

Series Overview



The term *a new beginning* brings to mind many things. Hope and opportunity. A fresh start. For the MacLomains and the rest of Scotland, the year twelve ninety-six meant anything but. Instead, it marked the beginning of a new and oppressed era fraught with two long wars with England. This particular series revolves around the First War of Scottish Independence that took place from twelve ninety-six to thirteen twenty-eight.

Heroes are often lost to time and folklore, especially if magic was involved. *The MacLomain Series: A New Beginning* shares those mystical tales. Stories about Scottish lairds that came to the aid of Sir William Wallace and King Robert the Bruce. Brave warriors and their lasses who single handedly changed the face of history...or so the story goes.

Sworn to a Highland Laird



The MacLomain Series- A New Beginning
Book One

By
Sky Purington

Prologue

——
29 March 1296

South Berwick, Scotland

A royal burgh just north of the Scottish border

“WE SHOULD *DO* something.” Adlin narrowed his eyes on King Edward I’s troops. “*Nothing* good will come from this, Grant.”

“Nay,” Grant said softly as his eyes trailed from Edward Longshanks’ army to the vulnerable village. “But there is naught we can do, laddie. Not this time around.”

Adlin freed his sword and sneered. “I’ve enough magic alone to change this.” He shook his head. “To stop the slaughter.”

“This slaughter is meant to be and has been since Margaret, Maid of Norway and Queen of Scots’ death in our Lord’s year, twelve ninety.” Grant placed his hand on Adlin’s blade and shook his head. “Since then Edward has had his hands in this one way or another because of his sister Margaret of England’s claim to the Scottish throne.”

“I dinnae need a history lesson.” Adlin lowered his weapon but did not sheath it. “I need to help defend these people.”

“Nay, ye need to let this period of history unfold as it will,” Grant counseled. “Ye need to restrain yer rage and pay attention. Ye should watch their every move so that ye can spread the word about their battle tactics.” His mentor’s wizened old eyes met his. “So that we might steer this country in the direction it must go.”

Adlin braced his hand against a tree and hung his head as Edward’s men roared and attacked. As innocent men, women, and children were killed. “I still dinnae see why we cannae stop this battle. Ye and I alone could do it easily. End Longshanks’ army now and mayhap alter his confidence in all future endeavors.”

“’Tis not our place, lad. Not yet.” Grant’s gentle hand landed on his shoulder. “We are not gods but men given a glimpse into the past. A glimpse at how we might help steer things.”

“We are not just men...” Adlin whispered but didn’t finish his statement because he knew Grant was right. History had to unfold as it would until they could take part.

Edward’s troops must capture South Berwick which would spark the First War of Scottish Independence. This would lead to the rise of Sir William Wallace followed years later by King Robert the Bruce.

All of this had to happen.

Scotland needed to have her history.

It was not long before William the Hardy, Lord of Douglas and his garrison surrendered the castle, and South Berwick was taken. All the while, Adlin did as he was told. He watched and learned as he murmured prayers to God for the fallen. For all the people he could not help.

The truth of it was, despite Grant’s words and reasoning, neither of them could do a thing anyway. Not without help from the future and a certain ring, perhaps even *rings*. Had he tried to defend these people, his blade would have slid through thin air. After all, they weren’t really here. Not quite yet.

“’Tis time for ye to reach out to her, and finally become part of the past,” Grant murmured.

The past.

A complicated place in more ways than one.

“Will she be ready for me though,” Adlin murmured. “’Tis a lot...all of this...”

“She is ready, lad, and will want to connect with ye.” Grant’s eyes met Adlin’s, and he nodded. “The time has come at last to find yer long lost love...’tis time for ye to find Mildred.”

Chapter One

North Salem, New Hampshire

October 2017

MILLY ROLLED DOWN her car windows, smiled and let the cool New England air fill her lungs as she drew closer.

"Are you almost there, darling?" Lindsay asked, her voice soft and raspy through the car speakers as she sampled yet another tone for an upcoming role.

"God, what part are you auditioning for now, Linds?" Christina asked, her voice mocking through the speakers as they all conference called. "Marilyn Monroe gets laryngitis but still aims for sexy?"

