



A Highlander's Christmas Kiss

Paula Quinn

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A STRANGER'S SMILE

Christmas may be coming to Linavar, but Temperance Menzie is far from joyful. Grief-stricken over the death of her father at the hands of the Black Riders, she almost didn't see the wounded stranger in the woods. And now she's determined to give this braw, brooding Highlander the help she couldn't give her father. But there's a secret lurking in the depths of his blue-gray eyes. And Temperance won't rest until she uncovers it .

..

A LOVER'S KISS

A killer for hire. It's the last thing Cailean Grant ever thought he'd become, but being part of the Black Riders was his only way to survive. Now, his guilt grows day by day, along with his desire for the beautiful, brave lass nursing him back to health. As Christmas, the season of miracles, draws near and the truth of his identity threatens to come out, Cailean must risk the only thing he has left to lose-his heart.

A Highlander's Christmas Kiss Details

Date : Published September 27th 2016 by Forever

ISBN : 9781455535309

Author : Paula Quinn

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Holiday, Christmas, Cultural, Scotland

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From Reader Review A Highlander's Christmas Kiss for online ebook

Ronda Tutt says

Soulfully Fulfilling!

Wow! Love does the strangest things, it literally has a mind of its own and Paula Quinn once again gives the readers and her fans another fine example of how love truthfully blind sides you when you least expect it and even go as far as slapping you silly till you are maddeningly obsessed and so uncontrollable that even your friends notice it before you do, regardless of the situations.

Most important though, is while in this blinding love stage, the most enduring and heartfelt emotions are clearly envisioned in every paragraph of this amazing story. I was immediately hooked and couldn't put the book down.

Temperance Menzie is one beautiful character inside and out. The author gives us a clear picture into her soul and her playful and feisty mind. The kinship of love between each family member definitely won me over and drew me into their highland setting as if I was there eating some of Gram's stew.

Cailean Grant is of course the fierce handsome warrior we have read about in previous books, you know the one who lost his sanity after losing his beloved dog and a woman he had feelings for, the one who thought happiness wasn't ever going to be in his future and to hell with everything. But good ole Love has its way with him and this tough warrior gets more than he bargained with. Love brought the life back into his heart once he realized the truth of his mistakes. His compassion and honor shined all through the book especially while protecting Temperance and her clan from an evil disgusting killing clan up to no good during a blessed holiday like Christmas.

Sure the sexy and handsome highlander would make every woman swoon but Cailean isn't the rouge and his character is the type that wants more than a pretty face. No, a tough, tender, loving, giving, and feisty woman like Temperance is what turned his head. By allowing himself to share his feelings and being truthful is what allowed him to love freely and give the greatest gift of all on Christmas and that was a soul bearing happiness between two people that even the reader could feel from within the pages baring down from the smiling heart right down to your curling toes.

Beautiful story and I highly recommend any of Paula Quinn's books. This is a perfect read for the upcoming holidays.

Excellent Read!

Heather says

Paula Quinn knows how to weave a beautiful and compelling love story. We met Cailean in Malcolm's book. He is the brother Malcolm took to a whore house to be with his first woman. Now, Cailean has become a different man, a much harder and colder man. He has known loss and has decided that love was not in his future and that he didn't want to go through the heartache of losing the ones he loved again, so he became a mercenary and left home. Temperance loves life and loves her home. She is betrothed to a childhood

friend but doesn't want to marry anyone without love. All of her dreams change in one blood-soaked night. She ends up nursing a man that she finds badly wounded in her cabbage patch after that heart-wrenching night never realizing that man she is nursing back to health had a very active role in the loss of her family. Cailean tries to resist her, he knows what he has done and the guilt weighs heavily on him, but they are drawn together and she slowly shows him that his cold existence isn't what he wants in his life. But will she ever forgive him when she finds out the role he played in her father's death? The story was passionate, beautiful, saddening, emotional, and very enjoyable to read. I enjoyed it a lot! It was just such a beautifully romantic story and Quinn's ability to weave a plot together with intriguing characters and a dynamic conflict is just delicious to watch unfold. I highly recommend this one!

