

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

KATHRYN  
LEVEQUE



*The*  
PHANTOM  
BRIDE

A MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

# THE PHANTOM BRIDE

A MEDIEVAL SHORT STORY

BY KATHRYN LE VEQUE

© Copyright 2022 by Kathryn Le Veque Novels, Inc.

Kindle Edition

Text by Kathryn Le Veque

Cover by Kim Killion

Edited by Scott Moreland

Reproduction of any kind except where it pertains to short quotes in relation to advertising or promotion is strictly prohibited.

All Rights Reserved.

The characters and events portrayed in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental and not intended by the author.

License Notes:

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook, once purchased, may not be re-sold. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it or borrow it, or it was not purchased for you and given as a gift for your use only, then please return it and purchase your own copy. If this book was purchased on an unauthorized platform, then it is a pirated and/or unauthorized copy and violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Do not purchase or accept pirated copies. Thank you for respecting the author's hard work.

# KATHRYN LE VEQUE NOVELS

WWW.KATHRYNLEVEQUE.COM

## **ARE YOU SIGNED UP FOR KATHRYN'S BLOG?**

You'll get the latest news and information on exclusive giveaways, exclusive excerpts, coming releases, sales, free books, cover reveals, and more.

Kathryn's blog followers get it all first. No spam, no junk.

Get the latest info from the reigning Queen of English Medieval Romance!

[Sign Up Here](#)

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Another tale inspired by the fabulous Edgar Allan Poe!

If you've read my Gothic novellas (almost always a holiday-themed tale), then you know I am a huge fan of Poe. I've used his poems and short stories as inspiration for these holiday-themed stories and this one is no exception. The Poe work that inspired this particular short story is *The Haunted Palace*.

Poe was quoted as saying that the death of a beautiful young woman was the most poetic thing of all. Many of his poems reflect that (*Annabel Lee*, *The Raven*, etc.). He really liked his dead young women. Go figure. In any case, I've taken that to heart with my own (dead) young woman in this tale, *The Phantom Bride*.

A lonely traveler, a derelict old house with a sad young woman as the inhabitant, a spooky modern post-script, and we've got a winner. The hero of this tale, Sir Lucas de Lara, was a secondary character in my novel, *Beast*. I do love the House of de Lara. But keep in mind this is a short story, so I hope you're entertained. It's great spooky fun!

Happy (ghostly) reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn'. The signature is stylized and includes a small heart symbol at the bottom center.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page

Copyright Page

Author's Note

*Part One: Through the Pale Door*

*Part Two: Smile No More*

*Epilogue: The Phantom Bride*

Kathryn Le Veque Novels

About Kathryn Le Veque





## PART ONE

# THROUGH THE PALE DOOR

*Year of Our Lord 1432*

*Somewhere in North Yorkshire*

He could hardly see.

There was a structure up ahead. That much he knew because the silhouette of something quite large would leave an imprint across the sky when the lightning burst and lit up the countryside. But the rain was pounding so dreadfully that he couldn't get a good look at it. All he knew was that shelter was ahead.

He had to keep going.

The storm was vicious. It had set upon him quite rapidly. One moment, there were only a few clouds in the sky and in the next, there was a deluge. The wind began to howl and the trees lining the road began to bend and sway. The knight had been astride his big horse, an old and steady steed, but when the storm kicked up in earnest, the animal showed signs of nervousness.

They had to find shelter.

There it was again, that massive bastion against the lightning-streaked sky. It was looming closer and he drove his horse towards it, trying to keep the stinging rain out of his eyes and knowing it must be miserable for his horse. He'd had the horse for over twenty years and, not strangely, he was rather attached to it. He treated it like a son. He urged the beast up the road, closer and closer to the castle on the rise.

There was an enormous gatehouse separating him from the shelter he sought, with walls that reached to the sky. He could hardly see them because of the driving rain, so he dismounted his horse at the gatehouse and prepared to announce himself to the sentries on duty. Peering up, he tried to shield his eyes from the rain, looking for a face or two that would surely be looking down at him.

But there wasn't anyone.

The gatehouse was dark and cold, built of dark granite that was gray and slick in the storm. He noticed that the gate itself, an enormous thing built of oak and iron, was slightly ajar. Closer inspection showed that one of the hinges on the north gate had broken, causing the gates to fall against one another and create a small, horse-sized gap.

Leading his steed, the traveler proceeded through the gap.

As the lightning lit up the sky again, he realized that he'd come into the courtyard of an enormous manse. It had towers, like a keep, but it was a house rather than a keep. The structure was shaped like a horseshoe, with the entry being at the center of the "U" shape. The traveler held up his hand to shield his eyes from the pelting rain, searching for shelter for his horse. The courtyard of the manse was cluttered with debris but he saw what looked like a stable on the west side. He pulled his exhausted horse over to the structure, which was nothing more than a roof and walls. It was, however, dry inside.

The traveler managed to get his horse into the small shelter and dried him off as best he could. Finding a bucket, he put water in it for the horse and broke out some of the precious grain he kept for feeding the animal. He tethered the horse, leaving the shelter to the sounds of the animal crunching on the grain.

His target was the manse ahead.

More lightning lit up the sky as he made his way to the weather-bleached door of the manse. He knocked, several times, with no response before finally giving a shove and



pushing the panel open. The bottom of it was badly warped, rubbing against the floor, which had once been stone but was now more dirt than stone. But he managed to shut the door, throwing his body weight into the panel as he closed it.

And with that, the horrible storm was kept outside.

For the time being.

Removing the hood of his oiled cloak, he could hear water dripping somewhere. The house smelled like wet earth and he sneezed, twice, as he stood in the entry and shivered. It was very dark and very cold. And as he timidly made his way inside, he was quite certain that it was vacant. Timbers from the soaring ceiling had crashed onto the floor over the years and he walked past them, eyeing them, looking up to make sure that more of the ceiling wasn't preparing to collapse on him.

All he could see above was darkness.

Water and darkness.

"Is anyone here?" he called.

His words echoed sharply off the walls. There was no reply, only more wind and rain and lightning. He couldn't see very much considering how dark it was so he managed to locate an enormous, dirty hearth and set his bags down. Then, he went around and gathered what dry wood he could find, mostly pieces from the collapsed ceiling, and brought them back to the hearth. Even if the chimney was blocked, the smoke could escape into the room and out one of the many gaping holes in the roof. Using the flint and stone he always carried with him, he ignited the wood in the hearth.

A blaze began to burn.

Relieved at the heat and light, he dried out his hands and tried to warm them, thinking on bringing his horse inside so the animal could have some heat, too. The blaze grew and he found more pieces of broken wood to throw upon the fire. Given that a good portion of the ceiling had collapsed, he had plenty of wood for the fire until morning came.

