



Timeless Temptation

The Later Years Prelude

Sky Purington

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The MacLomain Series: Later Years- Prelude

By

Sky Purington

He counted a total of thirty well-trained warriors.

All of which would soon die.

When Logan gave the signal, he and his men attacked. He whipped an ax. It lodged in his target's back. Then he released arrow after arrow. Three more men fell. His hand froze on the hilt of his blade when a flash of color snagged his attention.

Did a lass just ride into battle?

"Bloody hell," he muttered.

"*Where did she come from?*" Niall said telepathically.

"*We'll soon find out.*" Their eyes met. "*Follow me, cousin.*"

They spurred their horses and flew after her.

"*Och, look at her clothing,*" Niall said as he swiped his blade across a man's throat.

"*Hell and damnation.*" Logan's eyes narrowed. "*She's from the future.*"

Enemies rushed them from all angles. Niall swung his sword and took one down. Logan whipped a dagger and brought down another. His men took care of the rest.

Before they could get to the lass, an enemy yanked her onto his horse.

To save her they needed to flank her on either side.

"You take the left, Niall," Logan roared. "I'll take the right."

Adrenaline rushing, they flew after her. Close. Closer. Mere feet away now...

"Logan? Can you hear me?"

Surprised by Bradon's voice, he glanced around. His uncle should be in the twenty-first century, not here in thirteenth century Scotland. No time to worry now. He needed to keep his gaze trained on the lass. Yet when he tried to lock eyes on her again, everything went blurry before fading to black. Within seconds, his surroundings snapped back into focus.

Logan wasn't in Scotland anymore.

He was at the Colonial house in modern day New Hampshire.

Even stranger? He was on the same horse the lass had been riding.

How was that *possible*?

"Are you well?" Bradon eyed Logan with concern as he took the reins.

"Aye. Just confused. I heard your voice then I ended up here." Logan swung down. "What happened?"

"You tell me. When you first appeared, you seemed to be in a daze. A blink later, you were far more lucid." Bradon stroked the horse's muzzle. "Why did you show up on this beastie?"

He assumed Bradon was curious why Logan wasn't on his own horse.

"I dinnae know," Logan said as they walked toward the barn. "'Tis strange." He shook his head and tried to adjust from the rush of warfare to his quiet surroundings. "'Twould take someone powerful to shift me through time like that. One moment we were battling a band of warriors. The next, I was here. I've got to get back. There's a lass in need of saving."

Or was she? After all, her horse was here.

"I'd say you were meant to stop in," Bradon said. "We'll get you back to the battle soon. But first I need to show you something."

"What's that?"

"Not that but *them*." Bradon gestured at several stalls as they entered the barn. "Four horses showed up overnight." He nodded at Logan's horse. "Including this one. Like us, they can speak within the mind. Your horse's name is Athdara. She was here this morn, vanished and has now returned with you. Based on the magic I feel around all four of them, they were likely sent by a MacLomain."

A strange sensation rolled through him when his eyes finally locked on Athdara's.

"*Ceud mìle fàilte*," he murmured in Scottish Gaelic. Though he spoke to the horse, it almost felt like he greeted the lass he had just seen.

"*Her name is Cassie*," Athdara whispered into his mind.

Though he should ask where Athdara came from, he was too curious about Cassie. "*Why did she ride you into battle? Who is she?*"

No response. The horse had closed off her mind.

Baffled, Logan shook his head.

Bradon's eyes flickered from the horse to Logan. "What is it?"

"Athdara," he said. "While I might have arrived here on her, the lass still rode her when I left Scotland. According to the horse, her name is Cassie."

"Interesting," Bradon murmured. "Leslie was contacted by a lass named Cassie. She and her friends want to visit. They're all Brouns."

Logan couldn't hide his shock. "Truly?"

"Aye." Bradon's brows perked. "So 'tis what it seems. Maybe the MacLomain and Broun connections have begun again."

Connections that only happened between a modern day Broun and a medieval MacLomain.

"Maybe." Logan frowned. "But it cannae happen for me."

"Right." Bradon contemplated Logan with a less-than-convinced look. "Because you're betrothed to a lass you've never met."

"Aye, since birth."

"But," Bradon began before Logan cut him off.

"There's no questioning it. I'm a laird and 'twill strengthen the tie between our clans." Logan clenched his jaw. "Not only that but I'd never turn from such a commitment."

"You're a good lad." Bradon squeezed his shoulder and sighed. "Though you've got to be bloody lonely."

