



## The Devil of Jedburgh

*Claire Robyns*

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Raised on rumours of The Devil of Jedburgh, Breghan McAllen doesn't want an arranged marriage to the beast. The arrogant border laird is not the romantic, sophisticated husband Breghan dreams of?despite the heat he stirs within her.

In need of an heir, Arran has finally agreed to take a wife, but when he sees Breghan's fragile beauty, he's furious. He will not risk the life of another maiden by getting her with child. Lust prompts him to offer a compromise: necessary precautions, and handfasting for a year and a day, after which Breghan will be free. For a chance to control her own future, Breghan makes a deal with the Devil.

Passion quickly turns to love, but Arran still has no intention of keeping the lass, or making her a mother. He loves her too much to lose her. But when a treasonous plot threatens queen and country, Breghan has to prove only she is woman enough to stand by his side.

95,000 words

## **The Devil of Jedburgh Details**

Date : Published February 6th 2012 by Carina Press

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Author : Claire Robyns

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## From Reader Review The Devil of Jedburgh for online ebook

### Tracy's Place says

4.25 out of 5

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### April says

Loved it!

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### BlackTulip says

Reviewed By BlackTulip for Booked Up

The story takes place in the Scottish Lowlands, in a context of high instability and open rebellion. The reign of Mary Queen of Scots was marked with murder and scandal, her court was a viper's nest, where betrayal and plot were commonplace and where murder was often the easiest and quickest way to erase obstacles along the way to power.

The superb opening scene definitely gives the tone for the rest of this compelling story that keeps you in suspense page after page.

Two prominent families, loyal to the Queen made a pledge, one day, Breghan McAllen and Arran Kerr of Ferniehurst would have to marry... In a week's time Breghan will be the wife of the Devil that haunts her nightmares and Arran Kerr has even more terrible and frightening names attached to him ...

Breghan is the only daughter in a family populated with twelve brothers, she was rather spoiled but not to the point of being capricious. She's only young, impulsive, and a bit wild. Their first unexpected encounter is dramatic and explosive and it's only the beginning!

Arran has need of sons to inherit the land and responsibility and that's why he wants Breghan, whose mother produced a dozen sons without apparent problem; well that's what he thought until he saw Breghan!

Breghan had romantic ideas about the man who would love and cherish her; but there would be no companionable nights before a fire here, because Arran Kerr is a devil and a beast!

Before they met, they both had strong views about their future but now that they have met, it has become much more complicated.

These are very harsh times where some brutal acts will demand even more brutal retribution but thank God there are also some moments of softness. There's a deeply moving paragraph in the middle of the story that says:

**"Do you believe in love, Arran?" Breghan asked more softly. "Do you believe there can be more between a man and woman than practicalities and necessities? Have you ever wondered if there's someone out there who could make your heart beat faster with a mere look, who could take your**

**breath away with a simple caress, who could fill your life with even a handful of memories that grow richer with time instead of fading?"**

**Arran's gaze went over her shoulder, to some point on the blank wall behind her. He was silent so long, Breghan began to hear her own erratic pulse thunder inside her head.**

**"Such wistful emotions are a fatal luxury." His gaze came back to rest on her, a cool and calm green.**

**"I would run from such a person rather than seek her out."**

At this stage of the story he cannot answer her otherwise. A moment later, he gives a silent answer to Breghan earlier question:

**. "Do you believe in love, Arran?"**

**When I look into your eyes, darling, when I hold you in my arms, when I pretend reality can be changed and I'm allowed to have my heart's desire...then, yes, I believe in love."**

Claire Robyns delivers a wonderful, exciting, and poignant story with two very likable and strong main characters. And despite their doubts, their fears, danger always being present, and a curse that will almost tear them apart they won't be able to stand up to the irresistible force of their passion. The author has proven here to be a great storyteller who knows how to balance very skillfully history and fiction. I give 5 big stars!

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### **? Sassy ~ Amy ? says**

Arran is on his way to claim his bride when he is side tracked by a girl found hiding along the road. One of his men stabbed her thinking she was a boar. The girl is actually his betrothed who was running away from the pending marriage due to his reputation as the Devil... Every choice she makes from then on spirals her fate downward.

I got so caught up thinking... geez! shut your mouth! Everytime she started, she ended up sticking her foot in her mouth & getting into more trouble & with higher priced consequences. I was so frustrated with the both of them that I wanted to shake them.