This was a Netgalley book given in exchange for an honest review.

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

'A Highlander's Christmas Kiss' by Paula Quinn is book 5 in "The MacGregors: Highland Heirs" series. This is the story of Temperance Menzie and Cailean Grant.

Wow..wow!~ This book has everything I must say. A highlander with a torched sole who thought he could go without feeling but found he had chosen the wrong path with Lord Edward Murdoch's of Glen Lyon, Black Riders group. His cousin got hurt and he was was mislead into thinking a group leader of a small area was possibly at fault for his cousin being hurt. But when he went to correct this and tell the people so he was stabbed and left to die. But Temperance who was the leader's daughter found him and not know who he was took him in to help him. This just had so much planing out in this story. Another great read by Ms. Quinn!!

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

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Regan Walker says

Celebrate Christmas in the Highlands with a Worthy Hero!

The story begins as Christmas draws near in 1711 in Linavar, Scotland. As Temperance Menzie prepares for Christmas Day with her family, their celebrations are suddenly cut short when the gang of Black Riders storm into their land and falsely accuse her father of shooting an arrow through into one of their men. Temperance's father is innocent, but Cailean Grant, who now rides with the Black Riders as a warrior for hire, doesn't know that. And so he allows one of the Black Riders to kill him.

After the killing, Cailean begins to get a conscious and, having witnessed Temperance's grief, comes looking for her. They exchange a few words and later, she finds him in the woods, unconscious and stabbed in the back. She has no idea the wounded man she nurses back to life was one of the Black Riders who killed her father.

Cailean's guilt grows as Christmas draws near and his identity is revealed. As well, Cailean has an enemy among the Black Riders and must him and his own demons. Meanwhile the man Cailean hates wants

Temperance for his bride. It's a muddle for a while until Cailean begins to set things straight.

A well-told story that will warm your heart on a cold winter's night, it tells of scars from the past and second chances, of marrying for love and not for duty.

A great Christmas read!

Monique says

Cailean Grant is on his way to Lyon's Ridge Castle and Lord Edward Murdoch's band of mercenaries, the Black Riders is Cailean's way of dealing with his pain. He has become a hard man after some losses left him empty, the sun had gone out of his life until he sees a lovely lass at a market. The next time he sees the pretty woman, Temperance Menzie, the circumstances are far from pleasant and Cailean is stunned into re-evaluating his outlook on life. The third time they meet, she saves his life, and things will never be the same again.

A HIGHLANDER'S CHRISTMAS KISS is an exceedingly complicated story, not because it's hard to follow, but because of the chain of events that snowballs into glorious splendour as well as the darkest depths of hell. After re-reading the blurb, I had to change some things to my review, as I gather they would be seen as spoilers, it also required some additional thinking on my part regarding my perception of certain events. Once in a while, a book requires that the reader either chooses to accept a character's decision for what it is, or reject it because the decision does not appeal to me, as a person. And it is regarding the latter that I had to work harder, and try to be more objective with regards to the characters' actions, and evaluate if their actions were consistent with their characters.

Lord Murdoch has a son, Duncan, who is bent on taking Temperance as a wife. It doesn't help is that Lord Murdoch prefers Cailean to his own son, which understandably doesn't sit well with Duncan, who is a truly despicable character, and realistically so. Things go from bad to worse when Temperance makes it very clear that she will have nothing to do with Duncan. Temperance is a marvellous character: she will not back down once she has made up her mind, not by sheer stubbornness, but by conviction, and she will do what it takes, even if it puts her own life in danger. While nursing Cailean back to health, he and Temperance slowly fall in love, however she knows there is something he is not telling her, and indeed Cailean's secret is huge. I usually don't like when a character keeps a secret of this magnitude from another, especially a potential love interest, but I have to admit that Cailean didn't have much choice. And I had no idea how Ms. Quinn would make Cailean and Temperance find their happy-ever-after. Not that it necessarily seemed impossible, but that it would require extreme finesse. Even though both Cailean and Temperance survive the ending, A HIGHLANDER'S CHRISTMAS KISS has all the trappings of a classic Greek tragedy, of which I am not overly fond, and I also struggled with a decision Temperance made, and this is why I had to reflect and understand her point of view, where I had to accept the decision as hers, and not how I wanted things to be were I making the decision.