If he only knew.

Even so, he was to marry within days and refused to be tempted by another.

"Anyway, Leslie told Cassie not to come," Bradon explained. "But since then we found something else."

"What?"

Bradon headed out of the barn. "Follow me, and I'll show you."

As they walked toward the house, Logan's eyes were drawn to an upstairs window. Had he just seen a lass standing there? Maybe Leslie? Impossible. She had black hair not blond. Besides, when they walked inside moments later, they found her in the living room.

"Hey, Logan." She smiled. "It's good to see you."

Leslie was from present day, and Bradon was her medieval MacLomain.

“Aye, good to see you as well.” He picked up a picture propped on the mantle. It was of him and his parents when he was young. “I haven’t seen this in years.”

“You were so damn cute,” Leslie said. “I couldn’t help but put it out.”

Bradon arched his brows. “More like you had a strong feeling about it.”

Like all Broun lasses, Leslie was a witch.

“Yeah, I guess.” She shrugged and grinned at Logan. “It only makes sense. You *were* born in this house.”

“True,” he conceded, puzzled by her inclination to display the picture. He’d only lived here until he was three and then they had returned to medieval Scotland.

Leslie contemplated the room. “I’m in the mood for a new look in here, so I brought down some paintings from upstairs. Mind helping me hang them, Bradon?”

“Aye, lass.” Bradon lifted one of the paintings propped against the couch. “Logan, what I wanted to show you is on the bedside table in your mother’s old room.”

Logan nodded. “Should I knock first? Have you got company?”

“Nay, ‘tis just us.” Bradon cocked his head. “What makes you ask?”

Odd. He swore he saw a lass up there. Evidently not. He shook his head. “Nothing. I just wanted to be sure.”

He headed upstairs, surprised when he found a small box covered with Celtic symbols. More so, when he looked inside. It contained three small Claddagh rings clearly meant for a lass’s finger. Rings that confirmed the connections through time were *not* over. Each one would lead a Broun to her MacLomain. Logan sighed as he eyed them. There could be no love connection for him. Best to remember that.

Guilt flared. It was wrong of him to crave love from a modern day Broun. But hell, he’d been alone for so long.

Determined to remain honorable, he shut the box and set it down.

Then it happened. The symbols flickered.

Don’t pick it up again. Walk away. One of those rings couldn’t possibly be connected to him.

Yet he *had* to touch the box.

Just one more time.

So he picked it up.

That’s when he saw her.

Face averted, a woman gazed out the window. It was her...from the battle. She had the same hair. The same build.

Cassie.

But why did she appear ghostly?

“Hello?” he murmured.

No response.

He tried again. Louder. Still no reaction.

She opened the window and touched a leaf on the oak tree outside. Suddenly, the autumn foliage turned green. A chill raced through him when he spied his castle in the distance. Based on her gasp and the way she yanked her hand back, she saw it too.

Then it vanished, and everything returned to normal.

Well, as normal as things could be considering an apparition stood in front of him.

One that finally turned around.

He had a split second to register how beautiful Cassie was before she walked right through him. Unexpected heat tore up his spine. Lustful fire accompanied by snapshot images. He staggered forward and braced his hands on the windowsill when sharp arousal nearly brought him to his knees.

There was no escaping what happened next.

She was lying beneath him on a plaid. Not ghostly in the least but solid and real. His hands were braced on the ground, and though he knew this was wrong something deep inside his soul told him it was all right.

Nothing was as it seemed.

This was meant to be.

Her.

Him.

Them.

All thought fled as their eyes met then their lips connected. It was a kiss that outdid all others. Soft and tempered then wild as it deepened. After that, he became lost in something that couldn't possibly exist. That would never happen. Yet he drowned in the sensation.

Her sweet taste.

Soft skin.

Slender legs.

Endless curves.

He relished her response. The way she arched and gasped when he trailed his lips down her delicate neck. How she dug her hands into his hair when he pulled down the front of her dress and sucked a taut nipple into his mouth. She moaned as he fondled and peppered kisses over both breasts.

When their lips reconnected, they groaned. Such lust. Unavoidable desire. Desperate, he yanked up her skirt and settled between her thighs. He needed to feel her heat. To be deep inside her. *Now*. Lost in her eyes, he wrapped his hand around hers and pressed it to the ground.

Ready for pure bliss, he froze when a voice whispered through his mind. "*Stop, Logan.*"

He had come so close to taking her.

So close to betraying another.

