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Maisey Yates

Pretender to the Throne



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A duty to the past...

After fifteen years in self-imposed exile, the haunted rebel prince Xander Drakos must walk back through the palace gates and assume the role he once abandoned.

Only one woman can restore his good name—the woman he left behind. But when Xander finds Layna Xenakos, he's horrified to see the effects of the turmoil he left behind written in the scars across her body.

But her scars have given her strength, and Layna refuses to bow to his royal command. Now Xander must use his practiced charm to convince her to become his bride, securing his legitimate place on the throne.

Pretender to the Throne Details

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From Reader Review Pretender to the Throne for online ebook

Tanya Mayes says

I love this new twist on Beauty and the Beast. This is the story of Alexander (Xander) Drakos and Layna Xenakos. A couple who was once engaged to be married and tragedy struck for Xander and he left leaving her, his family and country behind and soon after tragedy struck Layna, she is scarred for life.

Fifteen years later Xander is back to finally do his duty as crown prince to claim the throne but because of his past he needs Layna to help him. When he finds her in a convent she is not the same woman he left behind. All he knows is he needs her and what he wants he gets and he does she decides to do her duty and help him no matter the cost to her.

Xander was a notorious playboy with many vices trying to forget the secret that he carries with him. He could never find any happiness. Layna because of her scars and what happen to her she blames Xander but doesn't know if she can truly forgive him. But the pain that they both went through becomes the driving force that makes them both stronger and to find the love they both need. Xander redeem himself to me in all ways no matter his past.

I love that Xander saw pass Layna's scars to get to her heart. This is the first story I have read where the heroine is not beautiful.

Maisey Yates handles the tragedies very delicately she built up the suspense and keep my interest until the very end. Great Job!!!

This is a must read story and series.

Xander Rocks!!!

TashNz says

#3 in the Call of Duty series. Xander Drakos, the prince who turned his back on his kingdom, giving his duty the big middle finger and skipping town. In his wake he leaves a destroyed queen to be, a nation in turmoil and his brother Stavros (from At His Majesty's request, book #2) picking up the pieces.

Many years later he's back and he quickly sets about reclaiming the throne with his jilted queen to be Layna. Xander was too busy drinking and gambling to keep up with the news in his country... he had absolutely no idea about Layna's fate when he walked away. Finding her in a nunnery is the last thing he expected, let alone how she now looks.

Somehow Xander convinces Layna to come back to the palace with him and support him winning his people back and taking the throne as their King. Whether it's throwing an engagement party, doing the rounds at a hospital or visiting his dying father, Xander feels like he's drowning, or being strangled - that is until he kisses Layna.

Xander and Layna are both damaged people and following their journey as a reader held me captured from

page one. It's eventful, heartbreaking, humorous, emotional and wonderful all wrapped up into one delicious book.

I love Maisey's stories, they're filled with drama, tension, passion and witty conversation. They are in far away places and my imagination never has a problem jumping right in and joining the characters, in this case Xander and Layna.

Well worth the read on a sunny sunday afternoon.

I'm not sure why I didnt realise that Xander's little sister Eva had her own story so I'm off to look that up now.

Aishee says

Oh My God!Oh My God!Xander's story is here. I was eagerly waiting for the last book of 'The Call Of Duty' series. It will be intriguing to know what actually prompted him to abandon his royal duties.

Countin' the days. *sigh*

Dee says

This is Xander's story and completes the Call of Duty trilogy. Crown Prince Xander left his home fifteen years ago under a cloud, he has spent every single one of those years in pain and although he never had the courage to end his life he had no regard for it, he took drugs, drank to excess and used sex to help him to forget. We know very early on that he left home because he blamed himself for the death of his mother as he was driving the car when they had the fatal accident, even worse both his father and brother also blamed him which was more than he could bear. Upon learning that his father is seriously ill and may die that he finally returns home, he knows that his abandoned country is not going to forgive him easily so he turns to Layna, the fiancée he left behind only to find that she has been suffering for the last fifteen years too due to an acid attack leaving one side of her face and neck badly scarred.

