



Possessed by Passion (Forged of Steele)

By Brenda Jackson

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Tyson hasn't forgotten the one who got away. A weeklong fling should be just enough to get the sultry beauty out of his system for good, even if he has to let Hunter set the ground rules. But the rules are suddenly changing for the no-strings bachelor. Can Tyson convince this sensual woman that he's the real deal—that they deserve a second chance together?

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Editorial Review

Review

"The conclusion to the Grangers trilogy fulfills the promise of the previous entries. It's fun watching another committed bachelor fall on his sword. Through the discovery of the real killer of the brothers' mother, they are also able to fulfill the promise they made to their dying grandfather. Mission accomplished."--RT Book Reviews 4 1/2 star review on *A Lover's Vow*

About the Author

Brenda Jackson is a *New York Times* bestselling author of more than one hundred romance titles. Brenda lives in Jacksonville, Florida, and divides her time between family, writing and traveling. Email Brenda at authorbrendajackson@gmail.com or visit her on her website at brendajackson.net.

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I understand you became an uncle last night, Tyson. Congratulations."

Tyson Steele glanced over at the man who'd slid onto the bar stool beside him. Miles Wright was a colleague at the hospital where they both worked as surgeons. "Thanks. How did you know?"

"It was in this morning's paper. Quite the article."

Tyson shook his head as he took a sip of his drink. Leave it to his mother, Eden Tyson Steele, to make sure the entire city knew about the birth of her first grandchildren. Twins. A boy and a girl that represented a new generation of Steeles in Phoenix. Everyone was happy for his brother Galen and his wife, Brittany, but his mother was ecstatic beyond reason. Within the past three years, not only had three of her six die-hard bachelor sons gotten married, but as of last night she also had a grandson and granddaughter to boast about.

He wondered if Galen was aware of the article in this morning's paper since he hadn't mentioned it when Tyson had spoken to him earlier. Knowing their mother, Tyson wouldn't be surprised if the announcement appeared in the *New York Times* next. A former international model whose face had graced the covers of such magazines as *Vogue*, *Cosmo* and *Elle*, his mother still had connections in a lot of places and had no shame in using them.

Miles's beeper went off and with an anxious sigh he said, "Need to run. I got an emergency at the hospital."

"Take care," Tyson told his colleague, who moved quickly toward the exit door. He then glanced around. Notorious was a popular nightclub in Phoenix, but not too many people were here tonight due to the March Madness championship basketball game being held in town. Usually, on any given night, Tyson could have his pick of single women crowding the place, but not tonight.

His brothers had tried talking him into attending the game with them, but he'd declined after his team had been eliminated in the previous round. It didn't matter one bit when they'd laughed and called him a sore loser. So what if he was.

Tyson took another sip of his drink and checked his watch. It was still early, but he might as well call it a

night since it seemed he would be going home alone, which wasn't how he'd envisioned spending his evening. Taking some woman to bed had been at the top of his agenda. Scoring was the name of the game. Women hit on him and he hit on women. No big deal. It was the lay of the land. His land anyway.

He stood to leave at the same time the nightclub's door swung open and three women walked in. Three good-looking women. He sat back down, thinking that maybe the night wouldn't be wasted after all.

Not to be caught staring, he turned around on the bar stool. The huge mirror on the wall afforded him the opportunity to check out the women without being so obvious. Good, he noted. No rings. That was the first thing he looked for since he didn't believe in encroaching on another man's territory. Tyson figured it must be his lucky night when they were shown to a table within the mirror's view. The women were so busy chatting that they didn't realize he was checking them out.

For some reason his gaze kept returning to one of the women in particular. She looked familiar and it took a second or two before it hit him just who she was.

Hunter McKay.

Damn. It had been years. Eighteen, to be exact. She had been two years behind him in high school, and of all the girls he'd dated during that time, she was the only one with whom he hadn't been able to score. She'd had the gall to ask for a commitment before giving up the goods, and unlike some guys, who would have lied just to get inside her panties, he'd told her the very same thing then that he was telling women now. He didn't do commitments. His refusal to make her his steady girl had prompted her to end things between them after the first week. It had been the first time a Steele had ever been shot down. For months his brothers had teased him, calling Hunter "the one who got away." He frowned, wondering why that memory still annoyed him.

