

Taken by a Highland Laird



The MacLomain Series: A New Beginning
Book Two
By
Sky Purington

Introduction



Having already been whisked back in time by a magical Claddagh ring, Lindsay has been navigating medieval Scotland by relying on her skills as an actress. More so, by utilizing a powerful magical gift she has long kept secret. One that helped her not only survive an English encampment on the brink of battle but also to manipulate its very commanders.

Soon after, she was rescued by a band of Highland wizards determined to save Scotland's history. Now she's on the opposite side of the River Forth facing the Englishmen who so recently held her captive. Knowing full well she can help in ways no one else can, she has offered to put her life on the line to aid the Scots. And so the story goes...

Prologue

11 September 1297

Stirling, Scotland

Hours Before the Battle of Stirling Bridge

WILLIAM WALLACE SAT back, crossed his arms over his chest and gave her a look she would never forget. An opportunistic expression mixed with surprise and confusion. "So you will be my spy?"

"I will," Lindsay confirmed. "While Adlin and his friends seem nice enough, it's safe to say I know them about as well as I know you."

"And the more friends, the better, aye?" Wallace gave her a look. "Some would say a *good* friend would give me insight into the upcoming battle."

"A *good* friend would do the opposite." Lindsay issued a knowing grin. "But I'll be sure to tell you everything that happens between now and the next time we meet."

"Which should be hours from now," he said.

More likely years but he didn't need to know that.

"As far as I can tell, Adlin has been very forthright with you," she remarked. "So I'm curious why you would ask this of me to begin with."

A puzzled expression flickered across his face then vanished before he shrugged. She had seen that look countless times before. The face of a man being unknowingly compelled. It was a gift of hers to get men to do things they otherwise would not. Right now, that was making sure she and William formed an alliance. Spying seemed as plausible a reason as any.

"There are always things to be heard," William murmured. "Even from those such as Adlin." His eyes leveled with hers. "Especially about future battles and where they might be, aye?"

She nodded but offered no further comment as they resumed eating breakfast. Because she was so important to today's battle, William had requested that she remain in his tent the night before. Though unorthodox, she agreed. As it was, she had spent the night in far more threatening tents lately.

"I should go check on Milly," she finally announced as she dabbed a cloth daintily on either side of her mouth and stood. "Before things get, well, you know...too busy."

"'Tis a brave thing yer doing luring the Sassenach, lass." William escorted her to the entrance. "Stay safe, Lindsay."

"I'm sure I'll be fine with one of Adlin's cousin's protecting me." She just hoped it wouldn't be the one she figured it would be. Since she was mysteriously whisked back in time from the twenty-first century, taken by the English then rescued by the Scots, Bryce, Graham and Conall had been vigilant protectors.

"Aye, especially the one." William grinned. "Ye know he's been eying this tent all eve wondering about us. I might not be able to see him, but I can feel him."

Oh, she knew.

And Laird Hamilton would soon find out exactly what she thought about that.

Unfortunately, by the time she had her say it was already too late.

Chapter One



“YOU COULD SLOW down some,” she muttered under her breath as none other than Laird Conall Hamilton yanked her through the woods toward Stirling Bridge less than an hour later.

“Not if they are to believe you are my prisoner,” he stated blandly, his hold on her wrist an unbreakable vice grip. Like a chain already trying to lock her down.

Naturally, ever the hero, he had volunteered to bait the English alongside her. At least six foot five with broad shoulders and endless muscles she was no match for him physically. But mentally? Time would tell. Lindsay sighed as she stumbled along and put up a believable struggle. The truth was, Conall was as smart as he was strong and that, amongst other things, was getting on her nerves.

Sure, being flung back in time to days before one of the most famous battles in Scottish history was daunting, but she had handled it. She had worked her magic on Hugh Cressingham then on John de Warenne, the Earl of Surrey. She had been what they needed her to be. But then that’s what she did for a living.

She acted, and she did so very well.

Again and again, over and over, no matter where she was.

“The bloody Sassenach are watching you, lass,” Conall muttered. “They want you back.”

“That’s what we’re counting on,” she reminded, nearly tripping on a root.

Fog drifted in thick waves through the damp, pine-scented forest, obscuring far more than she would like. It hid things from her. Kept something from her. Up until this point, she had been strong but something about that, not being able to see beyond the fog, sent shivers through her. A chill and dread that, of all things, had her clutching the ring in her pocket for comfort.

Guidance.

Protection.

But why would she feel that way?

Even as she shook her head against the idea, she slid the Claddagh ring on. Unfortunately, it didn’t affect her fear in the least. If anything, it made her feel more vulnerable. Or was it *really* the ring? She frowned as her eyes went to Conall.