"You're almost there, aren't you?" came Jessica's too-calm voice. "Can you see the house yet, Milly?"

"Nope," she responded. "But I can sure as hell see it in my mind's eye."

"And in the pictures strewn across your passenger seat," Jessica murmured.

"The very same I'm looking at online," Christina added. "The house that's finally going to lead you to Mr. Right, Milly."

"Oh, I doubt that," she said softly, glad to have her friends along even if they were just on the phone. She had met them almost two years ago in an online forum created by a woman named Cassie. The purpose of the group was to bring together anyone of Broun lineage descending from Scotland.

"There's something to be said for a brogue," Lindsay murmured, her voice even breathier. "The way it gets inside you."

"Um, Linds, what're you up to on the other end of the line?" There was a smirk in Christina's voice. "Because it sounds like you might need some privacy."

"Ha ha," Lindsay said, her voice still smoldering as she likely looked in the mirror and tried to work out an expression for whoever she was portraying. "A lady never..."

Suddenly, Lindsay's voice cut off and the line went dead.

Milly frowned and tried to reconnect with everyone, but hit a dead zone. It was probably for the best, all things considered. They would have insisted she keep them on the line until the moment she arrived at the house and deep down, she wanted that moment to be hers and hers alone.

Well, hers and the man waiting for her.

From the moment the mysterious Scotsman called asking her to sell his house, her thoughts had been in a whirlwind. Not just because of the sound of his voice but because of his old colonial. Her eyes flickered to the pictures on the seat next to her. How long had she been staring at them? Days, weeks, months? If not for the date on her phone marking when he first contacted her, she wouldn't know. She had become too drawn...obsessed even. She had been dealing in real estate for years, but something about this property was different.

It called to her.

He called to her.

Not just literally, but in ways she could not explain. It was as if she had heard his voice before. Like he was trying to remind her of that without actually saying the words. Which made

no sense at all. She sighed and shook her head. Why was she reading so much into this? He had said nothing out of the ordinary. Nothing that should make her feel this way.

She tried to stop obsessing as she turned onto a long dirt road but knew it was pointless. He had already gotten to her. Not just with his sexy accent, but with the timbre of his voice. It was deep and warm, reverberating down to places that had been dormant for far too long. Her ex, Jim never invoked that kind of response. Not even close.

Almost as if Jim knew he had crossed her mind the phone rang.

“Hey, sweetie,” she answered as her eyes locked on the ranch style house she was passing. Wide-eyed, she slowed down and stared. Somehow she *knew* that place. “Can I call you back, Jim?”

“Sure but first, did you make it to the house in Salem yet? I know you were anxious to.”

“I did.” She stopped in front of the ranch and continued staring at it, dumbfounded.

“What is it, Milly?” There was a frown in his voice. “Something’s wrong, isn’t it?”

“No,” she whispered, trying to figure out why she was having such a strong sense of *déjà vu*. Even the bench seat out front seemed familiar. As if she had sat on it a hundred times before.

“Mildred,” Jim persisted. “I know something’s wrong. What is it?”

Milly flinched, snapped out of it and continued down the road. “You know I don’t like to be called that.”

“Right, too old fashioned for an up and coming real estate mogul,” he mocked, but his voice remained affectionate. “Seriously, are you okay?”

After dating for years, she and Jim realized they were better off as friends. It wasn’t anything personal they just weren’t enough for each other. They lacked fire and passion and realized friendship was a better option. Now he was her closest friend, and she could not imagine it any other way.

“I’m fine just eager I suppose.” She eyed her reflection in the rearview mirror to make sure she looked her best. Her thick dark hair was pulled back in a twist, and her eye make-up done to perfection to highlight her sky blue eyes. Though it was a little chilly, she had opted for a slim fitting business suit that accentuated her long legs.

As she continued down the road, she admired her surroundings. Fall colors were just kicking in, and green leaves were splashed with sunlit pockets of bright red, pale yellow, and burnt orange.

“Foghar,” she whispered.

“Right, you’re eager to see an old house out in the middle of nowhere,” Jim started before he said, “Wait, what did you say? I didn’t quite catch that last part.”

