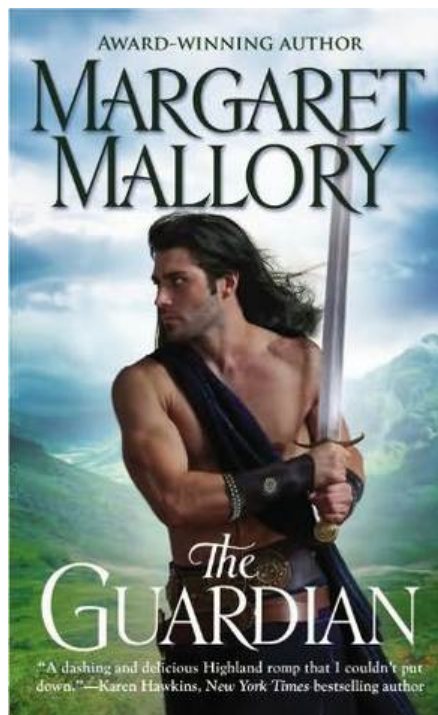




The Guardian

Margaret Mallory

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The Guardian

Margaret Mallory

The Guardian Margaret Mallory
PASSION IGNITED

After years of fighting abroad, Ian MacDonald comes home to find his clan in peril. To save his kin, he must right the wrongs from his past . . . and claim the bride he's long resisted.

As a young lass, Sìleas depended on Ian to play her knight in shining armor. But when his rescue attempt compromised her virtue, Ian was forced to marry against his wishes. Five years later, Sìleas has grown from an awkward girl into an independent beauty who knows she deserves better than the reluctant husband who preferred war to his wife. Now this devilishly handsome Highlander is finally falling in love. He wants a second chance with Sìleas - and he won't take no for an answer.

The Guardian Details

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From Reader Review The Guardian for online ebook

Barbara ★ says

I was rather disappointed in this series starter. I've always loved Ms. Mallory's Highlanders but Ian just came off as an arrogant ass. Yeah he's forced to marry a girl he doesn't want to marry (heck he didn't want to marry anyone really) but that's the way it was done in those times. You married to advance your family period. He was caught in a seemingly compromising situation and forced to marry a 13 year old girl. (He was rescuing her from a bad situation not behaving badly.) At the time he was about 15 or 16 and promptly left home with his four best buds to fight in France. He returns five years later (having not a single thought about his wife while gone) and immediately seems the beautiful swan she turned into (she was an ugly duckling for sure) and wants he and thinks he should have access to his wife. Oh now he wants a wife. Well too bad Ian because Sileas may still love you but she doesn't exactly want you.

There were many times that I wanted to reach through the book and smack him with a frying pan and actually cheered when Sileas did just that. You go girl! By the end of the book, Ian finally wises up and gets his act together but in my opinion, too little too late. I'm hoping that Alex, Duncan and Connor behave much more like Highlanders should.

Lisa Kay says

★★★?? Not really what I was looking for, so take that into consideration when looking at my star rating. Clobbering the hero over the head with a frying pan several times in an animated cartoon such as Disney's *Tangled* is funny. In this setting for Romancelandia, it didn't work for me no matter how much he deserved it. (The dweeb.)

Catherine says

DNF

I've reached my limit with this book. It is too irritating for me to continue. The hero is an immature, selfish pig. He leaves for five years after being forced to marry his childhood friend and ignores any attempts from his father to get him to come home. He's angry that he was forced to marry Sileas—*he's horrified at being stuck with such a scrawny, unattractive girl*—and he blames her for getting them into that situation. In his mind *he's not married* since he didn't consummate the marriage. He doesn't care (doesn't even consider at all) how bad things might have been for Sileas after being abandoned by her husband. It's her fault after all...

For her part, Sileas is still pining for Ian. She has a great guy hanging around her who loves her and wants to marry her. He tries to convince her to ask for an annulment or get a divorce because he wants to be with her and give her everything Ian hasn't. He's convinced that five years is long enough to wait. *Too bad he's not the hero!* But Sileas is still waiting for Ian to show up and fulfill her dreams of really being loved by him.