Paula Quinn's writing is superb, fluid and eloquent, yet understated and elegant. Ms. Quinn quietly weaves an abundance of historical details, which do not detract from the story but contribute to the authenticity of the atmosphere. A HIGHLANDER'S CHRISTMAS WISH is a majestic tale, rife with political clashes between clans in the Scotland of 1711, where love cannot be denied from happening. Ms. Quinn's sense of pacing is faultless, and plot twists abound, and a few caught me completely unawares. The characters whether lovely, loathsome, or anywhere in between behave as people do, while sometimes in ways that defy reason, it is how real people are. There are so many wonderful characters, each and every one of them very

complex. And some are utterly irresistible, such as Patrick MacGregor, who will be the subject of the next book in this series, and I cannot wait to see what this charming rogue will be up to.

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Deanna says

ARC provided by Publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review

A Highlander's Christmas Kiss is the first Paula Quinn book I've read so I went into this one without any concept of what happened in the rest of the Highlander Heirs series. Which made difference on my enjoyment of this book because I never felt like I was missing anything from not having read the previous books. So if you're worried about getting lost in the sauce, as one of my day-job co-workers loves to say, let me tell you that this book does standalone and therefore, can be read without reading the books prior to it.

Cailean Grant is a man desperate not to feel, so desperate he purposely keeps himself isolated from his home. From love. He's a flawed man who has made mistakes, but when those mistakes come back to haunt him, the walls he's built to keep others out starts to crumble. And the woman who nurses him back to health, also nurses him back to life. A life Cailean never thought he'd want to have again yet knows he could lose should Temperance discover the truth about him.

Temperance mourns the death of her father at the hands of the Black Riders and vows vengeance for his murder even as she struggles to deal with a betrothal to a man she doesn't love and a stranger whose life she's determined to save. The way she couldn't save her father. And despite not knowing anything about him.

A Highlander's Christmas Kiss was such a compelling and entertaining book to read. Well-written, richly detailed, and deliciously filled with a tortured hero and a grieving, down on her luck heroine, I found this book impossible to put down.

Heather C says

This is not only my first book by Paula Quinn but it is my first historical romance. I will have to admit up front that I don't think that historical romances are for me. I thought I would have enjoyed history and different time periods but it fell a little flat for me. HOWEVER, please do not take this statement as I don't like Paula Quinn's writing. I actually really enjoyed her delivery and style of writing. I just struggled with it being a period piece. This has nothing to do with the author and everything to do with my personal reading preferences.

This story actually has a bit more angst than I was expecting, which is a good thing. It had the right balance between two characters overcoming horrific things in their life and the joy of celebrating what they do have. I think people that enjoy historical romances are really going to eat this book up.

Copy kindly provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review

Michelle says

ARC provided by publisher in exchange for an honest review

There is something about historical romance that I adore. Maybe it's getting lost in the time, place, and simplicity but regardless of whatever it may be, I found myself getting swept away in Paula Quinn's prose.

A Highlander's Christmas Kiss was a gripping love story that took me by surprise as the author beautifully blends grit, loss, passion, revenge, and raw emotions in a heartfelt tangible manner. Temperance Menzie wanted revenge after her father's death but she never expected the man responsible for his death might be associated and part of it be the one man that ignites a burning desire in her. Cailean Grant finds himself in the arms of Temperance. His once closed heart begins to find new meaning. But what happens when secrets begins to plague their relationship? Can two strangers find peace and love in the Highlands?

So if you are looking for a love story that beautifully transports readers to a different place and time where raw emotions deep then this holiday treat will be sure to keep you warm this winter.

Barbee says

What is better than reading a Scottish highlander Christmas romance, by the extraordinary talent of bestselling author Paula Quinn! Definitely will get you in the holiday spirit!