“So what is your plan once we get close?” she said. “Because I thought I should be the one to put on the show since I *am* a professional actress and you’re ah...well, rather transparent.”

“I suspect you *will* put on a show,” he acknowledged, clearly not all that impressed as he pulled her along. “I’ll be curious to see how well you perform.”

Like Adlin and Bryce, he said ‘you’ instead of ‘ye’ when speaking with her. Evidently, it was how medieval MacLomains made it easier for twenty-first century women to understand them.

“So why are you so upset?” Lindsay arched her brows, about over his attitude given their current circumstances. “Might it be because I spent the night in William’s tent?”

Conall scowled. “Why would I care if you spent the night in his tent?”

Lindsay rolled her eyes. “Because you have been smitten with me since the night all of you saved me from the English.”

“Is that what you think?” His voice remained bland. “Or could you have misconstrued my vigilance in protecting a lass who tempts her own demise at every turn as affection?”

She dodged another root, growing more irritated by the moment. “So ending up in the enemy’s camp against my will was tempting my own demise?” She inhaled deeply at his gall. “Are you serious?”

“Ending up in Cressingham’s arms was tempting something,” he returned. “And God only knows what you were up to in the Earl’s tent.”

She narrowed her eyes at the back of his head. They might have met a few days ago, but this was the most he had ever spoken to her. Where she had hoped they might be able to speak sooner, now she was of the mind that he had spared her.

“Why don’t you say what’s really on your mind, Conall,” she said. “Because I highly doubt it has anything to do with me being in anyone’s arms but William’s—”

That’s all she managed to get out before he whipped her around and backed her up against a tree. Half a breath later his lips were on hers. Stunned, she started to push him away but soon realized what he was up to. He was trying to make her former captors act rashly out of jealousy.

Enough so that they would storm the bridge.

So she acted for all she was worth and struggled. It wasn’t the first time she played this sort of part. She could do it. Kiss a stranger and make it believable. Just picture someone else in her mind. Someone worth kissing.

The only problem was as her lips softened beneath his, she could only picture one man.

Conall.

Frustrated, but at the same time drawn, she was fairly certain she overacted the whole thing as she struggled against him while at the same time enjoyed it far more than anticipated. He tasted like some sort of mint and that tongue of his. When it teased along the thread of her lips, she found herself teasing right back.

She couldn’t remember the last time she had actually enjoyed kissing a man. More so, that it was a man who had given her nothing but attitude since they met.

Well, mostly.

Several nights ago when she had been under the influence of herbs, she recalled flashes of him being tender as he carried her across the River Forth. Then she remembered his warm arms around her as they traveled south and his soothing presence as she slept.

So there was a softer side to him.

It was that side she sensed in his kiss along with an unexpected jolt she had never felt before. A rush of heat and desire that caught her totally unaware. The vivid sensations were so strong that she completely forgot to struggle and became lost in the feel of him. Her entire world dwindled down to the talent of his lips and tongue and the warmth of his strong body so close to hers.

In truth, nothing got through until a harsh chill met her skin and he stilled.

Totally out of it, she struggled to catch her breath and gain her bearings. Were the English attacking? Was someone right behind her holding her at sword point? A few blinks later, she realized that wasn’t the case at all. In fact, she was no longer leaning against a tree but by the looks of it in a dimly lit jail cell. A torch hissed and spit from a nearby wall bracket, adding a smoky scent to the musty dampness.

“Bloody hell,” Conall murmured as he stepped away and frowned.

“Where are we?” She met his frown and looked around. “Please tell me we didn’t end up in an English castle somewhere.”

“Nay.” Conall grabbed the torch, opened the rusty cell door and headed down a stone pathway, leaving her in utter darkness.

“How chivalrous,” she muttered under her breath as she started feeling her way along. Unlike most, she found comfort in darkness, preferred it actually, not that anyone knew. After all, she made a point of putting herself in the limelight often and standing beneath the brightest lights possible.

“Conall,” she called out, sure to sound distressed. “Where *are* you? Where *are* we? How could you just leave me—”

“I’m here, lass,” he replied. His torchlight reappeared moments before he did. “Though I dinnae know the year with any certainty, I would say we’ve returned to my era. Thirteen twelve.”

So she had traveled through time again. “What makes you say that?”

“Because this is my castle,” he said as he replaced the torch. “After I had this section sealed off.”

“Sealed off?” That didn’t sound good.

“Aye.” He gestured that she follow him then headed back down the hallway. It seemed he had lit more torches in a larger but just as dismal area with no windows.

“I can only assume we’re in your castle dungeons then,” she remarked as she watched him. He felt along a stone wall, murmuring chants.