Maybe he'd bring the horse inside, after all.

More lightning, more wind and rain somehow dampened his enthusiasm for returning to the courtyard awash in torrents of water to retrieve his steed, so he settled down for a moment, leaning against something that, at one time, might have been a chair. It was difficult to tell because the leather had long been eaten away, leaving only a frame behind. But it was sturdy, whatever it was, and he leaned on it, feeling some relief for the first time all day. He'd been traveling home at a swift pace because he'd received word that his mother was dying. He'd come all the way from Boroughbridge on his way to Brampton, his family's estate, and he'd decided to take a shortcut through the Teesdale Vale.

And that's where he found himself now.

In this vast, dark, and verdant vale.

He couldn't admit that it probably wasn't a good idea to come this way because the Teesdale Vale could be unpredictable. The mountains were steep and the river that ran through it could be treacherous. But it would cut almost an entire day of travel off his journey and, being desperate to reach his dying mother, he was willing to take the chance. In this abandoned old manse, he was finding shelter and that was all he really needed for the night. He had food with him, though meager, but it was enough to get him through the vale and home.

Leaning against the old furniture, he pulled out the stale bread he'd carefully saved from the last time he'd visited an inn. There was also a bit of cheese and a bladder of wine that was mostly water at this point because he kept adding water to what wine was left so he could make it last. He hadn't eaten all day and tried not to wolf it down, but he was hungry. He had just finished sucking up a few precious drops of the watered wine when he heard movement in the shadows.

Quickly, he swallowed. Perhaps he wasn't alone, after all.

On his feet now, the knight set the bladder aside and collected his broadsword. His eyes, adjusted to the darkness, flickering about nervously.

“Who’s there?” he demanded. “Show yourself now and there will not be any trouble.”

There was no immediate response. He took a step or two away from the fire, looking about, when he caught movement out of the corner of his eye. Startled, the sword came up again just as the vision of a woman in a pale garment suddenly disappeared from his view.

*A woman!*

“Wait!” he called. “Please, wait!”

He set off in pursuit, through a narrow corridor and into a large chamber with windows all on one side. He could see the woman ahead of him, running away, preparing to go through another door.

He called to her again.

“Please don’t run!” he said. “I will not hurt you, I swear it. I simply need shelter for the night!”

The woman continued running and, frustrated, he went after her. He had no sooner rushed into the next room when he was confronted with a dining hall, lit with warm candles and food upon the table. An entire feast was laid out before him. Shocked, he came to a halt, noting the fire in the hearth and an enormous crystal pitcher of what he could only assume to be wine. There was more food than he’d seen in a long time and he hadn’t smelled any of it when he’d first entered the manse.

Not a whiff.

“What... what *is* this?” he said, incredulous.

The woman in the pale garments stood on the opposite side of the chamber. She wasn’t running any longer, but simply standing there, looking at him. He could see her in the candlelight, a pale and delicate thing with big, dark eyes and dark hair that trailed to her knees. She was lovely.

He lowered his sword.

“I am Sir Lucas de Lara,” he said, hoping it might ease the woman’s fear. “I swear to you that I mean you no harm. But... what is all of this? The food and everything. Are you expecting guests?”

The woman took a few timid steps towards the table. “Sit,” she said in a voice that was almost a whisper. It was breathless, without solid tone or mass, yet it seemed to echo off the walls strangely. “This has been prepared for you. You must be weary.”

Lucas blinked in surprise, looking at the table and all of its delicacies. He found it difficult to believe that a house in this state of decomposition should provide such an expensive table for a mere traveler.

“I am,” he admitted. “But... this is for me? Only for me?”

“Please sit.”

He scratched his head, puzzled. “But how did you know...?” he said, unable to finish the thought immediately. He paused before continuing. “I have only just arrived. How could you know to prepare this?”

“If you do not eat, it will get cold.”

He didn’t want that. A hot meal was most welcome. It didn’t make any sense, any of it, but who was he to question such a feast. Perhaps it had been laid out for the family and they’d not yet appeared for the meal. Perhaps someone had seen him coming through the storm and knew to prepare it. In any case, his stomach was rumbling and he very much wanted to eat it.

“I do not know what to say,” he finally said. “You are too generous, my lady.”

The woman moved closer to the table, indicating for him to sit. “Please,” she said. “You must not let the food go to waste. You must eat.”

There was that breathy tone again, but Lucas didn't really notice this time. He was focused on the food. Enormously hungry, he sat down without further prompting and grabbed a knuckle of beef from a platter in front of him. He didn't think it odd that he couldn't smell the food, even at close range, and when he bit into it, it was hot and salty. That was about all he could taste. But that didn't matter.

He plowed into the meal.

On the opposite side of the enormous table, the woman took a seat. She didn't make any move to eat and it wasn't until Lucas' third or fourth bite that he realized all of the food was on his end of the table.

He swallowed the bite in his mouth.

"My lady," he said. "I do not mean to take all of your food. Surely you are hungry as well."

The woman didn't reply at first. She simply sat there, watching him eat, a wistful expression on her pale face.

"He never returned," she said.

"Beg pardon?"

"He never came back."

"Who did not come back, my lady?"

She simply sat there, her dark eyes fixed on the food. "He was named for the god of healing and music," she said. "Apollonius, he was called. Apollonius de Hemswell."

Lucas slowed his chewing. "I have not heard the name," he said. "Where is he from?"

She sighed. "We were betrothed," she said. "He never came back. He promised that he would, but he did not."

Lucas swallowed the bite in his mouth, his brow furrowing at her puzzling tale. "Where did he go?"

"Battle."

It was the first time she'd answered him directly. Up until this point, it was almost as if she'd been distracted with something. Their conversation hadn't been entirely reciprocal. However, Lucas could see, in the few short sentences she'd spoken, that a tragic story was unfolding. Perhaps she had good reason to be sad and distracted if she was mourning a lost love.

"He was killed in battle?"

She nodded. "Aye," she said. "I have been here, ever since, hoping he might return. Hoping the news I received was a lie. Hoping every traveler might be him. You are not him, are you?"

Lucas shook his head. "Nay, my lady," he said. "I am very sorry."

"Are you certain?"

"I am," he said. But he couldn't help but look around the warm but shabby chamber. "And you live here?"

"It is my home."

"Are you alone?"

"I am always alone."

He sighed with some regret. "Then I am sorry for you, truly," he said. "But this is no place for a lady. Have you no family to take you in?"

She cocked her head curiously. "When Apollonius returned, we were going to have herds of cattle," she said. "Not just any cattle, however. The black and white cattle with meat that is very fine. Rich men would pay well for such meat but, truthfully, I have a fondness for animals so it is quite possible I would not allow him to sell any. I would keep them all as pets."