It isn't until around two thirds of the story that we find out exactly why Xander felt so guilty about that fatal car accident and for killing his mother. Ms Yates' timing of this information was perfect as I was beginning to dislike him a little for the way he spoke to and the way he sometimes treated her. Layna was a truly special person and I really really liked her. After all she had gone through she still decided to stand beside Xander and help restore the country's faith in him, she helped him to have the courage to take on the role that he was born to have, yes at times she faltered, but after what she had gone through I do believe she was entitled to those wobbles, especially after the way the press was treating her.

Ms Yates did a fantastic job in delivering this story. More than anything I loved that she made Layna more 'real', instead of giving us a silly insipid heroine we got one that was loyal and strong but one who also had insecurities and made mistakes. I did sometimes worry that she was turning the reader against Xander and therefore making his actions difficult to forgive, but in usual style she turned that all around. I love reading about tortured heroes and heroines and I love plenty of angst in my Harlys, but I do still look for a well written story and that is why Ms Yates is an auto-buy author for me.

Jacqueline says

In general I enjoyed this book. It was a bit different in that the hero really hated himself and had pretty much wasted the last 15 years. The heroine was a badly scarred nun to be. Both of them were interesting characters and they had good chemistry together. He was not as ass to her however. He was pretty nice and showed that he needed and wanted her from the get go.

However, this book badly needed a fresh set of editing eyes. The time line was wonky. It was more than likely a rewrite where all of the affected passages did not get caught. Sloppy and it affected my enjoyment of the story.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Maisey Yates takes the Beauty and the Beast story and twists it on its side with this book. Is the heroine the beast due to her unsightly scars, or is the gorgeous prince with his decadent lifestyle really the beast?

Disclaimer: I didn't put this review in spoiler tags, although there might be some borderline spoilerish elements. I endeavored not to give too much away, that wasn't necessary to expressing my thoughts of the book.

As I read this novel, it struck me that this is a very serious book. I didn't feel much levity, not that I always expect it, but it was noticeably lacking. Layna and Xander have some serious hurts in their past and their present situations. Xander went off the rails big time and the author wasn't afraid to keep it real in describing Xander's depredations. No Xander did it all in his checkered past (recent and distant). He was notoriously promiscuous to the degree that he doesn't even know how many women he's slept with (and doesn't even remember some of them), abused drugs, and was a hard drinker. In my mind I couldn't help wonder how healthy his liver is. I have alcoholics in my family on both sides, and through them I have seen the effects of long-term alcohol abuse on a person. I was glad that Layna doesn't let him off the hook when she agrees to marry him. She demands fidelity from him, and I was so glad that she required that he get STD tested. It was judicious, considering the circumstances. As for Layna's scarring, it's not just confined to a thin line that barely disfigures her face. She has significant scarring and the tabloids/newspapers say some truly awful things about her. That part was heartbreaking. I could completely understand her fears about going back to the public life she escaped from ten years ago. Going from a shallow, spoiled socialite with impeccable looks to a scarred woman in her near to mid-thirties who is marrying a good-looking future king would be heart-wrenching for any woman. Even with her training that vanity has no place in her life from the convent, that was difficult to weather. Although Xander is clearly the worse bargain, they make it seem like Xander is being altruistic in honoring his promises and marrying Layna.

Yates definitely brings the reality to what seems like a storyline straight out of the fairy tales. I can't say I would be eager to marry Xander with his abuses on his body (and it's not out of judgmentalism, but because you can't just click a finger and erase the effects of such a lifestyle from his body). And I think that it's clear

that Xander has a ways to go before he breaks fifteen years of bad habits. I think this is evident when they are first intimate. Xander's lovemaking style while accomplished, does show a certain degree of selfishness and callousness about sex. He doesn't understand why Layna is conflicted about the experience, even though she enjoyed it. This is telling and I think realistic for a man who has spent fifteen years sleeping around with random women he meets as he frequents the casinos where he parties and makes his living gambling. I also liked how Xander's perception of Layna changes. He never thinks she's ugly, but he sees the scars through a harsher lens initially. As he falls in love with her, the scars become a part of her, and he loves the character of her features, because that's who she is. They cease to stand out to him.