This story was not the kind of frustrating that took away from the story with the back and forth that just goes no where & has an HOA at the end. This had a build up of murphey's law choices & had a constant roll to the story.

It was great & I cannot wait to read more!

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### **Sandra says**

**I received an ARC from the publisher through NetGalley. This review does not include any mention of spelling and/or grammatical errors.**

This book seems at first glance simply a historical romance like so many others, yet it appealed to me for two reasons - a strong-minded, strong-willed female MC and an equally stubborn, pigheaded male MC.

Arran aka the Devil of Jedburgh, Laird of the Kerrs, must marry to produce an heir. His search for a wife is

not defined by love but by finding a woman strong enough to not die while giving birth. He has heard of the McAllen's wife's proclivity to bear lots of strong, strapping sons and assumes that the lone daughter, the last born, will thus also be able to produce his heir without dying in the process. Apparently, even the Scots in the middle of the 16th century had an idea of genetics.

On his ride to fetch his promised bride, he chances upon Breghan who's run off so she won't have to marry Arran since the stories she's heard about him don't paint a pretty picture. While she recognizes him, he does not, and she doesn't correct him when he assumes she's a lady's maid.

Rumors abound about Arran having killed four wives and his own mother, about him being cruel and heartless and in cahoots with the devil. Who would want to marry such a man, right?

Upon learning who Bree really is, Arran insists on a handfasting instead of a marriage, which binds Breghan to him for a year and a day. He's half mad with want for her yet refuses to risk impregnating her since she's, in his eyes, too fragile to bear children. Obviously, he can't marry her since she won't be able to give him heirs.

Arrogant, know-it-all male? Check.

The book progresses much like a typical historical romance, with rather witty, bantering dialogue between the two MCs and a fair amount of intimate encounters as Arran sets about wooing his reluctant wife and simultaneously despising himself for doing so. He wants her in his bed but also knows that he can't keep her and mustn't get her pregnant. Some of the book deals with the prevention of unwanted pregnancy and the author seems to have spent some time researching this information, as indicated in the afterword.

Between the amusing banter and the well-researched historical facts around the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots, this is a very entertaining read. At the same time, you can see the characters grow towards each other to finally confess their love. There are moments when my heart broke for Arran, for the pain he experienced early in his adulthood that shaped him into the man he is now and the reason why he's so deathly afraid of losing his wife if she were to become pregnant.

There is a huge breach of trust that Bree commits toward the last third of the book which then fortuitously serves as the breakthrough these two need to get past Arran's fears and end the discussion about Bree's leaving after the handfasting period is over.

The book is well written, with good forward movement and emotional descriptions of not only the female but also the male character. I held my breath, I laughed, I cheered, I feared right along with them. Their final scenes made me tear up. It's a good author who can evoke those kinds of strong emotions while I'm reading.

A few things I wasn't too happy about:

- the average male height during the 1500s was approx. 5'8". For any woman during that time period to produce 12 sons who all stand over 6', sorry - that's research fail. I understand that all romance males must be strapping, broad-shouldered, hunky specimen but it's not historically accurate.

- the location of the hymen. In so many romance books, including this one, the authors write the defloration as the male organ entering the female channel to some extent before breaking the barrier. That simply is not correct. A quick search on Google will tell you exactly where the hymen is located and half-way up isn't it. This myth is perpetuated again and again, and it's one of my pet peeves. I'm sure there is a romantic reason for why it's written this way, but it eludes me.

Overall, this was a great read for a rainy afternoon or a sunny day at the beach. I enjoyed spending time with

Arran and Breghan and will be searching out this author for more of her work.

I think you would too.

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## **Kayla Tocco says**

To find this review and others visit <http://www.wholeletterromance.blogspot...>

Publisher: Carina Press

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Genre: Historical Romance

May I just say that I loved this novel. I didn't feel disappointed at any point during it. Claire Robyns' weaves a tale that has you unable to put the book down from the start. She's created vivid and lively characters that complement each other well.

### The Blurb:

Raised on rumours of The Devil of Jedburgh, Breghan McAllen doesn't want an arranged marriage to the beast. The arrogant border laird is not the romantic, sophisticated husband Breghan dreams of, despite the heat he stirs within her.