I have been reading Ms. Quinn's exquisite stories since her debut. Believe me you can't help but get swept away in her riveting adventures, passionate romances whose characters take a chance on love and bask in the afterglow!

In this book and if you are following her wonderful The MacGregor's: Highland Heirs series, this is book #5. It is centered on "The Taming of Malcolm Grant" book #4 brother Cailean. You can read as stand alone or in book order. I prefer book order as I love connecting the dots to the MacGregor/Grant family members! This book will be released 9/27/2016.

Cailean Grant has a couple soul wrenching deaths that tears his heart out! He no longer wants feel all this pain and grief or even care anymore! He can't take it if another person he loves dies! So he leaves his loving family at Camlochlin, and becomes one of Lord Edward Murdoch's of Glen Lyon, Black Riders. A mercenary group that covers their faces with scarves so they won't be recognized. Black Riders are killers for hire basically, mercenaries that terrorize, kidnap, intimidate and assassinate for Lord Murdoch to keep the people fearful and in line and will accommodate his will. As Cailean no longer wants to feel, so he joins this group of ruthless killers for hire. His cousin Patrick MacGregor, follows him trying to convince him to return home to Camlochlin. To his family and friends that love him and to leave this empty dishonorable life!

Then someone attacks his cousin thinking he is a Black Rider and Patrick is near death. All Caelin see's is revenge! A man is killed, because evil Duncan Murdoch told him the people of a tiny hamlet, called Linavar, hate the Black Riders!

Then Cailean feels the guilt, pain and suffering he brought to others. He finally realized this is not the life for him, but is he too late? He goes back to apologize and confess his part in their leaders murder. Not that he believes they will forgive him but something he feels he must do. Someone stabs him in the back and leaves him for dead in a cabbage patch. Cailean is found by the daughter, Temperance Menzie of the deceased leader. As he is not recognized without the attire and scarf covering of a Black Rider, as he only looks like a kilted highlander stranger . Temperance brings him back to the house to nurse him to health. Not realizing she has the enemy in her bed!

Temperance Mensie is destroyed when her father, Seth is murdered by the Black Riders. She swears she will kill all involved even if she dies in the process. She now has to marry her best friend William Deware her childhood friend, but a man she doesn't love. William will be the new leader and she now needs protection! She wants passion and loves William as a brother, yet her father arranged this for her protection. As William will be the leader now. As the evil and brutal Duncan Murdoch is obsessed with Temperance, has been turned down for her hand many times.and she needs to be protected. He will do anything to possess her, a man she despises. She vows to kill all the men involved in murdering her father as she wants revenge!

She knows she is falling in love Cailean Grant, as she chips away at his frozen heart and gives him back his life. He knows he should tell her the truth that he's the reason her father is dead. Yet she seems to have a power over him to chase all his demons away! As he knows he is falling in love with her too! He knows he should tell her the truth, but he also know's she will despise and hate him. It's not even just her, it is all the people of the Hamlet. From her Gram and her cat Tamlin have warmed their way into his frozen cold heart. Yet he lives with the guilt each day knowing what he had set in motion!

Yet the truth has a way of showing up and what will this poor girl do. A lass who lost a mother at birth, father killed murdered because of the order, by the man she loves. Will she forget and forgive? Or have her revenge and kill all the ones responsible for her father's death? Does Cailean have a chance at love or will his heart be shattered, with Temperance's hatred and revenge! Will love heal the human heart or is it a lifetime of bitterness, revenge and heartache?

Yet it's Christmas and perhaps a time for miracles? A time for forgiveness, new beginnings, faith, joy and love? You will have read and find out if love really does heal all wounds.

"A Highlander's Christmas Kiss" by Paula Quinn- had me devouring each page with breathtaking anticipation! A twisting and turning maze of non-stop-action, adventure, drama, emotion, romance and love!

It is a beautiful Christmas story that will definitely melt your heart! Filled with fast paced plots, gorgeous settings, magnificent dialogue and furbabies you will adore!