Ian comes back and expects to be God's gift to his family for returning. He's still pissed that he has to deal with the wife situation, though. He just wants to end it and be done with it. At least until he sees Sileas. Suddenly all he can think about is how hard she makes him and how maybe it wouldn't be so bad to be

married to her if he gets to sleep with her. Don't imagine that he got a clue—that would be expecting too much of him. He only changed his mind because Sileas is hot now. Apparently he thought she'd stay skinny and awkward and thirteen forever.

He continued watching her as they ate their midday meal. With that full bottom lip, her mouth was made for kissing. Every time she puckered and blew on her stew, his heart did an odd little leap in his chest. And his heart was not the only part of him affected. His cock was standing to attention, stiff as an English soldier.

Likely, Sileas was foul-tempered toward him for not making his intentions clear. He had trouble recalling his reasons for waiting as he watched her take a spoonful into her mouth, smile with pleasure at the taste, and run her pink tongue across her top lip.

Perhaps he should just take her to bed now and have done with it. If the price of following his desire was gaining a wife, well, it was time he had one anyway.

Be still my beating heart, eh? And after only exchanging words with her *twice* since he got back. *rolls eyes*

Ian is shocked to find out that Sileas *and* his little brother Niall are angry at him. They've been left to keep the family going and are pissed when Ian doesn't consider what they did a big accomplishment. Sileas kept the accounts up and she and Niall made all the decisions for the crops and farm. Ian basically rolls his eyes over the thought of taking the task over and giving it any importance because he's *a warrior*. He also doesn't seem to have any awareness of how difficult taking care of their father has been and how hard it has been keeping up the house and the farm without the ability to hire workers.

Ian blunders around acting like a buffoon and is pissed when his family isn't impressed by him. He has no real sense of responsibility for his family and I am honestly shocked that he is the older brother and Niall is the younger. Ian acts like a little boy who never grew up.

So he decides (without talking to her) that he's keeping Sileas as a wife and goes up to her room when she's asleep. He gets naked, climbs in bed with her and kisses on her neck a few times while he gropes her boobs. That gets him so hot that he flips her over right then and starts lining up for the goal, if you know what I mean. Unfortunately, that's about the time the heroine wakes up. Now, I don't bring this up as a complaint about his actions being skeezy. I bring this up because *this is the hero* and this was an honest to God seduction for him. All Ian does is think about Little Ian and what would make him feel good. He has no real awareness of the wants and desires of anyone around him. I honestly don't think he even realizes that he should care. Because the world revolves around him, you know?

Because Ian was such a clueless douche it was hard to respect the heroine. She pined for him for five years and *continues* to pine for his love now that he's back. I have to doubt her intelligence in wanting such a man. She has a suitor and brother-in-law that are much, much, MUCH nicer and who value her and treat her with respect. Does she want them? Of course not. She wants the douche hero for...some reason. I'm still not sure why, exactly.

Basically, this book was too irritating to continue. I stopped at page 214 and have no regrets about never picking it back up again. I don't need a perfect hero or a perfect heroine, but I need one that's not such a pig.

Review originally posted on Fiction Vixen.

Zoe says

I know it is not supposed to be a funny book but I can't help it. The characters are kind of comical and I have the impression that the story was trying very hard to be a serious adult romance but only turned out to be a teenage high school sweetheart kind of story.

The writing is ok but I find the style and plots.....simple. I had trouble maintaining interests because it was all too.....ugh.....I don't have another word, simple. It is not a very complex book. The relationship between Sileas and Ian is kind of bland. I didn't feel that I wanted to see them together. I sensed no strong connections between them. Maybe it is the characterization. Maybe I will try another book from this writer then I will know better.

I feel however strongly compelled to ask the below questions to the following people:

1. @ The "forever in love with Ian" Sileas: my dear girl I am curious, you don't know why Ian was angry about having been forced to marry you? He really didn't want to marry you or anybody back then. What's so wrong about that? You got what you wanted by marrying him and at the same time robbed him the chance and the right to choose his life partner. I would be damned angry too if I were him and I would want to say hurtful things to you too. Seriously, what did you expect? I know Ian was not nice to ignore you for 5 years and went on as if he was not a married man. But in case you did not get the memo: this is how people act when you force them into something that they have no intention of participating in. I do not see why you feel you have the right to be angry at Ian? I have no sympathy for your plight. You were mistreated by your stepfather, ok I get it. You should be grateful that at least you got to stay with Ian's family for those years when Ian ignored you. You got exactly what you wanted: to escape your stepfather. You are humiliated because you forced a man into marriage, not because the man was an arrogant ass. I am afraid, my dear disillusioned pitiful girl, you cannot force someone to love you. No amount of wishful thinking would do. Be it 5 years or 10 years of waiting for someone. That, is one single truth in love.