She didn't answer him about the family, but it wasn't really his business, anyway. Lucas returned to his food.

“They would be expensive pets,” he said. “You cannot bring them into the house. You cannot pet them. They would eat your grain and you would not be able to buy more if you did not sell them.”

She was watching him as he tore off a big piece of stringy beef and chewed. “We were going to travel.”

“Oh? Where?”

“To the lands across the sea,” she said. “To the great cathedrals and the great buildings that were built by the ancient lords. To cities where the streets are paved with marble and the houses made of gold.”

“Is there such a place?” he asked, chewing. “I have been to Paris and other cities across the sea and I’ve not seen any of that.”

She stood up and walked halfway down the table, collecting the crystal pitcher and moving to fill his cup.

“I have seen such places, if only in my mind,” she said. “You see, I’ve never left Kirkwaite.”

“What’s Kirkwaite?”

“My home,” she said. “The manse in which you sit is Kirkwaite. It has been in my family for hundreds of years. My father was born here, as was his father. No one has ever left. They are all buried near the chapel at the rear of the house.”

Lucas eyed her as she stood next to the table, thinking she was an unnaturally pale but exquisite creature. And so very sad. He felt some pity for a woman who should be so lonely and so sad.

“My family is from the Welsh Marches,” he said. “My father and his father before him are all buried near Trelystan Castle. I think it is right that a man should be buried where he was born.”

“And you?”

“I shall be buried there also when the time comes.”



She began moving back down the table. “But what of your wife?” she asked. “What if she wishes to be buried with her family? Would you not be buried with her?”

He shrugged. “Possibly,” he said, picking at his food again. “I’ve not thought about it.”

“Then you are not married?”

“Nay.”

The woman took a seat at the end of the table again. “Do you have a good life, my lord?”

His mouth was full. “My name is Lucas,” he said. “And I do not have a terrible life.”

“Do you serve a great lord?”

“I do.”

“Where are you going?”

His movements slowed. “Home,” he said. “To Brampton. My mother is dying.”

“Is she ill?”

“She must be. I received a missive telling me to come home because she was dying.”

The woman didn’t seem to have any further questions about his journey or his dying mother. She continued to watch him from across the table as Lucas finished off a big piece of salty beef. There were other things on the table that captured his attention and he moved to a pewter bowl of carrots that had been boiled in brine. Like everything else, they were salty but essentially flavorless. Still, he didn’t care. He wolfed them down like everything else.

“You must be sad,” she finally said. “I know what it is to lose someone you love. Have you ever loved someone who is not your family?”

Lucas’ gaze flicked up to her, thinking it was a rather forward question. “I am not sure,” he said. “My brothers-in-

arms, I suppose. My fellow knights. There are men I have been friends with for years and I love them like brothers.”

“But a woman,” she said. “Have you ever loved a woman other than your mother?”

He drank deeply of the tart but flavorless wine before answering. “Nay,” he said. “I’ve not had that privilege.”

She sat back in the chair, watching him. “It *is* a privilege.”

“Of course it is.”

“What would you wish for in a wife?”

Because she was feeding him and providing him shelter, he would be polite, but he was becoming increasingly irritated with her questions, personal as they were.

“Obedience, I suppose,” he said. “Beauty and wealth. What every man wishes for.”

She cocked her head. “Is that what every man wishes for?” she asked. “Why not companionship and love and adoration? Must expectations always be practical?”

He shrugged. “To most men,” he said. “Most I know, that is. Why? Did your Apollonius not expect those things?”

For the first time since they’d met, she smiled faintly. “He expected everything of me and I gave him everything,” she said. “I could not give myself to another, not when Apollonius had everything of me.”

“And that is why you’ve never married?”

She was silent a moment. “Nay,” she said. “Knowing Apollonius has died means that my heart has been returned to me. He did not take it with him when he went. He returned it to me so that I may love again.”

“I hope you do.”

“A kind man, one who would help me with Kirkwaite.”

“I wish you well, my lady.”

“My name is Rosamunde. Rosamunde Teesdale.”

Lucas stopped chewing. "Then this vale is your family lands," he said. "This is the Teesdale Vale, is it not?"

She nodded. "It is," she said. "It belongs to me. All of it belongs to me."

He frowned. "Then why is it so derelict?" he asked, genuinely curious. "I do not mean to offend, my lady, but this manse is close to collapse. Surely you have the family wealth if you own these lands."

She nodded. "I do," she said. "The wealth is here, in this house. It is mine."

He blinked, puzzled by her answer, but then it began to occur to him why such a fine table had been set for him. *The Teesdale wealth*. Now, it made more sense. The Teesdale money must have been quite vast, certainly enough to put such food before him. But a pale young woman living alone in a crumbling house was still greatly bewildering.

"Then mayhap you should hire some men to help you repair your home," he said. "It is badly in need of help."

She nodded, as if she knew such a thing, but then she hung her head. Lucas finished with the carrots and, afraid that he'd offended her, watched her carefully as he moved on to a loaf of bread and some butter. As he buttered a thick slice of bread, Rosamunde stood up and went to the hearth, poking at the enormous logs on the fire.

Sparks flew.

"I am only a weak and helpless woman," she finally said. "I do not know how to repair things or hire men. I have been praying that someone would come along and help me with such things. I would pay them handsomely. Are... are you in need of money, Sir Lucas?"

Lucas looked around the chamber without moving his head. His eyes flicked from top to bottom, noting the cracked and damaged ceiling, the crumbling walls, the floor that was uneven and pooling with water in some places. The place was

beyond repair as far as he was concerned but he couldn't bring himself to give his opinion.

"I do not think I can help you, my lady," he said. "I serve the Duke of Bedford and I cannot surrender my oath. I am sure others will come along who would be willing to help you."

She turned from the fire, heading towards him. "It has been years and no one has come," she said, tears beginning to pool in her eyes. "You have been the first man in a very long time. There is no knowing when the next traveler will come. *Please*, Sir Lucas. I will promise you riches beyond your wildest dreams. You can have anything you want, anything I can grant you, if you will only help me restore my family home."

By this time, she was nearly upon him, the tiny woman in the flowing, white gown that, upon closer inspection, was in tatters. Delicate, wispy tatters floated around her when she moved. But Lucas didn't really notice.

He was coming to feel greatly sorry for her.

"Lady Rosamunde," he said steadily. "Your offer is quite generous, but again I must decline."

"Please," she gasped, falling to her knees beside the chair. She grasped him with hands that were ice-cold. "I have no one, Sir Lucas. No one at all. If you leave me, there will never be another. Please... please do not leave me. Stay and help me."

"But I cannot," he said as gently as he could. "I have a life away from here. I cannot leave it."