Another beautifully written story from start to finish, and definitely an emotional heartstring puller! I was tearing up so much that I simply could not put it down! I absolutely and unequivocally loved "A Highlander's Christmas Kiss" by the multi talented Paula Quinn. One of my top favorite authors on the planet!

Problem is after I read a Paula Quinn book I always want more! :)

I was given this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review through netgalley

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyrarkyker says

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

After having his last two true loves die in his arms, Cailean has decided that the only way to go through life is to be completely cold-hearted and not grow attached to anyone. He joins a group of mercenaries called the Black Riders and tries to shut himself off from the world. His cousin Patrick refuses to leave him though and does his best to keep Cailean from icing over his heart. When Patrick gets shot with an arrow, Cailean demands vengeance, unfortunately, his anger leads him on the wrong path.

Temperance has long tried to avoid Duncan Murdoch and his father's group of Black Riders. When they come to her village and murder her father in front of her, she vows vengeance against all the Riders. Cailean and Temperance both have their fair share of hurt, anger, and pain but will they be able to see beyond all that to the love and happiness awaiting them beneath it all?

"Ye are my candle in the dark."

Fifth in the MacGregor's Highland Heir series, we get Cailean Grant's story. We last saw him losing the woman he loved as she died in his arms and are reminded that his beloved dog also died in his arms. Both instances are heartbreaking but if you haven't read the past books, you wouldn't know how much Cailean loved his dog, there is little mention of the woman, and what we do get is how Cailean only knew her for a couple weeks and no one else knew he was in love. It makes the two instances seem distant and doesn't wrench the readers hearts, therefore making Cailean's insistence to be cold-hearted and shut off from the world seem a bit over dramatic. It also gave a contradictory feel when Cailean mentions how he misses writing poetry and is given to flowery talk to and about Temperance but supposed to be totally against falling in love; it felt as if the author was trying to mold Cailean into someone he wasn't.

Temperance was the independent, beautiful but doesn't realize it, and strong willed heroine, not a lot to distinguish her from other heroines in the genre. She was likeable until towards the end where we have to have the prerequisite extra angst and Temperance gets extra strong willed (stupid) in her quest for vengeance. Cailean and Temperance didn't have the burning chemistry I search for in books, they start off very doe-eyed about each other's looks and it feels like it is just a given that they will then end up together.

The villain was satisfactorily villainous, Temperance's Gram was sweet and quaint, and Cailean's cousin Patrick was loyal and side-eye sexy enough to anticipate his book. The biggest problem I had with this is that if you have read the other books in the series, no new ground is covered here and in fact, this book felt like a lot of filler; nothing really happens for most of it. Cailean slowly recovers from an injury as Temperance is attracted to him, there is the side angst that Cailean is a Black Rider and Temperance hates them, and then the ending danger as Duncan Murdoch comes back into play; I felt myself getting bored through a lot of the middle.

With a title of *A Highlander's Christmas Kiss*, you'd expect some holiday ambience and the story definitely delivers on that front. The talk of the celebrations the villagers observe along with the scenery and weather adding to the scenes was my favorite part of the story. If you're a diehard reader of the MacGregor series and have to know how each descendant of The Devil MacGregor and his friend Graham Grant end up, then this could be a good Christmas time story but others probably won't find a lot here for them.

Tammy says

This story is another fantastic read from the MacGregor/Grant legacy.

Cailean Grant is a broken highlander taken to riding with a band mercenaries hired by Edward Murdoch called The Black Riders. His personal tragedies have left him with a dark heart that is cold and empty.

Temperance Menzie is the carefree daughter Seth Menzie of Linavar, tenants of Lord Murdoch. She is spunky, witty and loyal.

Cailean catches a glimpse of Temperance while at the Kenmore market and is captivated by her. On their journey back to Lyons Ridge, Cailean's cousin Patrick MacGregor is shot with an arrow. In an effort to retaliate against the perpetrator Temperance's father is killed. Seeing temperance lose her father, and him being the cause of it, he goes to check on her and attempt to apologize.