In need of an heir, Arran has finally agreed to take a wife, but when he sees Breghan's fragile beauty, he's furious. He will not risk the life of another maiden by getting her with child. Lust prompts him to offer a compromise: necessary precautions, and handfasting for a year and a day, after which Breghan will be free. For a chance to control her own future, Breghan makes a deal with the Devil.

Passion quickly turns to love, but Arran still has no intention of keeping the lass, or making her a mother. He loves her too much to lose her. But when a treasonous plot threatens queen and country, Breghan has to prove only she is woman enough to stand by his side.

### My Take:

Breghan, right from the beginning you can tell she's independent and full of life and imagination and even when confronted with her biggest fear, being married to the Devil of Jedburgh (just one of many names her betrothed has all referring to how evil he is), she takes him on only to find that though he can be infuriating, he really isn't evil and is in fact just what she's been looking for her.

Arran, what can I say about him, he's sexy and kind and authoritative and totally alpha without being too overbearing. You can truly feel his emotions and love for Bree and see his mind and heart tearing him in two different directions as he realizes that because he doesn't want to hurt her or see her killed, he can't bear to be apart from her either.

Both are afraid to fall for each other, knowing that eventually they'll have to part ways and I enjoyed the experience of watching these two grow both individually and as a couple.

This story kept you turning the pages and I don't believe I found a dull moment in it at all. If I did, then all the great parts far outweighed the dull parts so much so that they've left my mind. The author has a gift with

words and the perfect voice for a historical romance. Normally, I have a hard time reading historical's that take place in Scotland due to the fact that some authors go a little heavy on the accents of their characters to the point of distraction. Ms. Robyns did not. She weaved just enough of their accents in so that you could hear the voices in you head and still enjoy the story.

The brief side stories of Bree's ladies maids finding their own romances were cute and charming and did not take away from the main storyline at all. I, for one, cannot wait for another story by Ms. Robyns.

My Rating: 4/5 Lattes

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### **Krista Ashe says**

Probabaly 4 1/2 stars. A hot love interest who wears a kilt and talks with a Scottish accent? Um, yes, please!!

I've been reading outside my YA genre lately, and since I love historical fiction, I decided to give historical romance a try. The Devil of Jedburgh didn't disappoint.

I loved that Breghan was a sassy, spunky woman of the 17th century. Even though she'd heard horrible stories about Arran, she always stood her ground and stood up to him and the patriarchal society she found herself in. Their chemistry was red hot from the first moment they met(even though he didn't know who she was). Of course, her spunk sometimes drove her away from Arran and would have served her a few times to read things between them a little differently.

Arran's devil reputation was only the product of legends. Instead of being a beast, he's a hottie with a sad past in love that leaves him emotionally stunted when it comes to love. Sure, he wouldn't mind a roll in the hay with Breghan, but he doesn't want to marry her bc he totally separates marriage and love. Plus, he only wants a wife to give him heirs.

Would totally recommend this to anyone who loves historical romance, and even though I read the eARc, I'll probably buy this one when it comes out. Great steamy scenes, historical tidbits interspersed(had never heard of handfasting, which is where a man would take a woman for a year as a trial marriage. If he liked her, he'd marry her, if not, he'd send her back to her family), and swoonworthy hero....and a sweet romance!

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### **Katie Michaels says**

Breghan's father has promised her hand in marriage to a neighboring laird with a fierce reputation. Arran is known as the Devil of Jedburg for his ruthlessness, his skill in battle, and a string of terrible rumors that follow his family. Breghan is a headstrong young woman, with her own ideas of how she wants to spend her future. Ideas that don't have anything to do with a wild beast of a man. She runs away, but only manages to incense her husband-to-be. Instead the marriage everyone expected, the two become handfasted for a year and a day.

Despite the fact that Breghan drives him crazy, Arran becomes quite taken with her. He uses their time together to become her lover. But he is terribly afraid of getting her pregnant. His father went through wife after wife who died in childbirth and believes Breghan would meet the same fate.

It's only a matter of time before these two are truly in love with each other, but Arran cannot see reason. His

fears rend him unable face a future with Breghan, and leaves everyone wondering how the relationship can make it.

The story is set on the backdrop of some Scottish royal intrigue. But the real draw is the evolution of our main characters. I have to admit, Arran did get on my nerves from time to time with his overbearing ways, but I tried to remind myself of the time frame in which the book is set. He makes for a pretty sexy hero and it was very gratifying to watch him slowly drop his defenses with Breghan.