"Not even for money?"

"Nay. I am sorry."

"Not even for a woman who would be obedient and loving?"

He sighed, feeling her icy hands on his. "I do not wish to upset you, but it is not possible," he said. "Not now. Not..."

Suddenly, she was on him, straddling his lap on the chair, her cold mouth coming down on his. Shocked, Lucas was prepared to push her away, but she wrapped her arms around his neck, her tongue invading his mouth, and he found himself immediately weakening.

*Flowers...*

She tasted of flowers and earth.

It had been so long since he'd last had a woman that his resistance wasn't what it should have been. It wasn't strong in the least and every second he let her kiss him, it grew weaker and weaker. The first few seconds of the kiss were soft, gentle, tantalizing. But quickly, he became intoxicated with the feel of her. The lightning flashed and the storm surged outside, and Lucas became swept up in what was happening. A soft, sensual body was seducing him. He was letting her. Soon enough, he put his arms around her and pulled her close, responding to her savage kisses.

He had to have more.

Rosamunde came alive in his arms. Her little body was wrapped up around him, her legs parted, and once she had him hot and bothered, she began fumbling with the ties of his breeches. Lucas felt her but he didn't stop her. This pathetic woman with the cold hands had him on fire and his mouth left hers, blazing a heated trail down her neck.

His hands began to move to her torso.

Her tattered gown disintegrated beneath his hands, the sounds of material ripping filling the chamber in concert with the snapping fire. Rosamunde managed to unfasten his breeches, freeing his great manhood, and she thrust her pelvis forward to capture him. Lucas slid into her body easily, feeling a faint heat close in around his member.

Instinct took over.

Lucas grasped her buttocks and thrust firmly, listening to Rosamunde gasp softly. She lifted her pelvis to his, wrapping her slender legs around his hips and drawing him in deeper

with every stroke. She held him tightly with her legs as her hands wandered to his face, holding it tenderly as she kissed him deeply.

Lucas was so highly aroused that her kisses had him hypnotized. In fact, everything about her had him hypnotized. It was as if he had no mind of his own. He was only able to respond to Rosamunde as she demanded his body. He had no idea how he found himself in this situation but he surely didn't care. Rosamunde's body was cool and soft, but her manner was hot and vibrant. Lustful.

Lucas had never known such lust in his life.

On and on they went, making love in the big chair that held up under the strenuous activity. Bodies joined, Lucas stood up and, holding Rosamunde with one hand, swept everything away from the table within arm's length with the other hand and lay her down on the tabletop. He pulled her pelvis to the edge of the table, holding her legs apart as he repeatedly thrust into her responsive, welcoming body.

It was like nothing he'd ever experienced.

Eventually, Lucas couldn't hold out any longer and he spilled his hot seed deep into her beautiful body, feeling every last tremor with the greatest of pleasure. But even as he went through the throes of his release, he could feel her climax and he continued to move deep within her, not wanting the experience to end.

It was euphoria.

But end it did as the rain and wind whistled through the old, broken house. He could feel it on his back. When his sweating, heated body slowed to a halt, Lucas found himself looking Rosamunde in the eyes. He was still buried deep within her soft, moist body but for several long seconds, he simply looked at her, shocked by the power and intensity of what had just happened. Before he could say a word to her, perhaps a word of apology or explanation, anything to fill the silence that was growing between them, she reached up and

yanked him down to her, slanting her mouth hungrily over his again.

Lucas was lost.





## PART TWO

### SMILE NO MORE

He'd awoken and Rosamunde was gone.

Lucas awoke to an oddly clear and bright morning absolutely alone. He was in front of the big hearth in the dining chamber, the hearth that had been blazing last night but now was utterly cold and dark. In fact, the entire chamber was cold and dark and as he sat up and looked around, he could see that the table was devoid of any remains of his meal.

The table itself was broken on one side, missing legs.

Grunting and weary, he stood up. He didn't remember how he got on the ground. In fact, he didn't remember the table being broken like that. He distinctly remembered it being level because he'd put Rosamunde on it and...

It had definitely been level.

*Rosamunde.*

Lucas began to look around, seeing if he could catch a glimpse of her. He took a few steps before realizing his breeches were still unfastened and his tunic was over near the hearth. It was a little disconcerting to be alone and half-dressed in a house that looked as battered and weathered as this one, but it was a house where a young woman resided.

And what a woman.

She'd kept him up most of the night with her sexual appetite. He'd never met anyone like her, but by the end of their fourth passionate encounter, he was starting to think that he was going to indeed return to Kirkwaite. Perhaps to marry her, or perhaps to simply consider it. He wasn't sure. All he

knew was that she had bewitched him somehow, enough so that he was considering her request.

Considering returning to a woman he didn't know.

With his breeches fastened and his tunic on, he searched the house for her, at least the rooms that were habitable and those were few. She was nowhere to be found, however, so after an hour of searching and calling her name, he was growing both confused and discouraged. He couldn't imagine where she had gone but he couldn't wait for her. He had a destination to reach in a few days and if he delayed any longer, he might not make it to his dying mother's bedside.

He had to go.

Lucas found his saddlebags out in the entry where he'd left them. His cloak was there and he brought his sword in from the dining hall where he'd set it down when he'd discovered Rosamunde and the meal she'd laid out before him. In fact, he had all of his possessions as he stood in the entry of the once-great manse, calling Rosamunde's name twice more with no reply before finally giving up.

He had to leave.

Out into the shockingly bright morning after a night of rain and wind, he slogged through the mud and found his horse still cozy and protected in the small stable. He gave the horse the remainder of the grain while he tended to the saddle. By the time he was ready, the horse had finished his meal.

They set out on their way.

Lucas' last vision of Kirkwaite was before they went over a rise and it disappeared from view. From a distance, it was bigger and more broken down than he'd realized. To think of poor, sweet Rosamunde living there all alone clawed at him. He simply didn't like the idea of her living there by herself, with no army and no protection. Sad, lovely Rosamunde who was still sorrowful over the death of her betrothed. It was a genuinely tragic story and the more Lucas thought about it, the more depressed he became.

She had begged him for help.

He'd been resistant and now he was starting to feel like an ogre for it. A poor, helpless woman had asked him for help and he'd refused, which made him a monster. More than that, his oath as a knight swore to protect the weak and Rosamunde most definitely fell into that category. The more he thought about her pale, sweet body and the way he'd reacted to her, the more inclined he was to return.

That made him feel even *more* like a monster.

He wondered if the only reason he intended to return to her was because she had so ably seduced him and he was eager to experience more of it. Perhaps that was some of it, but he also felt drawn to her as simply a woman. She was kind and generous. Her conversation had been mostly intelligent when she didn't seem distracted. She was curious and interested. When he thought about it, those were qualities he appreciated.