2. @ All the readers who blame Ian for his "mistreatment" of Sileas: what's wrong with being angry when you are forced to marry someone who you didn't want to? And what's so wrong about being away for 5 years to avoid having to deal with someone you don't want to deal with? I would do both in a heartbeat if someone forced my hand in matrimony and if I had the chance to escape. Sileas was definitely the benefactor in the marriage. She got her protection and could call herself Ian's wife, which was what she wanted. She did not give a shxt about whether Ian wanted her as a wife. She just hoped with her pathetic heart that he would one day turn around. If that is not selfishness and stupidity, I don't know what that is. If anyone is mistreated, I should think it was Ian. He just wanted to help Sileas but ended up having to marry her. I wish Sileas wasn't the heroine of the story. She does not deserve a happy ending.

3. @Ian: lad how old are you? For the life of me I cannot figure out your exact age. Some say you are only 20. My poor boy. I know people say that you are cold-hearted and cruel to have left Sileas for 5 years before you finally came home and that you are a cad to all of a sudden turn "interested" in Sileas because you realized she was now "pretty". Yeah it was not very gallant of you to leave the girl like this. But I understand why you felt the need to rebel. If you could cease thinking with your John Thomas and stick to your gun and annul the marriage, that would be great. I know you can't do that. Aunt Margaret wouldn't allow it. But know this: you would have my support if you did.

Katie Michaels says

I really enjoyed this Highlander love story! Ian and his three best friends are returning home to the Highlands

after spending the past five years in France. His clan has barely survived through a terrible battle that killed their chieftain and badly wounded Ian's father. Ian's good friend Connor is next in line to take over the clan, but his uncle Hugh has taken advantage of his absence to take over leadership, himself. Now, Ian and his band of brothers must work to install Connor in his rightful place at the head of the clan.

Of course, there is much more to the story than that. Just before he journeyed to France, Ian was forced to marry his very young friend Sileas. Even though she was only 13, she was trying to escape an arranged marriage set up by her stepfather. Ian cared for her as a little sister, but nothing more. So when his father forced him to marry the girl, he was furious. Once he returned home, he planned to end the marriage right away. But once he sees Sileas again, he realizes that she has grown into a beautiful woman; one who has helped see his family through his absence and the many trials they faced over the years.

Sileas is a great heroine. She is utterly loyal and in love with Ian. Yet she manages to hold on to her self-respect. And that is no small feat, the way Ian has dismissed her over the years. Their love story is sweet and steamy (once the story gets that far.) Ian is a good guy, but I wanted to shake him more than once for his general stupidity when it comes to his wife.

The story has some fun twists and turns --and we're set up nicely for future stories with Ian's friends Connor, Alex and (my personal favorite) Duncan. I'm looking forward to seeing where their futures will go. 4 stars.

**ARC Provided by NetGalley*

Lauren says

The Guardian

3 Stars

When visiting a soothsayer, four young highland boys receive prophecies of their future brides. Ian MacDonald is told that he will marry twice - once for hate and once for love. Years later he is forced to wed a childhood friend and deserts her to fight in France. Upon his return, he discovers that gangly Sileas has become a beautiful and spirited young woman with little patience for a man who chose war over hearth and home. Is it too late for Ian to prove his love for her?

Ian has to be one of the most self-centered, obnoxious and irritating heroes ever to disgrace the pages of a historical romance novel. He returns home and expects the woman he deserted to welcome him with open arms and kiss the ground he walks on . . . Well, he is in for a big surprise!

Sileas is a charming heroine - beautiful, caring and independent. The only problem with her character is her love for the undeserving Ian. It seems that love truly is blind...and deaf ... and stupid!