When he'd returned to Phoenix after medical school he'd heard she attended Yale to fulfill her dream of being an architect. After college she had made her home in Boston and returned to town only occasionally to visit her parents. Their paths had never crossed until tonight.

He'd also heard she had gotten married to some guy she'd met while living in Boston. So where was her ring? She could be getting it cleaned, resized or...maybe she was no longer married. He couldn't help wondering which of those possibilities applied.

Hunter had been a striking beauty back then and she still was. It had been that beauty that had captured his interest back in the day and was doing so now. It didn't appear as if she'd aged much at all. She still had that young-girl look, and those dimples in both cheeks were still pretty damn pleasing to the eyes.

The shoulder-length curly hair had been replaced with a short natural cut that looked good on her, and he couldn't help it when his gaze lingered on her lips. He could still remember the one and only time he'd kissed her. It has been way too short, yet oh so sweet.

He felt an ache in his groin and didn't find it surprising since it was a familiar reaction whenever he saw a beautiful woman. But it was Hunter who was affecting him, not the other two women. He remembered them from high school as well, but had forgotten their names.

What he did recall was that they had been Hunter's best friends even back then.

"Ready for another drink, Doc?"

He glanced up at Tipper, who'd been the bartender at Notorious for years. "Not yet, but do me a favor."

Tipper grinned. "As long as it's legal."

"It is. Whatever drinks those three ladies are having, I want them put on my tab."

Tipper glanced over at the table where the women sat and nodded. "No problem. I'll let their waiter know."

"Thanks."

Tipper walked off and Tyson's gaze returned to the mirror. At that moment Hunter threw her head back and laughed at something one of the women said. He'd always thought she had a sensuously shaped neck, flawless and graceful. He'd looked forward to placing a hickey right there on the side of it. It was the place he would brand all the girls in high school who'd gone all the way with him. It had been known as the Mark of Tyson. But Hunter had never gotten that mark. What a pity.

His cell phone pinged with a text message and he pulled his phone out of his jacket to read his brother Mercury's message. My team is up four. Be ready to celebrate later tonight.

Tyson clicked off the phone and rolled his eyes. *When hell freezes over*, he thought. If his brothers thought he was a sore loser, then Mercury could be an obnoxious winner, and Tyson wanted no part of it tonight. After returning the phone to his jacket, he let his gaze return to the mirror and to Hunter. He couldn't help but smile when he made up his mind about something. Her name might be Hunter but tonight he was determined to make her his prey.

Hunter McKay appreciated sharing this time with her two best friends from high school—Maureen Santana, whom everyone fondly called Mo, and Kathryn Elliott, whose nickname was Kat. Both had been bridesmaids in her wedding and because they'd kept in touch over the years, they'd known about her rocky marriage and subsequent divorce from Carter Robinson. Mo, a divorcée herself, thought Hunter had given Carter far too many chances to get his act together, and Kat, who was still holding out for Mr. Right, had remained neutral until Carter had begun showing his true colors.

"Here you are, ladies," the waiter said, placing their drinks in front of them. "Compliments of the gentleman sitting at the bar."

Their gazes moved past the waiter to the man in question. As if on cue, he swiveled around in his seat and flashed them a smile. Hunter immediately felt a flutter in the pit of her stomach, a flutter that should have been forgotten long ago. But just that quickly, after all these years, it had resurfaced the moment she stared into the pair of green eyes that could only belong to a Steele.

"Well now, isn't that nice of Tyson Steele," Mo said with mock sweetness. "I wonder which one of us he wants to take home tonight."

"Take home?" Hunter asked, while her eyes remained on Tyson. For some reason she couldn't break her gaze. It was as if she was caught in the depths of those gorgeous green eyes.

"Yes, take home. He doesn't really date. He just has a history of one-night stands," Mo replied.

"Do we have to guess which one of us he's interested in?" Kat asked, chuckling, and then took a quick sip of

her drink. "If you recall, Mo, that particular Steele was hot and heavy for Hunter back in the day."

"That's right. I remember." Mo turned to Hunter. "And if I recall, you dumped him. Probably the only female in this town with sense enough to do so."

With that reminder, Hunter tore her gaze from Tyson's to take a sip of her drink. In high school, Tyson, along with his five brothers, were known as the "Bad News" Steeles. Handsome as sin with green eyes they'd inherited from their mother, the six had a reputation as heartbreakers. It was widely known that their only interest in a girl was getting under her dress.