Perhaps there was more to his attraction to her than simply the physical.

The morning headed towards midday and midday towards the late afternoon. Lucas had been so lost in thought about Rosamunde and Kirkwaite that he hadn't realized his horse was traveling particularly slow. Quite slow, in fact. They couldn't have traveled more than ten miles from Kirkwaite in all that time. When he finally realized this and dismounted, he noticed that his horse had a swollen front fetlock. Hissing a curse for not noticing sooner, he remained on foot, leading the limping animal towards the next resting place for the night.

It was well after sunset by the time he arrived in a small village. There were mostly cottages clustered up against the road, small and cozy, but at the northern end of the village was a tavern. There was a painted sign over the door. *The Well*, it was called. Before he could go in, he had to find help for his horse and he noticed a small stable behind the tavern. That was usual with establishments like this. Given that it catered to travelers, there had to be a place for a man to bed his horse.

Lucas took his horse into the small but warm shelter.

There was a boy sleeping on the straw, a lad with red hair that stood up straight. He was startled by the sound of a horse entering the stable, leaping to his feet and rubbing his eyes. Lucas explained that his horse had a swollen leg and asked the lad for a poultice. The boy was young but he seemed to know what Lucas meant and bolted up into the loft above only to return with rags and bowls and things in his hands. He would make a mud plaster for the leg, he told Lucas, who paid the boy a coin for his trouble. The last he saw, his horse was munching on a bucket of oats while the boy mixed mud and oats and water for the poultice.

With his horse in good hands, Lucas entered the rear of the tavern. There was a small kitchen to his left where a man and two women were working, but he didn't pay them much attention as he headed into the common room and straight for the hearth. It was surprisingly empty so he had his pick of tables. He chose one, dragged it and a chair over to the fire, and sat heavily.

Wearily, he slung his bags on the table.

The common room smelled of smoke and piss, an unpleasant combination, but at least it was warm and dry. As he pulled over another chair to prop up his feet, one of the women had come out of the kitchen. She had a cup and a pitcher in her hands, setting them down on the table in front of him. The pitcher had something steaming in it and he poured it into his cup as he spoke.

“What do you have to eat tonight?” he asked.

The girl, her round face flushed from working in the warm kitchen, scratched her head. “Vegetable stew,” she said. “I can give you bread and butter and boiled fruit.”

“No meat?”

“Nay, my lord.”

It wasn't like he could go somewhere else and find a decent meal that included meat, so he simply nodded and she

scurried off, back to the kitchen. Lucas drank the hot wine, which they'd cut with boiled apple juice, so it was more juice than wine but it was hot and tasty. He drank a full cup of it and poured himself another in the time it took the serving wench to return with his food.

He pulled his saddlebags off the table as she set the tray down.

"The stew is very good," she said, putting a wooden spoon on the table. "If you are here tomorrow, Ioan says we will have lamb stew."

"Who is Ioan?"

"This is his tavern."

"The owner?"

"Aye."

Lucas peered at the stew in the big, wooden bowl. It was plentiful and it smelled good. He stirred it up.

"I will be leaving at dawn, hopefully," he said. "My horse has a swollen leg, but I hope that rest will heal it. Will the stew be ready in the morning?"

"I do not know but I will ask, my lord."

Lucas shoveled the vegetable stew into his mouth and found that it was quite tasty, as she'd said. He hoped to eat his meal in peace but the girl lingered there, annoyingly. He finally looked up at her.

"Is there something else?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I was thinking that I've not seen you before," she said. "Have you been this way in the past?"

He nodded. "Long ago," he said. "I used to live in Brampton."

"But no more?"

He shook his head and continued eating. The girl continued to stand there and watch him.

“Would you like company?” she asked timidly. “I would be happy to talk to you while you eat.”

He didn't want any company. He wanted to eat in peace and find a corner to sleep in, but he reconsidered that stance. If he was nice to her, she might even find him a bed. A lonely tavern wench might even be able to find him more food for the rest of his journey, so it would be wise for him to be kind to her. Mouth full, he indicated a nearby chair.

She grabbed it and quickly sat down.

“Have you traveled to many places?” she asked. “I would tell you of the places I've been, but I've only ever lived here.”

He was still chewing. “Where is here?”

“This village is called Ettersgill.”

He swallowed and immediately put more food in his mouth. “You were born here?”

“Aye.”

That gave him an idea. Perhaps it was a good thing this little maid wished to keep him company because if she'd lived here her entire life, perhaps she knew something about Rosamunde Teesdale and her derelict old home.

He was curious.

“What's your name, lass?”

“Leonor.”

“Leonor,” he repeated. “Then you would know the important families in these lands.”

Leonor shrugged. “There aren't many important families in the vale,” she said. “It is mostly farmers and men who fish in the streams and sell them at market.”

“Who are some of the important families?”

She cocked her head thoughtfully. “The de Balliol family of Barnard Castle,” she said. “Have you heard of them?”

“I have,” he said. “Anyone else?”

“Not really.”

“What of Teesdale?”

Her brow furrowed thoughtfully. “Towards the south?”

“The manse about ten miles to the south.” he said. “Doesn’t that belong to the Teesdale family?”

She nodded. “It did, once.”

He reached for a piece of bread. “What do you mean ‘once’?” he said. “The family still lives there, don’t they?”

Her features changed expression, as if suddenly realizing what he was asking. “Oh,” she said. “You mean the legend.”

“What legend?”

She sat forward and lowered her voice, as one did when relaying a juicy bit of gossip. Or, in this case, a local legend. There was a sense of glee in her eyes as she told the story.

“The ghost that walks Kirkwaite,” she said. “They call her the Soul Collector.”

He was about to take a bite of his bread but froze with the unexpected words coming forth. “The *what?*” he said, confused. “Of whom do you speak?”

Leonor was clearly delighted that she was able to tell someone a local legend, hopefully a tale he might find interesting. She very much wanted to be an entertaining companion.

“There is a story about a ghostly bride who lives at Kirkwaite,” she said. “She was betrothed to a man who left on the Crusades with King Richard and never returned. It is said that she made a deal with the devil in exchange for the return of her beloved. Legend says she promised to collect all of the souls she could for the devil and when she collected enough, he would return her beloved to her. Some people swear that they have seen her walking the grounds of Kirkwaite, on the hunt for unsuspecting travelers.”



Lucas' eyes widened. Before he realized it, he was choking on the bread in his mouth and he ended up having to cough it onto the floor. As Leonor rushed to pour him more wine to soothe his throat, he looked at the woman in horror.

"That's not true," he said, coughing. "Someone *lives* at Kirkwaite."