The rest of the plot revolving around a struggle for leadership of the Clan is well developed with some exciting action scenes. Unfortunately, it never quite succeeds in compensating for the weak romance.

The rest of the series focuses on the other boys: Alex the womanizer, Duncan the tormented and Connor the leader. As their characters are far more likable than Ian, I am willing to give their books a chance.

Gamze says

<http://gamzeninkitapdunyasi.blogspot....>

Kitap, 4 o?lan çocu?unun klanlar?ndaki cad?y? ziyaret etmeleri ile ba?l?yor. Çocuklar o ya??n verdi?i heyecan ile ileride nas?l büyük sava?ç? olacaklar?n? duymak isteseler de kehanetleri hiçte o yönde gitmiyor. Bu kitaptaki ba? karakterimiz Ian için, hayat? boyunca iki defa evlenece?ini. Birincisinden nefret edece?ini, hiç istemeyece?ini ikinci evlili?i ise mutluluk ve a?k ile yapaca??n? söylüyor. ??te ona söylemedi?i nokta ise bu iki olay?n ki?isinin ayn? olmas? :)

Ve bir de di?er ba? karakterimiz Sileas var. O da küçük ya??ndan itibaren hep Ian'?n pe?inden giden, ba??na s?k?nt? açsa bile Ian'?n onu kurtaraca??n? bilerek büyüyen bir k?z. 13 ya??na geldi?inde ise evden kaçır. Çünkü üvey babas? onu zorla evlendirmek, ve k?za kalan kaleye o ?ekilde sahip olmak ister. Bu yüzden Sileas kaçır ve kaçt??? yolun sonundaysa Ian ile kar??la??r. Ian ilk ba?ta onu geri götürmek istese de Sileas onu ikna eder ve geceyi Ian'?n yan?nda geçirir. Sabaha kar?? Ian'?n babas? ve amcalar? onlar? yan yana yatarken buldu?undaysa evlilik kaç?n?lmazd?r :) Ve Ian, daha 13 ya??nda sopa gibi bir k?zla evlenmek zorunda kalmaktan nefret eder. Evlendikleri günün ertesinde evden deyim yerindeyse kaçır. Veeee 5 senenin sonunda ya?anan olaylar nedeni ile en sonunda yeniden dönmek zorunda kal?r evine, ve tabii kar?s?na. Bu koca 5 sene her ?eyi tamamen de?i?tirmi?tir ve hayat?n?n maceras?n?n as?l ?imdi ba?lad???ndan habersizdir.

Kitab?m?z?n konusu genel olarak böyle.

Aspendos, kitap duyurusunu ilk yapt??? zaman çok sevinmi?tim ve hemen al?nacıklar listeme eklemi?tim. Tabii bunun için kitap fuar?n? bekledim çünkü orada standart 10 tl :) Her neyse i?te yazar?n ismi bir yerlerden çok tan?d?k geldi. Kitab? al?p, eve döndü?üm zaman farkettim durumu. Me?erse bu yazara ait iki kitap varm?? bende :D Tabii onlar? henüz okumad?m -_-

Highlander olsun da ne olursa olsun hesab?nday?m :) Ben ?ahsen kitab? genel olarak çok sevdim. Hem ana karakterler hem yan karakterlerin bollu?u hikayeyi daha s?cak bir hale getirdi?ini dü?ünüyorum. Yani sadece Ian ve Sileas'? okumak bir süre sonra bo?abilir, tek düzeli?e girebilirdi.

Kitab?n Aspendos'tan ç?kmas?ndan sevindi?im bir di?er konu ise serinin di?er kitaplar?n? da çok fazla beklemeyecek olmam. Çünkü di?er karakterlerin hayattalar?n?n nas?l bir yola girece?ini de ?imdiden deli gibi merak ediyorum :)

Kitap temel olarak, genç bir a?k, hayatta herkesin ihtiyac? olan ikinci bir ?ans ve sonsuza kadar mutlu ya?ad?lar durumu alm??..