Layna isn't portrayed as a perfectly good, pure woman either (other than what she appears to be on the surface). While she retired to a convent for ten years, her actions did have a certain degree of self-motivation. The convent was an escape, although she does realize how much she loves helping others and that her faith in God is real to her, in the process. At the root, it is running away, from the exposure she suffered as Xander's rejected fiancé who was horribly scarred by an angry protestor, and also from her own emotional breakdown.

Yes, as I wrote earlier, this is a very serious book. Despite the fact that one would consider this storyline fertile ground for a dramatic, glossy style Harlequin Presents, there is a deep emotional core to this book that refuses to allow the reader to dismiss this book as a light read.

I gave this four stars because it was a intense, layered, well-written, and emotional novel, and I think that Yates handled this dicey subject matter very well.

Dalia says

Not one of my fav books by MY. Too much darkness for my liking.

Jenny says

Xander Drakos is the ultimate bad boy. The playboy prince who must now claim his place on the throne. But with such a bad reputation only his ex fiancé Layna can help him restore his image in the eyes of his people.

When he returns home though he finds Layna living in a convent ready to take vows and become a nun and her once beautiful face badly scarred. Still he is determined to make her his bride but she can't forgive or forget how he once let her down and let him in again.

Fantastic book! Maisie Yates is the queen of Harlequin Presents. I love her characters. Xander is sex on legs, cocky and smug. A pure alpha male. Layna is a strong woman who was once a shallow, vain princess but after her accident she found a new purpose in life.

I loved that Xander was her first everything but I hated how she treated him towards the end. I wanted her to grovel more. I adored Xander's declaration of love and how he fought for her and never gave up on her. He definitely redeemed himself for his past mistakes. Swoon worthy hero!

Sheryl says

I didn't think Xander would be able to redeem himself with Layna... but GODDAMN he did it in is such a SPECTACULAR WAY that I freakin' LOVED HIM for it!!!!

Jenn - Reviews says

I loved this book. I thought there were so many layers and the author really did a great job of describing human nature.

I loved both Xander and Layna. Xander was an extremely damaged individual but I loved his honesty more than anything. I would always choose honesty over beautiful lies, and so did Layna. She was also scarred both physically and emotionally and I also liked her honesty about the person she had been and the one she had become. I loved her strength!

This is such a wonderful book. It was another one that hooked me from the first page to the last.

HÜLYA says

Maisey Yates kalemimi okudukça daha çok seviyorum. Yazar? epeydir okumam??t?m. Ba?l?l?k Yemini isimli hikayede iki yaral? ruhun hikayesi vard?.. Birinin yaras? görünür yerde yüzünde iken di?erinin ki ise ruhunda idi. Kaybolmu? bir adam idi Prens Xander. Çok dokunaklı? bir hikaye idi severek okudum..

Giovanni says

the first time i read it i wasn't in the mood and just couldn't find any books i wanted to read. so i easily got bored until the chapter...one. i stopped. then i waited for the right mood to read it. and finally it came yesterday.

So, full with it, i read it from the very start. And boy, did you forget your time. so what i learned? you really can't underestimate your mood.