Leonor handed him the cup. "No one has lived there for two hundred years," she said. "Did you pass the place? If so, you would see that it is crumbling. It is ruins."

He took the cup, but he didn't drink. He was trying to process what she was telling him, weeding through the legend to the crux of what she'd said. *A bride who lost her betrothed in battle.*

Wasn't that what Rosamunde had told him?

He could hardly believe what he was hearing.

"I saw the place," he muttered. "I slept there last night. Are you telling me that no one lives there?"

"No one has for centuries."

Oddly, that made sense to him. As much as he was in utter denial, what she said made absolute sense. The place *was* ruins. He'd mentioned it to Rosamunde and asked her why she'd not repaired it, but she hadn't answered his question except to say she knew nothing about paying men to repair it.

Then he began to relive the entire conversation.

Rosamunde been distant and distracted. Her voice had sounded breathless, yet it echoed. It had possessed a strange, ethereal quality. And the food he'd eaten... salty but tasteless. A meal that had appeared out of nowhere. And the begging... God's bones, she'd begged him to stay. To help her. And then they'd made love, over and over again. By God, he'd made love to a real woman.

*Not* a phantom!

Hadn't he?

Somewhere deep inside, he could feel the fingers of fear clutching at him, growing stronger by the second.

“This phantom bride,” he managed to say. “Does she have a name?”

Oblivious to the fact that his face had gone pale, Leonor nodded. “Lady Rosamunde,” she said. “She was the last of the Teesdales. They say that is why she will not leave her home. She seduces men, hoping to collect their souls, hoping that, someday, the devil might be satisfied and return her beloved to her.”

Lucas felt as if he'd been hit in the gut. He set the bread down and, with a shaking hand, drained the cup of hot wine. When he was done, he drained another cup. Then, he simply sat at the table, staring at the food, digesting everything he'd been told as Leonor prattled on about another Teesdale legend that had to do with a wild dog. Lucas finally put his hand to his forehead, sitting back in his chair, completely stunned by the information. He was reluctant to fully admit that it all made so much sense to him because he'd touched Rosamunde. He'd *felt* her flesh. He'd *looked* into her eyes.

*Dark, soulless eyes.*

Oh, God...

He'd had an encounter with The Phantom Bride.

“This bride,” he said, interrupting Leonor's inane chatter. “You're... you're certain about her?”

Leonor nodded confidently. “Everyone in these lands knows of her.”

“Has she captured many souls?”

Again, Leonor nodded. “Many, so they say,” she said. “Horses with bags and swords have been found wandering the vale because their owners have been taken by Lady Rosamunde.”

“How many?”

She shook her head. “I do not know,” she said. Then she peered at him closely as if just noticing that he looked rather ashen. “You said that you found lodgings there last night? Did *you* see anything?”

He wasn’t going to tell her that he had. He didn’t want to look like a fool, or worse – a madman. Only an insane man would admit he’d bedded a ghost. Traumatized, he shook his head and poured himself more wine.

“Only the lightning,” he said. “I slept and then... then I left first thing this morning.”

Leonor grinned. “No phantom bride whispering in your ear, demanding your soul?”

“Nay.”

He’d said it too quickly, but Leonor was caught up in the story, completely unaware of how shaken her audience was. “The legend says that if she touches a man, he’s marked,” she said, holding up her hands like claws. “He cannot get away from her. She’ll come for his soul.”

That was enough for him. Lucas abruptly stood up. “Cease your foolish tales,” he snapped softly. Then he looked embarrassed. Unsettled, even. “I... I must see to my horse.”

Leonor didn’t have a chance to say a word as he rushed from the common room and out into the rear yard. Concerned that she had offended him somehow, she went to fetch him more hot wine and brought it back to the table, waiting for him to return. But he didn’t come back right away. She knew he would because his saddlebags were on the floor under the table. But the minutes passed and, still, he didn’t return.

Leonor went to the hearth and stoked the fire against the cold night. There were only a handful of travelers on this evening and most of them had already settled down for the night, sleeping in chairs or in a corner. She was already planning on letting her new friend use one of the beds that hadn’t been rented out for the night. Perhaps he’d forgive her for telling him such a stupid legend.

Clearly, he hadn't appreciated it.

More minutes passed and, still, he hadn't returned. She hoped he hadn't decided to sleep in the livery simply to get away from her. When she could no longer stand the wait, she went to the door that led into the rear yard to see if she could catch a glimpse of the man, but she didn't see him. She even went into the stable where the stable boy was still wrapping the leg of the knight's sturdy steed. She asked the lad if he'd seen the warrior, but the boy hadn't seen anyone at all since the horse had been left in his care.

Curious, Leonor stepped out into the stable yard again, looking around for the handsome knight she'd chased from the tavern. She took a few steps in the direction of the privy when she caught sight of something on the ground.

A tattered bit of white, fine material.

Puzzled, she bent over to pick it up, feeling the texture against her fingers. It was almost gossamer, so fine that it was barely a whisper of material. Gingerly, she smelled it.

It smelled of flowers and earth.

No one ever saw Leonor again after that.

In the years to come, the stable boy would tell the tale of the phantom knight who visited The Well before taking Leonor with him, neither of them to be heard nor seen again. The knight's bags and horse were taken by the stable boy, who tended the old steed lovingly and comfortably for the rest of its life by selling many of the possessions in the knight's saddlebags.

The stable boy lived comfortably, too, thanks to a stranger's goods.

As for the legend of Leonor, it was said that she left with the phantom knight that evening, having fallen in love with a man who was from the world of the undead. In the years to come, his legend would blend with Lady Rosamunde's legend until it became something different altogether, but the core of it was still the same – the tale of Lady Rosamunde, who

smelled of earth and flowers, forever doomed to walk the earth in search of human souls.

And the knight and his serving wench, who were doomed to walk with her.



## EPTLOGUE

### THE PHANTOM BRIDE

*Present day*

“Are we almost finished with this tour?”

It was a groaning question. Sarah and Gale had come all the way from Los Angeles to do ghost tours of England and now they were in North Yorkshire doing one of the most popular ghost tours in the north. Quite frankly, however, they were growing weary of so many stories, so many stops and starts, taverns, inns, historical homes, and castle ruins. The crash course in the phantoms of the British Isles was starting to lose its shine and they were becoming more interested in the local ale and food than the spectral spirits.

Gale yawned at Sarah’s question.

“I think this is the last one,” she said. “An old Medieval inn that is supposed to be hella-haunted.”

Sarah yawned because Gale was. “Good,” she mumbled. “I think I’m done with these ghost tours. I think I’d rather start pub crawling.”