This is a wonderful tale of forgiveness that will pull at your heartstrings. The twists and turns (and there were plenty) had my heart racing and I couldn't read fast enough! Every time I thought I knew where it was going I was wrong. Paula Quinn is a wonderful storyteller. She paints a wonderful world of believable characters and brilliant plots and this book is no different. I was truly captivated!

*** I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review through Netgalley.com***

WTF Are You Reading? says

Cailean Grant never imagined that his life could or would be anything other than serving as part of the notorious team of mercenaries known as the Black Riders.

The only bright spot in his life coming in the form of his happy-go-lucky cousin, Patrick. Who has come to visit him. In the vain hope of bringing him home to their ancestral home at Camlochlin.

But when Patrick is shot as he is passing through the hamlet of Linavar. Cailean is convinced that Seth Menzie, a long time enemy of the Grant clan is to blame. And Cailean it seems is bent on revenge.

No matter the cost.

Until, that is...

He sees the sum total that his hasty rush to judgement mirrored back to him in the grief-stricken gaze of Seth's only daughter Temperance. As she holds her dying father in her arms. As the entire town looks on during the Christmastide feast.

But fate it seems is indeed a cruel mistress. When, as Patrick recovers from his wounds in the Black Riders' keep.

It is Cailean who is felled by an unknown assailant's arrow. Only to be rescued and nursed back from the brink of death by the one woman that he has hurt the most.

A woman who he comes to discover could be the only woman that he could ever love.

Temperance and Cailean present readers with a very bittersweet love story. One filled on both sides with loss, pain, and regret. But one in which hope for forgiveness and healing presides.

It is this hope in fact, that keeps one reading. Hoping and dare it be said "willing" that things work out for the two fated, yet wounded souls.

But Cailean and Temperance's story line is but one sweet and tender morsel, in a seemingly everfull pot. There is also:

Temperance's betrothed William Deware's quest to find and rescue his true love, Marion.

The plot by the loathsome Duncan Murdoch to claim Temperance and destroy Cailean by hook or by crook. And...

Temperance's plot to have her revenge on the man responsible for the wrongful death of her father.

In short. This is a story so full of emotion, complexity, and heart, that you will never want it to end.

Reviewer's Note: Though this book is part of an ongoing series. It may be read as a standalone.

Dianne says

He needed to harden his broken heart, what better way to do that then to ride with the Black Riders, murderous and cold-hearted killers for hire. The day his cousin was grievously injured, Cailean Grant needed to avenge his impending death. Given false information about who the supposed murder is, Cailean gives the nod to punish the man, not knowing he had signed his death warrant. Then he sat, like a cold statue, in shock, in shame and not feeling the satisfaction he had hoped for as Temperance Menzie cradles her dying father's head in her lap, her soul rent with pain.

Fate has a funny way of playing cruel jokes on humanity and now it is Cailean's turn when he is wounded, left to die and Temperance is the one to find him, unaware of his deed, taking him home to nurse him back to health. Throughout his recovery, he listens to Temperance vow to kill the man who ordered her father's death. Little did she know how close he was or how much regret he feels.

Sometimes an eye for an eye mushrooms into a chain reaction where death and hatred grow, squeezing out any chance for joy in a person's heart, and the fear of discovery leads to more lies, deceit and a living hell. As love grows, how can Cailean NOT tell her? What will Temperance do when she finds out? Will the season of miracles and love bring joy or more pain for these two?

Paula Quinn's **A HIGHLANDER'S CHRISTMAS KISS** isn't a formulaic historical romance, it isn't cut and dry, two people meant for each other in a time and place where tempers flare and arguments are settled with a sword. It is also a time when celebrations are what keep people going through the hard times, where forgiveness and generosity of spirit are their strongest. Beautiful scenic descriptions take readers back in time to the Highlands where life is hard, friends are true and evil can easily overpower all.

I found myself questioning whether I could forgive my father's murder, no matter the circumstances. Even more, I questioned if I could love the man responsible, even if he didn't do the actual deed. But, this isn't about me, but a woman far stronger, a woman of a different era, so if love conquers all, Temperance is either a fool or a saint in my book! As much as I liked Cailean and for all of the good things he had done, his lie of omission was huge and that truly bothered me.