Our hero and heroine were a broken couple. they seemed beyond repair for all the things they'd done and felt. our prince was a perfect imperfect future king. you wouldn't want to have him as your king once you learned what he'd done for fifteen years. drugs (!!), drinking, gambling, and countless anonymously sex with lots of women (and did MY tell us fine, and repeatedly until it imprinted on my mind that our hero's an absolute man-whore, thank you). but that's just in appearance. inside, you looked at a young man that hurt beyond words and simply just made mistakes. and every young people do make mistakes.

he came back as a man, who wanted to right his wrong (at least he tried) even though he still wanted to run so bad until he met our broken heroine. Our heroine had been beautiful, but because of some angry mad man who threw acid to her face, she had a half broken face. and yes, she blamed him plus she wanted to suicide. and i wouldn't judge her for that, it made her more real. i mean, i even couldn't imagine the pain when your

skin got burned. while our hero had scars inside, our heroine had them both outside and inside.

what i love was our hero accepted her as it is. he liked touch her face, he didn't even get disgusted to kiss her. well, i think that's lil bit unreal but since it's Romance it's okay. Very okay, in fact.

at first i despised our hero but as i knew him and his turmoil i found myself like him more and more until i wanted him have his happy ending. they're each imperfect but they're perfect as one. how i turned out loving them i didn't know, but i guess MY did herself a great job.

i loved the scene where they're made love and he confessed his love and the epilogue, of course (fifteen years later!)

i have three types of reaction after reading a book. if it's bad, it's "huh". if it's good it's 'wow' or *happy sigh*. and this one's one of the *happy sigh*'s.

Vintage says

Ay caramba. Our virgin princess is a sexual submissive. Kind of.

Let me back track. This is a beauty and the beast in reverse.

Our stalwart hero has been a worthless user and abuser for the past 15 years after a life-changing event back at the realm. Called back home because his father's in a coma; his brother and sister are ineligible to rule, he calls on his ex-fiancee who is the scarred victim of an acid attack.

The H is an unrepentant sensualist and hedonist and openly admits wanting a marriage of convenience with no fidelity in mind. Gulp. The virginal heroine is in an crystal prison of her own making: the acid attack and her scars have paralyzed her emotionally although they woke her up to her emotional shallowness from her previous life.

The heart of the story is how the two character grow, develop and learn to open themselves not just to what duty means but to emotion and ultimately to love.

The big shockeroo is (view spoiler) Apparently, these two have not read the H rulebook about how virgins are to act and react. All in a little raw particularly for a Harlequin.

Angsty, roughly romantic, slightly irritating, but very well done. Not your grandmother's Harlequin pablum.

3.5 not quite a 4.

Fiona Marsden says

This book made me cry before the end of chapter six and I had a tear in my eye right through the last chapter.

This was a very emotional read. I've been waiting for this story ever since I read the original Call of Duty

duo about Eva and Mak and Stavros and Jessica, the younger brother and sister of Xander, our not so heroic hero.

Fifteen years ago he walked away from his family who were grieving the death of his mother. He also walked away from Layna, his young beautiful fiancée. In the aftermath of his leaving, chaos reigned in the small country and in the resulting violence, Layna is injured.

Now Xander is coming back. Not because he wants to but because Stavros has asked him to come. Stavros has no children of royal blood as his daughters are adopted. Eva is pregnant but her life is no longer bound up in the Drakos line but with her husband.

Little do they know how undeserving Xander is of the place he must take.

Xander is everything you do not want in your new king and even more so as a husband. He has spent the last fifteen years drowning his conscience and sense of duty in alcohol and an endless stream of meaningless sex.

Layna is hiding from the world in a convent, seeking a new life different from the one she was raised for, future Queen, a prospect she thinks is impossible.

Xander's disruptive return into her life triggers a whole lot of things Layna doesn't expect. As we see these two get to know each other again, recognise the changes the years have wrought, we go on an emotional journey with them to find what seems an unlikely happy ever after.

Maisey Yates does emotional well and specialises in scarred heroes and heroines. This book is not perfect in every way but it engaged me with it's portrayal of two very wounded people finding strength and true love in each other. And to me that makes it brilliant.

Jenn - Reviews says

I loved this book. I thought there were so many layers and the author really did a great job of describing human nature.

I loved both Xander and Layna. Xander was an extremely damaged individual but I loved his honesty more than anything. I would always choose honesty over beautiful lies, and so did Layna. She was also scarred both physically and emotionally and I also liked her honesty about the person she had been and the one she had become. I loved her strength!

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