Gale grinned as she looked out the window, over the small town they’d just entered. As the bus began to slow, the guide who had been with them for two days of the whirlwind tour stood up. The man had a pipe and a newsboy cap and neither one moved as the bus lurched and bumped over the road. The man even spoke with the pipe in his mouth like it was part of his tongue or teeth. No matter how he formed his words, the pipe stayed.

“I’ve saved this tavern for the last part of our journey,” he said over the noise of the bus. “We’ll soon be visiting what is known locally at The Well Inn. It has been around for at least six hundred years, possibly more, and there are many stories attached to the place. One of the most prominent stories is one of The Phantom Lover and his bride.”

The bus took a bump over the rough pavement and the tour guide held tight to the seats of the coach to keep from falling, but he didn’t falter in his story.

“As the legend goes, many centuries ago, The Well Inn was a tavern established for weary travelers here in the Teesdale Vale,” he said loudly. “There is a legend about a weary traveler who would appear regularly at the inn, evidently looking for his lost bride. That legend, however, stems from an older legend from a nearby Medieval manse which has long since gone to ruin and returned to the earth. Evidently, a young and lovely woman lived there, betrothed to a knight who never returned from the Crusades. She made a bargain with the devil to collect souls. Collect enough souls and he would return her beloved, so she waited in the ruins of the home, luring unsuspecting men to their doom.”

Both Sarah and Gale were listening intently. Sarah raised her hand. “But why do they call it the legend of The Phantom Lover and not The Phantom Bride?”

The tour guide grinned, the pipe still in his mouth. “That’s the interesting part,” he said. “Local lore says that there was one knight in particular whom she seduced and led to his doom, only the man didn’t realize he was dead. It is said that he visits The Well Inn occasionally still, trying to find his way north, trying to get away from The Phantom Bride who keeps his spirit in purgatory. Who knows? Maybe we’ll see him today, sitting near the door with a scrap of The Phantom Bride’s shroud clutched in his hand. A tattered scrap was the calling card of The Phantom Bride. It is said that he waits by the door with his fearful servant, looking for his chance to escape north.”



It was delightfully spooky and the women strained to catch a glimpse of the tavern as it came into view. It was of Medieval design, with ancient timbers in the walls and an upper floor that was larger than the ground floor, overhanging the street. The coach came to a halt in the car park and everyone disembarked, with Sarah and Gale being the last off the bus. With the group wandering towards the ancient tavern, the two women looked around, getting a sense of the countryside and of the village itself. Sarah was looking off towards the north.

“I wonder where that manse was,” she said.

Gale turned to see what had her attention. “Let’s ask The Pipe,” she replied, referring to their tour guide. “I’m sure he knows.”

She scooted quickly after the group, bringing up the rear along with Sarah. The tour guide was holding the door to the tavern open as they caught up to him.

“Excuse me,” Gale said. “Where is the old manse located?”

The tour guide pointed towards the south. “That way,” he said. “Near Barnard Castle.”

“Will we be going in that direction?”

The tour guide shook his head. “No,” he said. “We’re heading southwest.”

With that, he went inside, corralling the group and having them sit in a designated area. Gale and Sarah remained outside, however, looking around the grounds, the exterior of the very old tavern.

It was all quite fascinating.

“Come on,” Sarah said. “Let’s go inside. I’m hungry.”

Gale nodded, though she was still looking up at the roof of the tavern. “I’m coming,” she said. “But *look* at this place. You can totally see how old it is. Just look at that roof.”

Sarah was already heading through the door. She mumbled something that Gale didn't hear as the woman continued to stand there and look at every aspect of the architecture. Then she finally looked to the door, which was quite old. It was an ancient block of oak that had been repaired many times over the years. Probably over the centuries. How many people had come in and out through that door? How many lovers or enemies?

Gale found the door fascinating for all of the history it had seen.

Finished with her inspection of the exterior, she headed for that very door and for the interior of a tavern that had seen centuries of patrons. As she pulled the panel open and prepared to step through, a man exited and she accidentally bumped into him. It was a hard bump, as if she'd hit a brick wall, and as she staggered back, she noticed that the man had dropped something.

A tattered scrap of chiffon.

But the man kept walking as if he hadn't realized he'd just bumped into someone. He was a big man, dressed in dark, rumpled clothing. Reaching down, Gale picked up the scrap of material, noting how old and dirty it was. Clearly, it must have meant something to the man for him to carry it around with him, so she began to walk after him.

"Sir?" she said. "Excuse me, Sir? You dropped this."

As Gale chased the man down, inside the tavern, Sarah ordered two pints of ale and went to sit at a table near the door. The tavern was crowded, but interesting. She knew that Gale was going to love it.

She waited for her friend to come.

Ten minutes later, Gale still hadn't come into the tavern so Sarah went in search of her, but to no avail. An hour later, and with the help of several local police, the grounds and interior of The Well Inn were thoroughly searched for Gale, but there was no sign of her. The Pipe and his tour had a schedule to

keep and were forced to leave, but Sarah remained behind, helping search for her friend who seemed to have vanished from the face of the earth.

It was all a great mystery.

When Sarah was the one to find a tattered bit of chiffon several hours later near the entry to the tavern, she soon found out what happened to Gale the moment she touched it.

The Phantom Bride came for her, too.

❧ THE END? ❧

# KATHRYN LE VEQUE NOVELS

*Medieval Romance:*

## **De Wolfe Pack Series:**

[Warwolfe](#)

[The Wolfe](#)

[Nighthawk](#)

[ShadowWolfe](#)

[DarkWolfe](#)

[A Joyous de Wolfe Christmas](#)

[BlackWolfe](#)

[Serpent](#)

[A Wolfe Among Dragons](#)

[Scorpion](#)

[StormWolfe](#)

[Dark Destroyer](#)

[The Lion of the North](#)

[Walls of Babylon](#)

[The Best Is Yet To Be](#)

[BattleWolfe](#)

[Castle of Bones](#)

## **De Wolfe Pack Generations:**

[WolfeHeart](#)

[WolfeStrike](#)

[WolfeSword](#)

[WolfeBlade](#)

[WolfeLord](#)

[WolfeShield](#)

[Nevermore](#)

[WolfeAx](#)

**The Executioner Knights:**

[By the Unholy Hand](#)

[The Mountain Dark](#)

[Starless](#)

[A Time of End](#)

[Winter of Solace](#)

[Lord of the Sky](#)

[Splendid Hour](#)

[The Whispering Night](#)

[Netherworld](#)

[Lord of the Shadows](#)

[Of Mortal Fury](#)

**The de Russe Legacy:**

[The Falls of Erith](#)

[Lord of War: Black Angel](#)

[The Iron Knight](#)

[Beast](#)

[The Dark One: Dark Knight](#)

[The White Lord of Wellesbourne](#)

[Dark Moon](#)

[Dark Steel](#)