Baz? eksikliklerin oldu?unu hissetsem de yine de büyük bir bölümünü keyif alarak okudum. Bu tarz kitaplar? seven arkadaş?lar?ma kesinlikle tavsiye ederim :)

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

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Imprint: Grand Central Publishing
Author's Website: <http://www.margaretmallory.com/>
My Source for This Book: Netgalley
Part of a Series: Yes, Book 1, Return of the Highlanders Series
Series Best Read In Order: N/A
Steam Level: Steamy

Just what fans of Scottish Romance have been craving!

Ian has been Sileas' keeper since she was just a small child. Awkward looking and rather gangly, Sileas is the furthest thing from Ian's ideal woman as could possibly be, and he sees her as more of a baby sister than of someone he'd ever want to share his life with, let alone his bed.

When Sileas runs away from her abusive step-father, who intends to wed her to his own horrible son in order to control the lands she's inherited, she begs Ian to help her, which he does. When he is discovered the next morning sleeping (clothed) next to (an also clothed) Sileas, his family saw a way to gain control of Sileas' lands and forced the two to marry under the guise of "protecting her virtue". Ian, furious at being forced to wed, abandons both his family and his new bride for four long years, before returning with the intent of finally ending his farce of a marriage to Sileas.

I think that Ian rather ruined this one for me. The fact that he did his best to "forget his vows" while in France for four years, completely ignoring what Sileas might be going through due to his abandonment, and then came home expecting her to be happy that he'd finally returned quite literally made me want to strangle him. I greatly dislike infidelity in my romance novels, and while it's almost maybe sort of understandable in Ian's case, it still left such a bad taste in my mouth that I really couldn't enjoy the rest of the story. I suppose I just feel that if honor and responsibility are so important to him, why on earth would he abandon both his family and his vows? *shakes head*

To be fair, the storyline and writing was fantastic. Four best friends, all having received a prophecy of sorts regarding their future loves from the local seer, return home from battle to find the clan in political uproar and having to work past intrigue and treachery in order to unite the clan and have the rightful heir take power. The love scenes were very hot, and the historical elements, such as the Infant King, trial marriages, traveling priests, and so forth added a ton of flavor to the story.

Overall, I personally never warmed up to Ian, which pulled my rating down by a full star. Readers who are not bothered by infidelity, especially as occurs before the marriage is ever actually consummated, will almost certainly rate it higher. As it is, 3.5/5 Stars

Angelc says

I was really looking forward to this book because I loved the author's previous book, "Knight of Passion". Most of the reason why I loved that book so much was because I loved the hero, Jamie, and the romance. Here, I was disappointed in both of those aspects that I was really looking forward to.

There were many great characters in this book, but the hero, Ian, wasn't one of them. Sileas had what I like to call "Twilight" syndrome, where she is surrounded by great guys who respect her and care about her but she 'loves' the one guy who treats her disrespectfully.

Sileas spends more time with Ian's brother, Niall, who I absolutely love, than she does with Ian. Niall is so sweet and caring, even accompanying her on a dangerous trek. But she's not into him. She also is very happy when she's around Alex, Ian's cousin. Alex treats her well when Ian doesn't and picks up the slack for his cousin, trying to smooth things over. Also, Sileas is always laughing and happy around Alex but not around Ian. I would love to read the books where these two upstanding young men are the center of the story.

I really liked Sileas' relationship with Ian's family. They really were her family too, and there was a lot of love there. I don't think Ian would have had much of a chance with Sileas if it weren't for her bond with his family.

I felt like all Sileas and Ian had was the physical bond, and it just wasn't enough for me. I would have loved to see the heroine with either Niall or Alex, who both clearly respected her and cared about her.

ARC sent by publisher in exchange for honest review

reviewed for <http://inthehammockblog.blogspot.com>

Crystal ♥ RBtWBC says

The Guardian is fiendishly good and a sensational start to a new series.

Ian MacDonald was forced to wed Sileas five years ago when she was but a child and him a young man, angered and blaming her for his misfortune he returns to France and the war there, all but forgetting the girl he left behind.

When Ian and his three best friends finally return to their homeland after the death of their Chieftain, they find it vastly different from how they left it and a tyrant in the Chieftain's seat. But that isn't the only thing that is different; the ungainly wife he refused to acknowledge is now a beautiful woman, capturing the attention of more than one male, including him.