Because she had not meant to say it. Foghar? What did that mean?

“*Autumn, lass,*” whispered through her mind. “*’Tis your time.*”

Milly pressed the heel of her palm to her forehead and shook her head. Since when did she think with a brogue? That became the least of her worries when she came to the end of the road and laid eyes on the colonial and the huge barn across from it. In pristine condition and unexpectedly beautiful, the property was, by all accounts, a gold mine.

Yet, like the ranch she had passed, all she could do was stare as chills rushed through her. Somehow, though she had never been here before, she knew this place. All of it. The barn, house, even the gnarly old oak tree out front. As if in a dream she parked, got out and started toward the house only to be stopped short by an unexpected male voice.

“May I help you, miss?”

Astounded that she had missed the slick black luxury car already parked there or the tall, handsome man leaning against it, she frowned. Dressed as dark as his car in a tasteful suit, he wore sunglasses that hid what she knew was a thorough appraisal of her.

She didn't bother confirming her identity but instead said, "And you are?"

"St. Paul," he replied with an unusual British accent as he held out his hand. "Phillip St. Paul, with United Kingdom Realty."

"Milly Broun." She gave his hand a firm shake and kept her cell at the ready just in case. "I was unaware another agency had been contacted. As far as I knew, I was the sole agent on this property." She looked around. "Has the owner shown up yet?"

"Actually, my company represents the former owner." He cocked his head. "You *do* know he's deceased, yes?"

Startled, she shook her head, taken aback by the way her chest grew tight and breathing became difficult. "What do you mean he's deceased? I just spoke with him a few days ago."

"I am afraid that is impossible, Ms. Broun." Phillip's lips turned down. "My client passed away last month."

"What?" she whispered. Though tempted to double check to make sure she had the right address, she knew she did. "That's impossible."

"I assure you he did," Phillip said. "He passed away right here, in the home he was born and raised in. Just as he wished."

"Born and raised?" She shook her head. "But the man I spoke with had an accent."

"Did he?" Though it was subliminal, she didn't miss the interest in his voice. "Then I am afraid you must be the victim of a hoax."

So it seemed.

"Would you mind showing me your business card, Mr. St. Paul?" she asked.

"Of course." He pulled out a card and handed it to her.

Though it could be a forgery and she would never know it, she made a point of looking it over. "Forgive me if I seem rude, but why would someone local hire an international real estate agency?"

"I don't know, Ms. Broun," he replied. "I wish I could be more helpful."

She got the impression he was looking her over again. Partly checking her out and partly assessing how smart she might be. Unsure how to proceed, her eyes went to the house. If he represented the property, then there was no point in her being here. Yet the thought of driving away made her stomach flip.

"Would you mind if I did a walk through?" she said softly before she could stop herself.

"Are you in the market for a new home, Ms. Broun?"

"No," she replied. "At least I wasn't until..."

When she trailed off, he bowed slightly and made a flourish with his hand toward the house. "Might I escort you in then?"

Her eyes widened at his old fashioned mannerisms and words.

"Um..." Way to sound professional. But all of this was a little offsetting. And heaven knew she was not interested in moving here. She liked her place in Newmarket.

"Please." Phillip put his hand to the small of her back. "I insist."

Instead of thanking him and heading out, she found herself being escorted inside. The minute she stepped through the front door, she felt like she was walking into a dream. Everything was so familiar it was surreal. She knew this place every bit as much as she had the ranch.

With low ceilings typical for homes built in the early eighteenth century, the house was in excellent condition and remarkably clean. As she walked through she swore she saw it as it might have been. Sometimes with nineteen-forties décor, other times more modern. As if she had witnessed it in two different time periods. But how was that possible?

As she climbed the stairs to the second floor, her sense of familiarity only grew. She knew these rooms as though she had lived in them. When she looked at the attic door, more chills swept through her. What was *with* this place?

Curious, she opened the door only to feel an even stronger sense of recognition. She had walked up these stairs as a child in her dreams. Over and over. Looking for something. A treasure created just for her. No, not just for her. For another too. Milly flew up the stairs just as she had in her dreams expecting to find...*what*? She blinked several times and shook her head once she reached the top.