Galen Steele, the oldest of the bunch, had been a senior in high school when she'd been a freshman. Tyson was the second oldest. After Tyson came Eli, Jonas, Mercury and Gannon. Each brother was separated the closest in age by no more than eleven months, which meant their mother had practically been pregnant for six straight years.

"Tyson gave me no choice," Hunter said, finally replying to Mo's comment. "I liked him and for some reason I figured he would treat me differently since his family had been members of my grandfather's church. Boy, was I naive."

Kat chuckled. "But like Mo said, when you found out that you'd be just another notch on his bedpost, at least you had the sense to dump him."

"I didn't dump him," Hunter said, sitting back in her chair. She didn't have to glance over at Tyson to know he was still staring at her. "When he told me what he wanted, I merely told him I saw no reason for us to continue to date, because he wasn't getting it."

"That's a dump," Mo said, grinning. "And be forewarned, nothing about the Steeles has changed. Those brothers are still bad news. Hard-core womanizers. Getting laid is still their favorite pastime."

"At least three had the sense to get married," Kat added, taking another sip of her drink.

"Oh? Which ones?" Hunter inquired.

"Galen, Eli and Jonas."

Hunter vaguely remembered Eli but she did remember Jonas since they'd graduated in the same class. And she couldn't help but recall Galen Steele. He had gotten expelled from school after the principal found him under the gymnasium bleachers making out with the man's daughter. His reputation around school was legendary. "So, Galen got married?"

"Yes, a few years ago, and his wife just gave birth to twins," Mo explained. "Last night, in fact. The announcement was in the papers this morning. It was a huge write-up in the society section."

Hunter nodded as she tried ignoring the fact Tyson still had his eyes on her. "What does Tyson do for a living?"

"He's a heart surgeon at Phoenix Baptist Hospital," Mo responded.

"Good for him. He always wanted to be a doctor." She recalled their long talks, not knowing at the time their

conversations were just part of his plan to reel her in. Unfortunately for him, she hadn't been biting.

"Don't look now, ladies, but Tyson has gotten up off the bar stool and is headed this way."

Although Kat had told them not to look, Hunter couldn't help doing so. She wished she hadn't when Tyson's gaze captured hers. He'd been eye candy in his teens and now eighteen years later he was doubly so. She couldn't miss that air of arrogance that seemed to surround him as he walked toward them. He appeared so powerfully male that every step he took conveyed primitive animal sexuality. There was no doubt in her mind that over the years Tyson had sharpened his game and was now an ace at getting whatever he wanted.

He was wearing a pair of dark slacks and a caramel-colored pullover sweater. She was convinced that on any other man the attire would look just so-so. But on Tyson, the sweater emphasized his wide shoulders, and the pants definitely did something to his masculine build.

"I understand whenever a Steele sees a woman he wants, he goes after her. It appears Tyson's targeted you, Hunter," Mo said as she leaned over. "Maybe he thinks there's unfinished business between the two of you. Eighteen years' worth."

Hunter waved off her friend's words. "Don't be silly. He probably doesn't even remember me, it's been so long."

It took less than a minute for Tyson to reach their table. He glanced around and smiled at everyone. "Evening, ladies." And then his gaze returned to hers and he said, "Hello, Hunter. It's been a while."

Hunter inhaled deeply, surprised that he *had* remembered her after all. But what really captured her attention were his features. He was still sinfully handsome, with skin the color of creamy butternut and a mouth that was shaped too darn beautifully to belong to any man. And his voice was richer and a lot deeper than she'd remembered.

Before she could respond to what he'd said, Mo and Kat thanked him for the drinks as they stood. Hunter looked at them. "Where are you two going?" she asked, not missing the smirk on Mo's face.

"Kat and I thought we'd move closer to that big-screen television to catch the last part of the basketball game. I think my team is winning."

Hunter came close to calling Mo out by saying she didn't have a team. She knew for a fact that neither Mo nor Kat was into sports. Why were they deliberately leaving her alone with Tyson?

As soon as they grabbed their drinks off the table and walked away, Tyson didn't waste time claiming one of the vacated seats. Hunter glanced over and met his gaze while thinking that the only thing worse than being deserted was being deserted and left with a Steele.

She took a sip of her drink and then said, "I want to thank you for my drink, as well. That was nice of you."

"I'm a nice person."

The jury is still out on that, she thought. "I'm surprised you remember me, Tyson."

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