The direction of the plot is pretty predictable. If the guy's big issue is fear over pregnancy, it's no big leap to guess what's going to happen and how it will all turn out. But I did enjoy getting there. And I was surprised to find I also liked the little side plot of Arran's brutish friend and Breghan's maid. Plus --there were kilts. (And a hint of a brogue.) 3 1/2 stars.

*\*ARC Provided by NetGalley*

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## **Ruth says**

I really enjoyed this one, provided by netgalley. What's not to like about a hottie in a plaid? Even the cover's hot, although I'll be honest, I don't think they really went in for chest waxes in those days.

The plot was a leetle bit formulaic (Scottish hottie seeks bride, marries into the clan next door to resident spitfire, we follow their attempts to make it work etc. etc), but there were a couple of things that made this much more enjoyable than that cynical synopsis (try saying that with your mouth full..) let's on.

Now, I had to admit, about 50% of the way in I was pondering to myself "I really hope this one comes up with a more interesting way to finish this book than I think it is". After the heroine and hero settle into life in his place, start coming to terms with one another, and she's lost her cherry and decided that having sex with a super-hunk isn't actually half bad, I really couldn't figure out how this book was going to hold my interest. Well, this author came up with a really good way of doing just that!

The author uses the historical aspect really, really well. She's got it right that in Scotland, both the Highlanders and those on the Borders (with England) were considered equally fearsome, equally aggressive and equally uncontrollable. It was the ones who inhabited the areas around Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling, Glasgow who were considered the most civilized. Our hero is a Border lord, with the EQ of an ant and a body to lust over!

Also, the author makes some of the best use of real historical figures that I've read. She effortlessly weaves Mary, Queen of Scots, her husband "King" Henry Darnley, and the Earl of Moray (Mary's far more effective half-brother) into the plot, in a way that is probably as fair as I've seen. She doesn't fall into the old Mary-Queen-of-Scots-Is-A-Tart line and she makes Darnley as insecure as a spoilt, teenage boy is. The hero isn't just prancing around on the side of all this political mayhem either - the author has taken a very specific event in history and plonked the hero front and center, and focuses just on his experience of what happens. It's really great stuff!

I also love how the hero has some hang-ups about childbirth. Too many historicals just pretend that childbirth was as it is today, when it was incredibly dangerous. I just checked that one study suggests that between 1400 and 1800 women had a 1-3% chance of dying with each birth, and since they averaged about 5 births, then about 10% died directly as a result of childbirth. That's a grim figure. No wonder so many women wanted to be nuns.

Now, I did have one gripe about this book. I just couldn't stand the heroine. I had two issues with her. First off, and most irritatingly, she was a spoiled brat. She wanted absolutely everything her own way, and even when she got her own way, she was horrible. Apparently she was beautiful, but I just couldn't shake the mental picture of her being like a Tudor Naomi Campbell, all pouty lips, sour face and raging temper tantrums. This was Scotland in the 1500s for heaven's sake - she belonged to her father. That's how it was! Even better for her, her Dad thinks the sun shines out of her backside, despite being a wicked little selfish madam, so she got an easy ride. Couldn't the little witch just be happy with that?

The other issue was that I couldn't help thinking how much more I would have enjoyed this one if the heroine *hadn't* been a spitfire, but just an intelligent woman of her times, who actually knew when to keep her trap shut and could actually influence her husband rationally rather than hitting his chest all the time. But I suspect that the highland historical romance WITHOUT the heroine-as-spitfire trope doesn't actually exist. Please let me know if I'm wrong...

Anyway, 4 stars, despite all my grumbling, and if you want to know more about the Stewarts, who really were an interesting, flawed family, with more than one or two naughty members over the years, check out *The Royal Stuarts: A History of the Family That Shaped Britain*.

It's available to buy NOW.

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### **Judy Croome says**

Ms. Robyns demonstrate an excellent command of historical detail in this romantic tale set in the midst of the royal intrigue of Queen Mary of Scotland's court. The intertwining of actual characters with the fictional characters (and some dramatic scenes of the harsh cruelty of the age) contributes to the realism and magnetism of the growing relationship between spirited Breghan McAllen and the Devil of Jedburgh, Laird Arran Kerr.

Frightened by the dark rumours of the Laird's reputation, Breghan runs away when her parents refuse to withdraw their marriage arrangement with the Devil...straight into the arms of a golden virile stranger!