This wasn't a dream, and she was not a child.

Yet as she walked to the center of the attic and spun slowly, she started doubting herself less and less. Whatever was happening was real, and she was not here out of pure chance. Somehow, some way, this was meant to be.

She belonged here.

"Mr. St. Paul?" she called out as she headed downstairs. "I think I might be interested in buying after all."

Unfortunately, he was nowhere to be found. By the time she got downstairs, his car was gone. There was a note on the counter saying he had to meet with another client and for her to lock up. He even left the key code for the lockbox on the front door. An extremely unorthodox and illegal thing for a real estate agent to do.

Milly called the number on his card only to be connected directly to his agency. Though tempted, she didn't mention his odd behavior and simply pursued purchasing the property.

"You did *what*?" Jim asked hours later as he walked in the front door of her apartment.

She proceeded to tell him everything.

"So it was the attic from your dreams?" He poured himself a drink and plunked down on her couch. "Are you sure?"

"Positive." She sat next to him and started sifting through pictures. "Everything was so familiar, Jim. It was crazy." Milly pointed out various images. "All of these rooms, every last one." She shook her head. "I've been in all of them. I just know it."

"Sure, okay." He looked them over then snatched up Phillip's business card. "He's something, eh?"

"Something?" She frowned and kept eying the pictures.

"Yeah." He tapped the photo on the business card. "Don't suppose you noticed his looks?"

"His looks?" She shrugged, still enthralled by the pictures. "Sure, I guess."

"You guess?" Jim sighed, took a sip then handed her his drink. "Milly, you've gotta start *looking*."

"Looking?" she said absently.

"Yeah, *looking*."

When he nudged her, she glanced at him. "What?"

"This. Him." He pointed at Phillip's card. "Was he single? Did you even ask?"

"God, no." She frowned. "Why would I?"

"Because you've been single for far too long." He squeezed her shoulder and shook his head. "And a guy that looks like this should've reminded you of that."

Milly kept frowning as she glanced at the picture and recalled Phillip. Without the dark glasses, she could admit he was pretty damn good looking.

"Too tall," she muttered.

"Too tall?" Jim sniggered. "I've never heard you complain about tall men before."

"That's because you're six foot two and he was freakishly six foot five'ish. Maybe a little taller."

"Freakishly?" Again, with the amusement in his voice. "Damn him."

"Yup," she whispered. The truth was her mind was a million miles away. All she could focus on was the man with the brogue. Had it all been some sort of hoax? If so, why and by whom?

She supposed, in the end, it didn't matter because she wanted the house. Ironically, her initial bid was accepted, and her closing unbelievably quick. Within a few short weeks, Jim and Christina were grunting and groaning as they helped her move in.

"Couldn't the moving company have taken this, Milly?" Christina bitched as she grabbed a box of books out of Jim's truck.

"And doesn't it take time to get a loan?" Jim muttered. "Like thirty days to close or something like that?"

Normally, yes, but this had fallen into her lap. Almost like it was meant to be.

"So you got this place just like that, eh, Mil?" Christina commented as she passed. "Came pretty damn easy, didn't it? I've got a saying about things that come too easy..."

She didn't hear the rest of Christina's statement because she vanished into the house, but Milly had a pretty good idea what was coming. The cold hard truth. Born and raised in Virginia and recently moved to southern Maine, Christina rarely held back. Especially when she smelled bullshit. Though this whole thing *had* happened a little too smoothly, there was no foul play at work. The house was in great shape, and Milly got it for a steal, so she hadn't been swindled. At least she hoped not. Buying a house was always a risk.

Milly was about to grab a box when Lindsay texted, "You're moving? I'm on my way to help."

Hell, no. She loved Lindsay but now wasn't the time. So she texted back. "All's well. Got moving under control. Stay focused on your next part. Xo."

No response. She sighed and shook her head as she pocketed her phone then got a box out of the truck.

"Linds is on her way, isn't she?" Christina rolled her eyes but grinned as they passed again. "Why doesn't that surprise me?"

