



Claimed by Love (Love in Bloom: The Ryders): Duke Ryder

By Melissa Foster



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""You can always rely on Melissa Foster to deliver a story that's fresh, emotional and entertaining. Make sure you have all night, because once you start you won't want to stop reading. Every book's a winner!"" —*New York Times* Bestselling Author Brenda Novak

Family law attorney Gabriella Liakos has one true love, Elpitha Island, where she grew up and hopes someday to return. But Elpitha is in financial ruins, and Gabriella will do anything to keep it from falling into the wrong hands.

Duke Ryder is a savvy real estate investor set on making Elpitha into an exclusive resort. Unlike other investors, he's not scared of purchasing a property where one family has roots so deep they practically reach the ocean floor...until he meets his beautiful, stubborn, and enticing tour host—the daughter of the owner of most of the island.

Gabriella sets out to dissuade Duke from purchasing Elpitha, but Duke has other ideas. He wants Gabriella *and* the island. Duke's powerful seduction draws Gabriella in, but can a savvy investor who's used to glamour and glitz, and a woman interested in preserving the culture she adores find a happily ever after together?

The RYDERS are the newest addition to the Love in Bloom series. Each book may be read as a standalone novel, or as part of the series.

MORE RYDERS coming soon!

Seized by Love (Blue) - Now Available!

Chased by Love (Trish)

Swept Into Love (Gage)

Rescued by Love (Jake)"

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Editorial Review

Review

PRAISE FOR MELISSA FOSTER:

"You can always rely on Melissa Foster to deliver a story that's fresh, emotional and entertaining. Make sure you have all night, because once you start you won't want to stop reading. Every book's a winner!" ?*New York Times* bestselling author Brenda Novak

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"Steamy sex scenes and heartfelt confessions...a satisfying addition to the 'Love in Bloom' series." ?*Midwest Book Review*

About the Author

Melissa Foster is a *New York Times* & *USA Today* bestselling and award-winning author. She writes sexy and heartwarming contemporary romance and new adult romance with emotionally compelling characters that stay with you long after you turn the last page. Melissa's emotional journeys are lovingly erotic and always family oriented--perfect beach reads for contemporary romance lovers who enjoy reading about wealthy heroes and smart, sassy heroines.

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DUKE RYDER BALANCED his cell phone against his shoulder, listening to his buddy and investment partner Pierce Braden talk about their newest potential investment property as he followed the rickety wooden dock onto the white sandy beach.

"The dock just might be the most stable thing on Elpitha Island," Pierce said. "Try to soak in a little sand and sun while you're there. That's the best part of the island."

Duke's eyes were immediately drawn to the sprawling oak trees he'd read about, standing sentinel over the forested acreage beyond. Long, thick branches spread like languid arms draped in moss, reaching for...what? One glance told him that there wasn't much to reach for, save for a building that looked more like a forgotten Mediterranean villa than the welcome center of the small Southern island. The stone and wood building had a deep porch that spanned the entire length of the left side with stone pillars. A wooden trellis laced with the most captivating flowering vines shaded the area. Although the structure itself was in need of repair, it was surrounded by perfectly manicured, ornate gardens, which contrasted sharply with overgrown and unkempt bushes littering the far edges of the property.

“The proximity to the mainland isn’t bad,” Duke said to Pierce. He set his suitcase on the sand and looked back at the Atlantic. “It only took an hour fifteen to get here.” Elpitha was the smallest of the vacation islands off of South Carolina, and more than half of the land had been owned by the Liakos family for centuries. It was just over eight square miles, and not many investors wanted such a small tract of land, or to deal with families that were as entrenched as the Liakos family was thought to be. Some families might sell out, but they would fight tooth and nail against change, which could cause discourse on an island this small. Duke and Pierce weren’t deterred. The restrictive size of the property would only increase the value, making it an exclusive vacation spot for the elite.

“With Hilton Head and the other islands so overrun,” Pierce said, “Elpitha is ripe for development. Although we’ll have to work around that name. Who wants to go to an island called Elpitha? It sounds more like a disease than an island.”

Duke squinted up at the blazing sun and loosened his tie. “I don’t know. I kind of like it.” He noticed a plantation-style home tucked behind the trees in the distance. “They weren’t kidding about the strange mix of Mediterranean and Southern feel of the place. This should be interesting.” Duke knew some of the island’s history, and though he still didn’t understand why Greeks would immigrate to the South and try to re-create their country’s feel, it didn’t much matter. If he and Pierce decided to purchase the land, they would bulldoze every structure and give the island a complete Southern overhaul, making it the most desirable resort area in the South.

“Chuck called earlier and said Liakos’s granddaughter Gabriella is an attorney,” Pierce explained. “He thinks they might bring her in on things. Apparently their family keeps things tight. So if you meet her, play nice.”

The hollow clank of a screen door hitting its frame drew Duke’s attention. A woman stood on the porch of the old building, shading her eyes from the sun as she looked out at the water. Her long dark hair hung halfway down her back. Duke was too far away to see her features, but there was no missing her curvaceous ass and full breasts, not to mention legs that seemed to go on forever beneath her short summery dress. Duke watched with interest as he listened to Pierce relay the most recent information from the attorneys and engineers.

The woman glanced at her watch, then settled her hand on her hip. A voice rang out from inside the building, and the pretty woman hurried back inside.

“I just found proof of life,” he said to Pierce as he stepped onto the sandy path. “I’ll call you once I’ve done some recon.”

Users Review

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