From that first meeting between the fiery Breghan and the (deliciously) arrogant Arran, Ms. Robyns successfully tells a gentle and passionate love story threaded through with the danger of a threatening civil war.

I was quickly drawn into this richly detailed story: the tender but strong women who are more than a match for the brave, but tough, warriors who love as wildly as they fight.

This is a fast-paced, exciting read. THE DEVIL OF JEDBURGH transported me back into the heart of the Scottish Lowlands during a time when men would give their lives to protect their country and their families, and the women they loved were as brave as the warriors who fell in love with them.

A wonderful read, with plenty of heat between Arran and Breghan. This is the kind of romance I love reading.

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### **Lorraine says**

This was a really good book. I couldn't put it down. Really loved the heroine and the hero. Many of the mistakes they make is based on fears but eventually everything turns out great! I recommend to all my friends. Very passionate couple.

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## Scooper Speaks says

3.5

**Favorite Lines: “He wants to dally for a while afore choosing a more appropriate wife and I want to earn my freedom. We both win.” (p. 71, egalley)**

Men are convoluted thinkers and the most alpha of them all is Arran. Known as the “Devil of Jedburgh” he is a vicious fighter who will do whatever it takes to secure his family’s hold on its land, Ferniehurst. Even if it means marrying an ugly, stout woman to give birth to his sons. He’s even found the perfect woman, Breghan McAllen. Her mother had given birth to 12 sons and one daughter. Too bad for him Breghan plans to be brood mare to no man.

There were a few nail-biting moments in *The Devil of Jedburgh*. I was concerned with how Breghan would confront the issue between her and Arran. There really was only one way to do so, but it involved Breghan tricking her hero. In reality I hate women who do as Breghan did. Did it affect my enjoyment of the story? Yep. It lowered my opinion of Breghan and even though I know it was necessary to resolve the conflict, I found it a bit distasteful.

Before all the conflict began to be resolved I enjoyed every bit of tension. I liked watching the fiery heroine running from a future she wanted no part of and I smiled as she found a way to make peace with the idea of being a woman of her time period. I even teared up when Breghan had issues with her father. The characters are inviting and well-written. The setting is vivid. *The Devil of Jedburgh* is a straight up classic Scottish romance. It’s love and action rolled into a tale set in my favorite place, the highlands of Scotland.

There are political machinations (not my favorite plot line), misunderstandings and hints at a possible second book set in the same world. Overall, it’s a nice story. Again, my problem is with the sneaky, chick trick the heroine played on the hero to move the story forward toward a happily ever after. It is a dirty, underhanded thing to have done.

So now that I’ve made you want to know what she did it’s time for you to go buy the story. I don’t regret reading it and one day may read it again.

Scooper Speaks

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## Nita says

Breghan McAllen's father has promised her hand in marriage to the Laird of Kerrs, Arran. He is known as the Devil of Jedburgh, because of rumors of his evilness. He's finally looking for a wife in order to get an heir. He choose's Breghan thinking she will be someone who can handle giving birth to a large baby. When he finally meets Breghan, though, he finds a much tinier woman than he expected. He suggests a handfasting instead of a marriage. Breghan agrees, looking forward to the freedom to choose her next husband after a year with Arran.

This one started a little rough for me. I found the hero a bit too unforgiving and rough around the edges in

the beginning. And though Arran doesn't change a whole lot by the end, he grew on me. If I were in his circumstances, I might be grumpy too. He did have some great moments of sweetness with Breghan.

I really enjoyed the historical aspects of this book. Robyns integrated Mary, Queen of Scots and the politics and royal drama of that time very well, I thought.

Definitely recommended to fans of highlander romances.

ARC provided by NetGalley.

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### **Sha Mslvoe says**

This is my 1st book by Claire Robyns and it was a very good book from start to end. This is a "read in a day" kind of book. It was hard to put down. I really enjoyed this book and was entertained with their characters as well as their interactions.

There are many humorous parts that will have you chuckling. So I highly recommend this novel, then judge for yourself if you liked it or not! Great book to read about Scottish Highlands.

\*\* I would like to thank the publishers and the folks at Net Galley for making this advance copy available to me for review. \*\*

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### **Kathy says**

A lovely read - good historical with passion, gripping plot and deep characters. The hero took me by surprise - he wasn't the usual cliché romantic hero, but I could see why the heroine loved him - he was sexy, fully male, passionate and real. It had smackerings of a 'beauty and the beast' theme which I love.

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