Ian is determined to win her affections again but Sileas' family is looking to take advantage of his long absence. Can he reconcile his new feelings for Sileas and prove his love before it's too late?

If you love Scottish Romances then The Guardian is a must read!

Ian was an amazing character; a sexy and strong warrior, built, with black hair and blue eyes, just the way I like em'. He doesn't start off winning the 'Husband of the Year' award but when peeling back his multiple layers throughout the story you find a heart of gold and man who will do anything for those he loves.

Sileas is probably one of my favorite heroines. She has been abused emotionally and physically but also suffers from that ugly duckling syndrome, being an awkward and gangly girl and blossoming into a gorgeous woman, though she still feeling insecure about her looks. Despite all this, Sileas, is still a strong woman; helping out with Ian's disabled and disheartened father, assisting his mother in the day to day running of the house and lands and being a sister to Ian's younger brother.

I thought it was hilarious, and so typical for a male, for Ian to think that he could walk right back into Sileas's life and have her welcome him into her bed. He truly did not get it at first why she was giving him the cold shoulder. Hello, you abandoned her to your family to deal with nasty gossip for five years while you

were out having yourself a grand time! Sileas doesn't easily forgive but you really can't help how the heart feels and despite all she still loves Ian. And in the end, I think Ian made up for his mistakes.

Their love story is heart warming and gets very steamy, it's not an easy relationship and they have their fair share of bumps but the development of it was believable. Each character, main and secondary, where endearing and stood out, even the villains. It is also, a well-written story with descriptive world building that never bored and plenty of action and suspense to keep you turning the pages. It was fun and interesting and the plot has a few twists and turns in it. The ending was well done for the couple but leaves it open and expecting for the next novel in the series, which is Alex's. And I cannot wait to see how that plays out!

<http://readingbetweenthewinesbookclub...>

Stacey is Sassy says

He comes good in the end...

This was definitely a more historically accurate romance than I've read in awhile. Forced marriages, clan wars and dodgy rulers were the norm. I know I should appreciate the author for her fine work in research but in a little way, it makes the journey to happiness a little rougher. Men were the rulers and could do as they pleased and who they pleased. Obviously, this does make romance a little tricky. We have to get past the hero being a douchewaffle because of course, he fights the love bug.

The storyline was interesting and the characters showed a lot of growth from the beginning to the end.

The narrator does a great job and I found him extremely easy to listen to. Saying that, I was bloody glad this one didn't have a lot of sex scenes. Derek Perkins has a more mature voice and it felt like I was listening to my father reading. It was a little awkward and I nearly skipped listening to them.

Another great story from the Romance Package and I'm keen to step back in time with Margaret Mallory again.

Asena Özoral says

2,5

***Book-Lover* says**

I loved every-bloody-thing about this book!!!

This is a tale of young love(not exactly)...second chances(not really)....and happily ever after (DEFINITELY!)

Ian intended on helping out a friend in need, turns out, he got himself held at knife point at the altar staring at his new bride, next to a drunken priest. Having no desire to be a married man, he deserts his bride for 5

years, only to come back home, to find a beauty so rare she takes his breath away and stops his heart. Too bad his "wife" wants absolutely nothing to do with him. Too bad for her, he intends to make her his wife in all the ways that count now for eternity!

Their chemistry was amazing, a few misunderstandings along the way, scorching love scenes, unbreakable bonds among Duncan, Alex, Ian and Connor really set up for the series to come. I adored this book, definitely continuing the series!

Laura the Highland Hussy says

I didn't think the back of the book made this one sound all the interesting, to be honest, but man was I mistaken!

From the first word I was hooked. I read so late that my husband actually turned the light off on me! I put it down, and while the kids were at swim lessons, I picked up my Nook and kept reading. I felt so much anticipation from this one, I swear I have heart palpitations.

The book opens with 4 boys visiting a witch. I was intrigued. Next up is a forced marriage. I was interested. Then the 4 heroes of the series were captured. I was hooked. What can I say? I'm a sucker for a good Highlander book-they don't call me the Highland Hussy for nothing!

In a mistaken circumstance, Ian is forced to wed 13 yr old Sileas (this is the 1500s, so that's not as bad as it sounds, plus Ian is like 17). For Sileas, not only is Ian the one she's wanted since she could toddle after him, he has been her protector, her savior, her guardian in all things. But this was not how she wanted him.

