



## Barbarian's Soul

*Joan Kayse*

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## **Barbarian's Soul** Joan Kayse

Blood. Death. Destruction. Bran, son of Fynbar survived it all as a gladiator in the arenas of Rome's blood sport. Earning his freedom did not earn him peace, and he finds his hell continues when he remains in the heart of the Empire to see his sister and her family secure. But now that all is settled, he is close to attaining the one shard of hope that saw him through his darkest days—he is finally returning home.

Adria has lived life in the streets of Rome since being orphaned as a young girl. Not an easy task considering the poverty that plagues the city. She uses the skills she's learned to fill her belly and take care of those in desperate need. That she does so by stealing from only those who can afford the loss and never for her own personal gain is something she accepts. But when a notorious master thief pressures her to join his lethal ranks and her foster mother is faced with eviction, she breaks her most basic rule and steals for profit.

Forced to remain in the midst of Rome, Bran earns silver by crafting exquisite jewelry, a skill he was renowned for in his homeland. One last transaction will fill his coffers and he will at last be able to take his clansman and the children he is sworn to protect away from the filth that is the Empire. But his elation is short lived when a thief steals the valuable cache of precious jewels. Losing the deal and his chance to return home, he tracks down the culprit only to discover a mere slip of a girl whose amethyst eyes spark fire even as she fights his reclamation of his property. Bran's pride demands he make her pay for his trouble, while his soul is drawn to her temper and spirit. Adria agrees to act as nursemaid to his three out of control wards, refusing to believe that the gruff, stoic, intimidating man, reviled as a barbarian just might be conquering her heart. Can the two survive the pain and resentments of an unfair world and the machinations of an old enemy, to gain what they both long for—a family?

## **Barbarian's Soul Details**

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Author : Joan Kayse

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## From Reader Review Barbarian's Soul for online ebook

### Katy says

3.5-First reads winner. Overall the book told an interesting and detailed story. The description of the marketplace and the violence was vivid and brought the reader to Rome. I was clear the two main characters, Adria and Bran, were passionate about life and each other. They had clearly defined personalities and made their differences and lust an interesting thing to experience. There were two things I was not fond of in the book, prompting the 3 versus 4 star rating. The first being how whiney the children are, it took me out of the story and made me not care if anything happened to them. The other, and this is just my personal views, was the exposition took too long. Neither character acted on their feelings until almost half way through the book, making it less romantic than anticipated. Generally an enjoyable read.

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### Tonya says

I was hesitant to write this review for a few reasons, one being I won this romance novel via Goodreads Firstreads\* and don't want to piss off the free book fairies. Sadly I could not rate this one any higher than a two star or ok rating.

Barbarian's Soul is the third in a series, (I don't believe I missed anything in the first two), these novels take place in Rome during Nero's heyday before he went all bats\*%t crazy burning Christians as if they were tiki torches in his gardens.

Bran is an Irish barbarian that served as a gladiator during enslavement, he's very sexy (or so we're told). Adria is a Roman orphan (who has sexy violet eyes) that's been living as a thief in the streets and slums. Bada bing bada boom we have insta-crush when these two have a brief glance in a crowded market place.

The story could have had way more meat, the reader is not immersed in early Rome nor are they ever given the chance to fully invest in either of the main characters. The characters are boring and even the sex scenes are yawn worthy. The timeline of the story seemed way off too, whole weeks are missing and this causes the reader to miss time that Bran and Adria should have been verbally sparring or even just getting to know each other. Emotions are glossed over, character history is sketchy, and the whole feeling of the novel seemed rushed.

All in all it was an ok read, not something I'd think twice about other than I promised to write an honest review after my Firstreads win. So here it is & there goes my chances of ever winning again.

\*Note I won this book via the Goodreads Firstreads in exchange for an honest review.

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### Debora says

I really liked this book. It was a change of genre for me. I usually read paranormal books. After reading this book, I want to read the other 2 previous books in this series. Great story.

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### **Suzanne Ferrell says**

Once again Joan Kayse takes her readers back into the world of Ancient Rome. This time it's into the life of a former Gladiator Bran and the lovely thief who steals his heart. But first she steals jewelry he crafted and impugns his honor. Not a thing to do to a Barbarian who holds both his honor and craft in high regard.

This is the story of two souls finding each other amidst the harsh world of the commoners in Rome. As always, Ms. Kayse gets right to the heart and heat of the matter, making you fall for the Barbarian Bran and root for the thief, Adria. Mix in three orphans Bran is raising, his friend the maimed Menw, friends from previous books, two gangs of evil threatening the couple and their make-shift family and it's a cast of rich characters to keep you turning the pages until the very last one.

Ms. Kayse has the ability to make you not only see Rome in those ancient times, but feel the hope and despair swirling in the underbelly of the city.

Bring on more Romans!!

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### **Helen says**

I fell into this one and really enjoyed it, Bran is such a wounded hero with a lot of guilt to overcome and Adria is just the heroine to help him living in these times are tough and MS Kayse brought it all to life I loved this one.

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### **Angie Ballard says**

I loved the first two books in this series, The Patrician and The Patrician's Fortune, but I just wasn't sure at first that I'd enjoy a novel revolving around Bran, the hardened ex-gladiator I'd met briefly in the other books. Wow, was I wrong! Joan Kayse has done it once again, creating a character so real, with so many complex layers, that I fell for him. And I was cheering for Adria, the heroine, from the very beginning. I was completely immersed in their story as their romance blossomed in its own rocky way. I was sorry to wipe the dust of the streets of Rome from my feet when it ended - I'm sure I'll be re-reading it soon ;)

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### **Jennifer says**

I really enjoyed reading this book! A bit predictable in terms of character and plotline, but still a very delightful read. I quite enjoyed both of the lead characters and their personal journeys. This was a first time reading this type of a book and I would definitely read another!

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### **Jackie Moore says**

I have to admit I didn't read any of this author's other books before this one. That being said I really liked this book and will now have to read her other books as well. Mainly because I want to find out how the other

characters in the book got together.

This book though was very interesting. At first it was a bit of a slow read, but once I got about a quarter of the way into the book it started to really take off. I loved both of her main characters. Adria had a lot of spirit and that never seemed to waver, and Bran was a wounded soul who found himself drawn to Adria mainly because of her spirit, and also her beauty. I liked how Adria ended up finding a home with Bran and his family. I also liked how she ended the book. The only thing I wish is that I knew what happened to both of these characters after the ending of the book, because I liked them so much!

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