

Book Talk

The Brides of Alba: Healer

By Lee De Bevoise

Do you like tales about King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable? Imagine if the tale also includes the roots of Early Christianity in Europe. There's that and more in **Healer** the first book of **The Brides of Alba** series. Written by Linda Windsor, a best-selling and award-winning writer who has penned 29 other novels, this historical romance novel is set in sixth century Scotland, known at that time as Alba.

Brenna of Gowry, believed to be a witch who could transform herself into a wolf, has been in hiding for 20 years following the extermination of her family by Tarlach O'Byrne, a local yet powerful chieftain. She is a well-trained and gifted healer in the mold of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Other characters include Faol, Brenna's remaining companion – a huge white wolf, Brother Martin, the brothers O'Byrne, as well as Merlin and other familiar characters from Arthurian legends.

Windsor weaves a tale of romance, faith, and intrigue. Her characters are well-developed and become comfortably familiar as you read **Healer**.

This certainly is not a novel written with only ladies in mind. It's full of enough sword-play, mystery, and suspense to please any reader of either gender. In fact, **Healer** is a hard novel to put down. In a recent e-mail, Windsor agreed, explaining, "I was blown away when my publisher and agent, both guys, called me to tell me how it kept them reading all night and that they loved it."

Interpersonal dynamics and relationships, many of which each of us face daily, are a backdrop for the main plot lines in **Healer**. Windsor also skillfully demonstrates through her characters that personal salvation through Christ is a choice that is available to everyone.

Skillful use of believable dialog, as well as her ability to draw word pictures of the scenes, makes **Healer** a fast-moving and pleasant read.

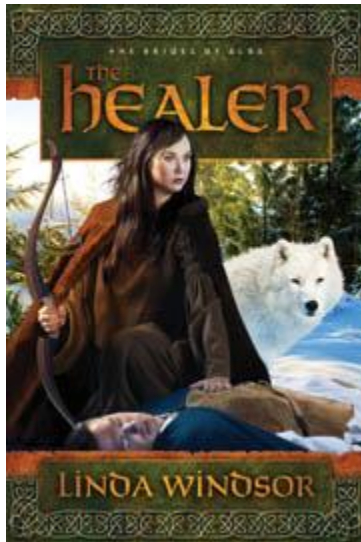
Windsor certainly did her homework in preparing for **Healer**. As a nice bonus for her readers, she includes an extensive glossary and detailed backgrounds on the major characters in the King Arthur and the Grail Palace, as well as the huge bibliography assembled and used by her are included.

Even if you have never read a historic romance novel, don't miss reading **The Brides of Alba: Healer**. Even though romance and action fills the pages of this novel, the absence of gratuitous sex and graphic violence is a pleasant plus and not even missed. **Healer** is an excellent summer vacation read.

The second book of **The Brides of Alba** series, **Thief**, is due out next summer. From some hints dropped by Windsor, **Thief** should be another excellent summer read, which I plan to review as soon as it's available.

Editor's Note: Lee De Bevoise is an award-winning former newspaper and magazine editor, who currently lives in S.E. Nebraska.

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