The forced wedding is awful. Not only is it Sileas' worst day of her life, but Ian is forced at knife-point to say his vows. The morning after the wedding, he bails. Ian and his 4 best buds go off to France and he tries his best to ever forget he was married. The only reason he comes back at all is that his clan is attacked and his father gravely injured. He and his friends Connor, Duncan, and Alex are inseparable, so they all return.

Ian's plan is to annul the marriage to his child-bride...but he not once ever thought that she might have grown up. His child-bride is no longer a child.

Sileas is the heir to Knock Castle, and her lands are important to any clan that can get its hands on the castle. Not only has she grown into a beautiful young woman, she is basically the glue holding the family together. She also has a line of suitors waiting for her to give up hope on her estranged husband.

With one look at Sileas, Ian is a goner...but he doesn't recognize his wife in the sultry young redhead. When he finally does, she has run off because not only did Ian snub her at their wedding, he snubbed her the day after by leaving, and every day since in not coming home. To not even acknowledge his wife in front of the clan? Major faux pas.

It seriously takes Ian like a week to realize that he actually wants to keep Sileas as wife, and that he needs to do more than crawl naked into her bed (yeah, the idiot did that!). I loved watching Ian have to work for Sileas' attention and affection. A few quotes of my favorite quotes:

"You are mine, he said pausing to look at her with burning eyes. "And I'm claiming every inch of ye."

"When she was a wee thing, she trusted him to rescue her from mishaps. And now that she was a woman, she trusted him with her heart. He would do his best to deserve it, now and always."

I have a feeling that all of the politics involved in this book are super important for the series. Everything from Connor's chieftainship, to Knock Castle. There was a visit to Stirling where Sileas tried to get the queen to annul her marriage-what a scary place, Court, I mean. All the backstabbing and awful awful things going on...I was very satisfied with how that turned out, but I know that Douglas will play an important part in the series-he's too evil and wily to just fade away.

The ending and all of the events leading up to it were tied in together so neatly (but not too nice and neat, otherwise there wouldn't be a series!) and made me feel that Ian had redeemed himself for leaving Sileas and his clan.

Final verdict? I have 2 of Margaret Mallory's books on my nightstand and I am seriously wondering why I've never read them? I will be reading her backlist this week.

<http://www.demonloversbooksandmore.co...>

Duchess Nicole says

While this book didn't blow me away, it did have all of the elements that I tend to like in a Highlander romance. I love those that are rich in Scottish history...obviously loosely based on real events, with an author's historical note. But the history and politics didn't at all override the romance, which is obviously the best part of the book to me.

Sileas (pronounced She-luss) was a pitiful young girl, she and her mother were both used as pawns in men's games of war and politics. I could empathize with her plight, but the miscommunication between she and Ian when they were older and wiser got to be too much. Sileas seemed more mature when she was a thirteen year old. Honestly, her character just caused a lot of problems. She WAS available and useful in Ian's parent's household, and the family came to love her and rely on her, but I couldn't get past how much chaos she caused.

Ian was a somewhat blah character. I just didn't feel anything for him, which is very uncommon for me with regards to heroes. He was a teenage boy full of hormones and horny-ness at first, but even after he grows up, he just remains so *clueless* about Sileas. I never understood how he couldn't see her embarrassment and heartbreak. Did he honestly NEVER think about what a forced marriage would do to a thirteen year old girl? Not to mention one who had already lived the life that Sileas did. This was a hard thing to buy, and if I couldn't bring myself to believe that he was such an utterly oblivious person, then I'd just have to fall back on the fact that he is unfeeling and never cared about her emotional well being.

All that being said, I will still continue with the story, because I am very intrigued by Connor and the rest of the men. This series seems to not only have individual stories but a series plot as well, and I love that in a series. It makes for an intricate and intriguing story line. The writing is fine, it's the characterization that fell short for me. I just didn't really like either of them.

I listened to the audiobook...the narrator sounded like an old English Dude, and I KNOW that fact colored my opinion of the story, so take this review for what it's worth. I will switch to reading the rest of the series.