Unfortunately, when Lindsay offered to help it likely meant she would spend more time auditioning for them then actually laboring. On top of that and no doubt an occupational hazard, Lindsay could be a little self-centered...and high maintenance.

"Her heart's in the right place," Jim said, right behind her. As a rule, he got a kick out of Lindsay and didn't mind looking at her either. "Did she mention what time she's flying in?"

Though Lindsay's main address was in California, she now had a second apartment in New York City. As it turned out, she was in New York right now.

"Nope." Milly gave him a pointed look over her shoulder as they entered the front door. "Any chance you know how she found out I was moving? I was going to wait and surprise her after I settled in."

"No idea." He offered a lopsided and very guilty grin. The sort that made his darkly lashed green eyes stand out.

“You’re setting yourself up for heartache with that one, sweetie,” she reminded. “Linds isn’t in the market for a man. Right now her focus is elsewhere.”

Mostly on herself.

“I know.” He kept grinning. “Don’t worry about me.”

“Well, somebody’s gotta,” Christina said as she set a box of wine down and began exploring its contents. “Because Linds so isn’t the girl for you, Jim.”

“Yeah, yeah.” He grabbed a beer out of the refrigerator, cracked it and took a deep swig before he said, “Time will tell.”

The truth was Milly didn’t think Jim was really all that interested in Lindsay anyway. Sure, he liked to flirt with her, but the way he eyed Christina when she wasn’t looking, told another story all together. No surprise really. Christina was just as beautiful as Lindsay but in a different way. With sun-washed light brown hair, unique grayish green eyes, a warm skin tone, and a sultry southern accent, she possessed plenty of charm. When she turned it on that is. Because she could be equally sassy in a heartbeat.

“Any word from Jessie?” Christina pulled out her phone and frowned. “I worry when she gets real quiet.”

“I know.” Milly tossed Christina a corkscrew. “I’m sure she’s fine, but I’ll give her a buzz in a bit and check on her.”

Jessica—AKA Jessie—was different than most people. She lived in upstate Maine nearly on the Canadian border and was pretty much a recluse. Gifted with herbs and other things born of nature, she had a small cabin deep in the woods and made a living providing people natural medicines, soaps and what not. She was gifted in other ways too. Overly insightful and so intuitive is was spooky. Add the fact that she never, ever showed emotion, most people tended to be just fine with her steering clear of humanity. But not Milly, Lindsay, and Christina. They loved her no matter what and tried to get up to visit her whenever they could.

“We’ll have to send her a video once you have everything set up,” Christina mentioned as she unwrapped and rinsed two wine glasses.

Milly nodded. They would *never* get Jessie here, so that was the next best thing.

“I think I’ll head out and get some wood...” Jim started but trailed off when he looked out the kitchen window. “Uh, ladies...”

“What?” Christina’s eyes widened too. “Well, I’ll be damned.”

Milly joined them, just as shocked by what she saw. Looks like she didn’t know her friend as well as she thought. Of all people, Jessie stood out front, perfectly still as she gazed up at the old oak. Even more alarming? Tears poured down her cheeks.

The three of them were outside in seconds.

“Jessie? Milly cocked her head and tried to meet Jessica’s eyes. “Sweetheart, are you all right?”

Nothing. No response. It almost seemed like she was in some sort of trance. Frightened for her, Milly did something she knew Jessie would not like. She put a comforting hand on her shoulder. That, it seemed, was just the thing to do because Jessie’s startled eyes shot to her face and she shied away.

“I’m sorry,” Milly said softly. “You were really scaring us. Are you okay?” She looked around and frowned. “How did you get here?”

It took Jessie a moment to gather herself before she wiped her cheeks and shook her head. Though she might have been overly emotional seconds before, her expression resumed its smooth mask, and her voice was as level and soft as ever. “I’m not sure.” She glanced from the

tree to the house before she started walking down the dirt road, murmuring, "I'm sorry. I have to go home."

Concerned, Milly, Christina, and Jim glanced at each other before they followed her. As far as she could tell Jessie was physically okay. Lovely as ever, she wore a long, flowing skirt and a turtleneck sweater. Petite, she was the shortest of them with almost exotic looks. Perhaps a gypsy heritage mixed with Native American. Most considered her jet black hair and equally dark eyes striking. If Jessie ever allowed men near, they would likely fall all over her.