[A de Russe Christmas Miracle](#)

[Dark Warrior](#)

**The de Lohr Dynasty:**

[While Angels Slept](#)

[Rise of the Defender](#)

[Steelheart](#)

[Shadowmoor](#)

[Silversword](#)

[Spectre of the Sword](#)

[Unending Love](#)

[Archangel](#)

[A Blessed de Lohr Christmas](#)

**The Brothers de Lohr:**

[The Earl in Winter](#)

**Lords of East Anglia:**

[While Angels Slept](#)

[Godspeed](#)

[Age of Gods and Mortals](#)

**Great Lords of le Bec:**

[Great Protector](#)

**House of de Royans:**

[Lord of Winter](#)

[To the Lady Born](#)

[The Centurion](#)

**Lords of Eire:**

[Echoes of Ancient Dreams](#)

[Blacksword](#)

[The Darkland](#)

**Ancient Kings of Anglecynn:**

[The Whispering Night](#)

[Netherworld](#)

**Battle Lords of de Velt:**

[The Dark Lord](#)

[Devil's Dominion](#)

[Bay of Fear](#)

[The Dark Lord's First Christmas](#)

[The Dark Spawn](#)

[The Dark Conqueror](#)

[The Dark Angel](#)

**Reign of the House of de Winter:**

[Lespada](#)

[Swords and Shields](#)

**De Reyne Domination:**

[Guardian of Darkness](#)

[Black Storm](#)

[A Cold Wynter's Knight](#)

[With Dreams](#)

[Master of the Dawn](#)

**House of d'Vant:**

[Tender is the Knight \(House of d'Vant\)](#)

[The Red Fury \(House of d'Vant\)](#)

**The Dragonblade Series:**

[Fragments of Grace](#)

[Dragonblade](#)

[Island of Glass](#)

[The Savage Curtain](#)

[The Fallen One](#)

[The Phantom Bride](#)

**Great Marcher Lords of de Lara**

[Dragonblade](#)

**House of St. Hever**

[Fragments of Grace](#)

[Island of Glass](#)

[Queen of Lost Stars](#)

**Lords of Pembury:**

[The Savage Curtain](#)

**Lords of Thunder: The de Shera Brotherhood Trilogy**

[The Thunder Lord](#)

[The Thunder Warrior](#)

[The Thunder Knight](#)

**The Great Knights of de Moray:**

[Shield of Kronos](#)

[The Gorgon](#)

**The House of De Nerra:**

[The Promise](#)

[The Falls of Erith](#)

[Vestiges of Valor](#)

[Realm of Angels](#)

**Highland Warriors of Munro:**

[The Red Lion](#)

[Deep Into Darkness](#)

**The House of de Garr:**

[Lord of Light](#)

[Realm of Angels](#)

**Saxon Lords of Hage:**

[The Crusader](#)

[Kingdom Come](#)

**High Warriors of Rohan:**

[High Warrior](#)

**The House of Ashbourne:**

[Upon a Midnight Dream](#)

**The House of D'Aurilliac:**

[Valiant Chaos](#)



**The House of De Dere:**

[Of Love and Legend](#)

**St. John and de Gare Clans:**

[The Warrior Poet](#)

**The House of de Bretagne:**

[The Questing](#)

**The House of Summerlin:**

[The Legend](#)

**The Kingdom of Hendocia:**

[Kingdom by the Sea](#)

*Regency Historical Romance:*

[Sin Like Flynn: A Regency Historical Romance Duet](#)

[The Sin Commandments](#)

[Georgina and the Red Charger](#)

*Gothic Regency Romance:*

[Emma](#)

*Contemporary Romance:*

**Kathlyn Trent/Marcus Burton Series:**

[Valley of the Shadow](#)

[The Eden Factor](#)

[Canyon of the Sphinx](#)

**The American Heroes Anthology Series:**

[The Lucius Robe](#)

[Fires of Autumn](#)

[Evenshade](#)

[Sea of Dreams](#)

[Purgatory](#)

**Other non-connected Contemporary Romance:**

[Lady of Heaven](#)

[Darkling, I Listen](#)

[In the Dreaming Hour](#)

[River's End](#)

[The Fountain](#)

**Sons of Poseidon:**

[The Immortal Sea](#)

**Pirates of Britannia Series (with Eliza Knight):**

[Savage of the Sea](#) by Eliza Knight

[Leader of Titans](#) by Kathryn Le Veque

[The Sea Devil](#) by Eliza Knight

[Sea Wolfe](#) by Kathryn Le Veque

**Note:** All Kathryn's novels are designed to be read as stand-alones, although many have cross-over characters or cross-over family groups. Novels that are grouped together have related characters or family groups. You will notice that some series have the same books; that is because they are cross-overs. A hero in one book may be the secondary character in another.

There is NO reading order except by chronology, but even in that case, you can still read the books as stand-alones. No novel is connected to another by a cliff hanger, and every book has an HEA.

Series are clearly marked. All series contain the same characters or family groups except the American Heroes Series, which is an anthology with unrelated characters.

For more information, find it in [A Reader's Guide to the Medieval World of Le Veque](#).

# ABOUT KATHRYN LE VEQUE

*Bringing the Medieval to Romance*



KATHRYN LE VEQUE is a critically acclaimed, multiple USA TODAY Bestselling author, an Indie Reader bestseller, a charter Amazon All-Star author, and a #1 bestselling, award-winning, multi-published author in Medieval Historical Romance with over 100 published novels.

Kathryn is a multiple award nominee and winner, including the winner of Uncaged Book Reviews Magazine 2017 and 2018 “Raven Award” for Favorite Medieval Romance. Kathryn is also a multiple RONE nominee (InD’Tale Magazine), holding a record for the number of nominations. In 2018, her novel WARWOLFE was the winner in the Romance category of the Book Excellence Award and in 2019, her novel A WOLFE AMONG DRAGONS won the prestigious RONE award for best pre-16th century romance.

Kathryn is considered one of the top Indie authors in the world with over 2M copies in circulation, and her novels have been translated into several languages. Kathryn recently signed with Sourcebooks Casablanca for a Medieval Fight Club series, first published in 2020.

In addition to her own published works, Kathryn is also the President/CEO of Dragonblade Publishing, a boutique

publishing house specializing in Historical Romance. Dragonblade's success has seen it rise in the ranks to become Amazon's #1 e-book publisher of Historical Romance (K-Lytics report July 2020).

Kathryn loves to hear from her readers. Please find Kathryn on Facebook at Kathryn Le Veque, Author, or join her on Twitter [@kathrynleveque](https://twitter.com/kathrynleveque). Sign up for Kathryn's blog at [www.kathrynleveque.com](http://www.kathrynleveque.com) for the latest news and sales.