Then everything fell away, and he once again stood in the Colonial with his hands braced on the windowsill. He released a shaky breath.

It hadn't happened.

His honor remained intact.

Night had fallen, and Athdara looked up at him from the yard below. It had been her voice that tore him from his vision.

"Ye must get back to Scotland," Athdara said. *"'Tis time to ride into battle once more. 'Tis time to save Cassie. She and her friends are meant to travel through time."*

Cassie. God Almighty, she really *was* coming.

Moments later, Cassie stood beside him looking down at Athdara. Like before, she was ethereal. He tried to drag his eyes away but couldn't. She was too tempting. Too much of something that had long been denied him.

"Nay." He forced his eyes shut. "I cannae do this."

Time to be strong.

Noble.

Resolved.

She was meant for one of his cousins. There was no other explanation.

Which meant that she *must* come.

That she *would* come.

It could be no other way since he already spotted her in Scotland.

What happened between them now was but a ripple in time. Somehow part of a bigger picture that could not include him.

“Logan, are you all right?” Bradon said.

Everything swirled away and yet again, one reality replaced another.

It was daytime and he’d just seen the flicker of the Celtic symbols. He was about to pick up the box but stopped.

“Nay,” he whispered and left it alone, determined to avoid temptation.

“Logan?”

His eyes shot to Bradon. “All is well enough, but I’ve got to go. I’ve had a vision. You must call Cassie back and invite her here.”

“Aye?” Bradon’s eyes went back and forth between Logan and the box. “What kind of vision?”

“One that’s connected to the horses.” Logan headed downstairs. “As you guessed, the Brouns and MacLomains are coming together once more.”

“So we should invite Cassie’s friends too?”

“Aye.”

Leslie heard their conversation and joined them in the foyer. “No worries. I’ll call Cassie and extend the invitation.”

“So I can only assume your vision has to do with Cassie,” Bradon prompted.

Logan nodded but remained vague. “Somehow the horses are connected to the Broun lasses, and they’re going to end up in medieval Scotland.”

“So a vision about Cassie, eh?” Leslie grinned. “That sounds pretty telling.”

“’Twas nothing but a forewarning that she’s going to travel back in time,” he lied. “I’m not meant for any of them. I’m betrothed and mean to see it through.”

“You’re betrothed to a lass you’ve never even met,” Bradon reminded.

“But soon will,” he said.

“Just like you’ll soon meet Cassie,” Leslie murmured.

“Only to save her from the enemy,” Logan assured.

“Right.” A tempered smile hovered on Leslie’s lips. “There isn’t anything more romantic than being saved by a handsome MacLomain.”

Logan narrowed his eyes.

“It’s true.” Leslie shrugged. “Been there, done that.”

Don’t say another word. Walk out and travel back in time. Forget any draw you have to Cassie. Forget the passion felt in a mere vision.

But instead, he paused at the threshold and looked back at the picture on the mantle.

What he meant to say was, “Please put that away. I dinnae want Cassie to see it when she arrives,” but instead, he murmured, “Perhaps ‘twould be wise to keep that there so she’ll recognize my parents when she travels back in time. A means to make her more comfortable.”

“That makes sense.” Leslie quirked the corner of her lip. “And who knows considering all the magic at work around here, maybe she’ll see something else when she looks at it.” She winked. “Besides the cute little boy with piercing blue eyes.”

“Och.” He scowled. “You best not use magic on her.”

Leslie's eyes widened. "I'd *never* use magic on a woman I just met."

Bradon chuckled.

"I mean it." Logan gave her a pointed look. "Dinnae do anything that might lead her astray."

Leslie put a hand over her chest. "Who me?"

"Bloody hell, put the picture away then," Logan muttered as he strode outside, calling over his shoulder, "I love you both and will see you again soon enough."

Because if nothing else had been proven with this jaunt forward in time, it was that big changes were coming. Changes he should not want to be part of. Yet his eyes drifted to the barn in passing. At the horses connected to the Brouns.

Despite efforts not to, his gaze landed on the window that offered a taste of temptation.

A glimpse of Cassie.

She would never know of it. He would never tell her. Nor would he tell anyone.

Though part of his future, she could never be his.

So might Fate be kind and wipe this from his memory.

Yet somehow he knew as he rushed into battle once more that temptation had the power to test time. Be revealed. Challenge hearts.

More than that, it could not be forgotten.

Find out what happens to forbidden love in *Quest of a Scottish Warrior*, [The MacLomain Series: Later Years](#), Book One.