They didn't walk far before part of the mystery was solved. Jessie's old Volkswagen Beetle had been abandoned halfway down the road with the door open and the engine still running. So she had driven here yet it almost seemed like she did not remember.

"Oh no you don't," Milly exclaimed and blocked her path when she realized Jessie had every intention of getting in and driving home. "It's almost nighttime, and it's a long drive back, honey. You're spending the night."

"I cannot do that." Jessie's eyes met hers. "You know I cannot, Milly."

"Of course you can." Milly steered her back toward the house. "There's just the four of us here, and you know everyone."

"Not Jim." Jessie didn't look in his direction. "I don't know Jim, and that's not good."

"But you've heard lots about him so in a way you do." She kept steering Jessie along. Thankfully, she didn't put up a fight, but then very few were as non-confrontational as Jessie. As Christina hopped in her car and drove it to the house, Milly made introductions. "Jessie this is Jim." She motioned between them. "Jim, Jessie."

Jim started to hold out his hand to shake but stopped, clearly remembering Jessie's aversion to being touched. "Nice to finally meet you, Jessie. I've heard a lot of good things."

"Nice to meet you as well." Jessie's eyes met and held his for a moment before she whispered, "I thought so," then kept walking.

When Jim frowned at Milly in question, all she could offer was a shrug. This was Jessie and bizarre was the norm. Things only got stranger when Jessie stopped short in the driveway, and her eyes turned to Milly. "So you met him then? How did it go?"

Milly frowned. "Met who?"

She was shocked when Jessie's brows boldly inched up a fraction in what had to be surprise before she did the unthinkable and *touched* Milly.

"Oh, I see," Jessie said softly. "He likes to play games."

"I'm not following, sweetie." Milly shook her head. "What are you talking about?"

"You met him right here in this very spot." Jessie's eyes stayed with hers. "You've met your Scotsman, Milly."

Previous Releases

Best Reading Order



~The MacLomain Series- Early Years~

Highland Defiance- Book One
Highland Persuasion- Book Two
Highland Mystic- Book Three

~The MacLomain Series~

The King's Druidess- Prelude
Fate's Monolith- Book One
Destiny's Denial- Book Two
Sylvan Mist- Book Three

~The MacLomain Series- Next Generation~

Mark of the Highlander- Book One
Vow of the Highlander- Book Two
Wrath of the Highlander- Book Three
Faith of the Highlander- Book Four
Plight of the Highlander- Book Five

~The MacLomain Series- Viking Ancestors~

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Quest of a Scottish Warrior- Book One
Yule's Fallen Angel (spin-off novella)
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Oath of a Scottish Warrior- Book Three
Passion of a Scottish Warrior- Book Four

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Rise of a Viking- Book One
Vengeance of a Viking- Book Two
A Viking Holiday- Book 2.5
Soul of a Viking- Book Three
Fury of a Viking- Book Four

Her Wounded Dragon- Book 4.5
Pride of a Viking- Book Five

~The MacLomain Series: A New Beginning~

Sworn to a Highland Laird- Book One
Taken by a Highland Laird- Book Two
Promised to a Highland Laird- Book Three
Avenged by a Highland Laird- Book Four

~Calum's Curse Series~

Sister series to The MacLomain Series. Can stand alone, but is best enjoyed after The MacLomain Series (Books 1-4) which includes The King's Druidess.

The Victorian Lure- Book One
The Georgian Embrace- Book Two
The Tudor Revival- Book Three

~Holiday Tales~

Yule's Fallen Angel
+ Bonus Novelette, Christmas Miracle
A Viking Holiday

~Forsaken Brethren Series~

Independent series unrelated to The MacLomain Series

Darkest Memory- Book One
Heart of Vesuvius- Book Two

About the Author



Sky Purington is the bestselling author of over thirty novels and several novellas. A New Englander born and bred who recently moved to Virginia, Sky was raised hearing stories of folklore, myth, and legend. When combined with a love for nature, romance, and time-travel, elements from the stories of her youth found release in her books.

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