That said, it takes an amazing author to give such life to her characters that I was thinking of them as living and breathing people.

I received this copy from Forever in exchange for my honest review.

Series: The MacGregors: Highland Heirs - Book 5
Publisher: Forever (September 27, 2016)
Publication Date: September 27, 2016
Genre: Historical Holiday Romance
Print Length: 342 pages
Available from: Amazon | Barnes & Noble
For Reviews & More: <http://tomtender.blogspot.com>

Lover of Romance says

This review was originally posted on Addicted To Romance

A Highlander's Christmas Kiss is the fifth in the Macgregor's series and this has been the first time that I have read this author in quite a few years so I was very eager to get back to her writing.

I want to say that this story really impressed me or even had a strong Christmas feel to it, but I would say there was some of the Christmas culture going on and I was highly looking forward to that but I was expecting a bit more than was actually delivered also I did feel at times that the romance felt a bit lacking. Although there is some great development in the plot build up, there was still a few factors that kept me from fully enjoying this story in the ways that I wanted to and was pretty excited for.

This story begins when our heroine is out walking with her father, from the get-go we get the impression of how close these two are with each other. Temperance is practically engaged to her closest friend but she doesn't feel passion or love for him. But then we see a traumatic event happen when a group of Black Riders, come in and kill her father right in front of Temperance and she is grief-stricken. Her father was her anchor and her joy. She her emotions are a bit out of whack. But when she stumbles across an injured man, she helps to heal him taking him back with her to her home and her grandmother. As Cailean Grant works to being healed and recovering there is a strong passion that builds between Cailean and Temperance but soon there are many factors against them. For one, Temperance is technically still engaged to another man even if he is in love with another lady. Then our hero, Cailean, was part of the Black Riders, and even though he tried to stop the murder of Temperance's father, he couldn't stop it. Cailean has already lost a beloved lass he once loved and loss and doesn't want to lose this woman he has grown to love here.

It was the build-up of the plot that really kept me in tune with this story and I was relieved for it because I had a difficult time really connection to the actual romance of the story. I just had the most difficult time connecting with these two characters. But I just had to know what happened to Cailean and Temperance and seeing the outcome of the secrets and seeing if the one that murdered our heroine's father was brought to justice. We see a bit of the culture of the highlanders but not as much as I normally have found with Paula Quinn's writing. We do see the fragile lives of the villagers that lived under the governance of those more powerful than them.

However, I do feel that the built up of the plot and the great dialogue is what kept me going with this book and there were some great positive qualities that kept me intune with this story and I am intrigued by this family of MacGregors and plan on reading more!!

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1-Click Addict Support Group says

Love has never been so complicated...

There's nothing like the feeling of the holidays to make the highs and lows of life seem that much more poignant. That is never more in evidence than in this story which proves that theory is true no matter what the century.

It is the Scottish Highlands of hundreds of years ago but the feelings of family and joy around Christmas time are the same. Temperance Menzie is feeling that joy until her father is taken from her in an act of violence that turns her sweet and loving nature dark and mistrustful. Cailean Grant's role in that night of violence haunts him as he tries to right a wrong that he knows he cannot.

"Whatever shards were left of his heart were completed shattered."

My heart ached and tears were in my eyes as Tem realized her father was lost to her. The emotions that scene, and the ones that followed, churned up had me feeling each moment of gut-wrenching loss and grief that followed. Revenge and betrayal, secrets and lies were a huge part of Tem and Cailean's courtship as their relationship played out amidst mystery and intrigue. There were sword fights and castles and the knowledge that family and alliances were the difference between life and death.

Thank goodness there were some light-hearted moments to balance the heavy drama that made up much of this drama-filled story. And of course the passionate scenes couldn't help but melt a few hearts as well as the snow-covered heather.

Transporting me to another time and place, it was a surprise to reach the end and realize I wasn't, in fact, in the Scotland of old... Thank goodness there are more books to read and catch up on in the series. I can't wait to go back the highlands! ~ Diane, 4 stars