to be twenty-nine, and she ran an extraordinarily successful business, with half of it conducted on the Internet. Since graduating from Princeton with a master's degree in medieval European history, she'd taken exactly two personal vacations. Her first had been to London with a tour of Cornwall and Wales. At the last minute a friend had told her she had to spend a few days in Scotland, and even though she was not a creature of impulse—Claire liked to be in control—she had changed her itinerary the day before departing to do so. The moment she had passed Berwickupon-Tweed, an odd excitement had filled her. She had instantly loved Scotland.

It had almost been like coming home.

She'd given herself the standard tour that time—Dunbar, Edinburgh, Stirling, Iona and Perth. But she had known she would come back to explore the Highlands. Their stark majesty and rugged desolation called out to her in a way she had never before experienced. Two years ago, she had returned, spending ten days in the north and northwest. On her last day, she had discovered the small, craggy, beautiful island of Mull.

She had traveled to Duart on the sound of Mull, the seat of the Maclean lairds for many centuries past. An intense need to explore and discover the history of the area had overcome her, but wandering through the castle hadn't satisfied her at all. Just before leaving the island, she had stumbled across a charming bed-and-breakfast in Malcolm's Point, and she had been directed to Dunroch by its owners. She had been told Dunroch was seat of the Macleans of south Mull and Coll and that the current laird remained in residence, although he was rarely seen. He was a recluse, they said, and unwed, a terrible shame. Like most aristocrats, financial reasons forced him to open the grounds and a few rooms to the public.

Intrigued, Claire had rushed over to Dunroch an hour before closing. She had been so overwhelmed by the gray castle that the moment she approached the drawbridge that lay over the now-empty moat, chills had begun to run up and down her spine. She had been breathless as she passed under a raised portcullis and through the short, dark passageway of the gatehouse, realizing it had been a part of the original castle, built in the early fourteenth century by Brogan Maclean. She had paused in the inner bailey, staring not at the bare courtyard, but toward the sea and the keep. She didn't have to be told to know that the tower, looking out

over the Atlantic, was a part of the original fortifications, too.

All of the rooms were closed to the public except for the Great Hall. Once inside, Claire had stood there, oddly mesmerized. It had seemed familiar, although she had never been there before. She had stared at the large, sparsely furnished chamber, seeing not the three elegant seating arrangements, but a trestle table, occupied by the lord and his noblemen. No fire burned in the massive hearth, but Claire felt its stifling heat. When another tourist had walked past her, she had jumped, almost expecting to see the laird of Dunroch. Claire could have sworn she felt his presence.

She could still recall the sight of the imposing castle from the road below the high cliffs as if she had been there yesterday. She'd thought about the castle a lot and she'd even done some research, but the southern Macleans were mysterious. A Google search and her online research library hadn't brought up any reference to any of the southern Macleans since Brogan Mor, and he had died in 1411 at a bloody battle called Red Harlow. The lack of information only whetted her appetite, but Claire had always been insatiable when it came to history.

Claire sorted through a pile of jeans, breathless now. This trip, she was spending one night in Edinburgh and driving directly to Dunroch. She was staying at the bed-and-breakfast, Malcolm's Arms, and she had given herself three entire days on the island. But there was more. As a seller of rare books, she intended to ask the present-day laird if she could have access to his library. It was an excuse to meet him. She didn't know why she was compelled to do so. Maybe it was because there was no history on this branch of the Macleans since Brogan Mor. Claire had decided the current laird was probably sixty years old, but she had an image of him in her mind, like a mature version of Colin Farrell.

Claire tossed a few pairs of jeans into her suitcase, deciding that she was almost done. She was tall for a woman, standing five foot ten in her bare feet, and she was incredibly fit from kickboxing, running and weight training almost every day. Being strong made her feel safe. When Claire was ten years old, her mother had gone to the corner grocery store, leaving Claire alone in the one-room apartment, promising her that she'd be back in five minutes. She'd never come home.

Claire tried not to remember about that endless night. She'd been a fanciful child, believing in monsters and ghosts, annoying her mother to no end with her claims that creatures lived in her closet and beneath her bed. That night, she'd seen terrifying shapes in every shadow, every drifting drape.

That had been a long time ago. Still, she missed her mother. To this day, she wore an odd pendant which her mother had never taken off—a highly polished pale semiprecious stone set in four arms of gold, each arm intricately detailed with an obviously Celtic design. Whenever Claire felt particularly sad, she would clasp the pendant in her palm, and her grief would ease. She didn't know why her mom had been so attached to it, but she suspected it had something to do with Claire's father. The stone was the dearest memento Claire had.

Not that she had a father. Her mother had been painfully honest, explaining that there had been a single night of passion when she had been young and wild. His name was Alex, and that was all Janine knew—or said she knew.

After her mother's death, Claire had gone to live with her aunt and uncle on their upstate farm. Aunt Bet had welcomed her with open arms, and growing up, Claire had become close to her cousins, Amy and Lorie, both near her own age. When Claire turned fifteen, Aunt Bet had sat her down and told her the gruesome truth.

Her mother hadn't been murdered for the money in her purse or her credit cards. She'd been the victim of a pleasure crime.

That knowledge had changed Claire's life. Her mother had been murdered by a perverted madman. It confirmed her worst fears—bad things were out there and they happened at night.

And then, in her sophomore year of college, her cousin Lorie was murdered while leaving a late-night movie not far from campus. The police had swiftly determined that Lorie had been the victim of yet another pleasure crime. That had been five years ago.

She didn't know when the nation's oh-so-clever press had first coined the phrase *pleasure crime*, but it had been around for as long as she could remember. Social commentators, psychiatrists, liberals and conservatives alike all claimed that society was in a state of anarchy. Eighty percent of all murders were now sexually related, and every year it was getting worse. Lorie had died like a thousand others. She'd had sex. Bodily fluids had shown that she had been very aroused and that the perpetrator had cl...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cary Burgess:

The guide untitled Dark Seduction (The Masters of Time Book 1) is the publication that recommended to you to learn. You can see the quality of the reserve content that will be shown to an individual. The language that article author use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of exploration when write the book, therefore the information that they share for your requirements is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of Dark Seduction (The Masters of Time Book 1) from the publisher to make you far more enjoy free time.

Eleanor Bender:

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Michael Dennison:

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Jerry Sonnier:

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