“Aye,” he muttered. “Like Castle MacLomain ‘tis one of verra few in Scotland that have dungeons.”

Lindsay sighed as he tried to get beyond the wall with magic. Though it should be the last thing on her mind considering their circumstances, she kept replaying their kiss. Who knew Conall had it in him? She never would have guessed considering his stiff behavior.

She licked her lips and eyed him, knowing full well it was the last thing she should be doing. The last thing she ever did with any man for that matter which probably should alarm her even more. Yet it didn’t as she fully appreciated how handsome he was. Better looking, in fact, than most actors she came across in Hollywood which was saying something.

With his height and build, he could be cast in a great number of parts. Her eyes trailed up his long, well-formed legs. They weren’t body-builder muscular but lanky in a good way and led up to an ass that most male actors would gladly use as their butt-double in screenshots.

He might be overly tall, but all his proportions were dead on. Enough so that he could pull off a wide variety of roles from action to even romantic drama. Her gaze went to his face. Oh, yes, he would do well in a romance. Cowboy, Sci-fi, Fantasy, it didn’t matter. Those classic yet rugged features would fit the bill across all spectrums. The jaw, cheekbones, sensual lips, thick dark brown hair with a hint of auburn then last but certainly not least those eyes.

As if he knew she was checking him out, those eyes turned her way accompanied by a scowl. Even miserable, those icy orbs of his were stunning. Minty light sage with just the right amount of sexy crinkle at the corners, they were thickly lashed and made for the camera. Eyes like his would jump off the screen with the right lighting.

“Och,” he muttered and shook his head. “You dinnae need to put on a show anymore to get what you want. I’ll protect you, lass.”

Lindsay frowned, not following. “And what show am I putting on?”

“The one you put on with every man.” He continued studying the wall before he moved to another.

She perked her brows. “Excuse me?”

"You are whatever we need you to be," he explained as he crouched, touched a particular stone and murmured another chant. "You adjust accordingly to get what you want."

True. To a degree. But the way he said it made her feel dirty.

"So what are you implying?" She inflected an edge of sarcasm and gave it right back. "That I am adjusting to you?" Then a dainty snort. "As if such a thing were possible."

Still crouching, Conall rested his elbows on his knees, eyed her and shook his head.

Did they not just share the same kiss? Was he truly so unaffected by it?

"Please, Laird Hamilton, share your insight into my character." Lindsay arched one brow in mild curiosity, refusing to let him get her riled. "I *insist*."

While she sensed his irritation had more to do with where they were, it quickly found an outlet in what had troubled him prior.

"Which character should I share insight about?" he said dryly as he stood. "Because there are so many."

Stung but determined to roll with it, she offered him a tepid smile. "I have to wonder what bothers you more. That I, a woman, was able to take care of myself and get out of some damning situations." She pouted, sure to look sad for him. "Or that you, a man, were completely unneeded. That all you did was help your grandfather carry me across a river. An old man, by the way, that carried me further than you and with more compassion than you likely have in your little finger."

"Compassion is it?" He offered a stiff smile. "I dinnae think you worry all that much about such a thing."

Lindsay narrowed her eyes and shook her head. She might want to tell him where to go, anyone would, but he was likely waiting for that. Hoping for it. Because he was clearly attracted to her and did not want to be. And she wanted to know why.

Time to test some theories.

"Who broke your heart?" she said softly, adjusting her posture to one less confrontational as she touched the wall and shifted closer to him. "Because I suspect someone did."

Conall leaned his shoulder against the wall, crossed his arms over his chest and eyed her with unexpected amusement. "Aye, someone did."

"I thought as much." She kept her tone gentle, her curiosity piqued as she shifted even closer. "How long ago? Are you all right?"

"Good days and bad." He shrugged a shoulder, a hopeful gleam in his eyes. "But rumor has it, she wants me back."

"That's good, right?" She tried not to frown when a nugget of disappointment made her shoulders tighten. For God's sake, this was a *good* thing.

"Aye." He nodded. "'Tis verra good had she not already agreed to marry another."

"Oh, I'm so sorry."

Just like that, her muscles loosened. Damn it.

"Och, 'tis nothing to be sorry over," he commented as he resumed studying the wall. "I'll marry as well, and she will become my mistress."

"I see," she murmured, biting back a frown. That sort of thing was common enough in just about any century, but for some reason, she had not thought Conall was the type. But then, what did she really know about him? Nothing evidently.

"'Twas easier than I expected," he muttered as he felt along the wall more insistently and grew more frustrated with their prison.

"What's that?"

“Simply saying what needed to be said to pacify and interest you,” he said. “To direct your mind in another direction altogether.”

What the hell was he talking about?

Yet as their eyes met, his expression a bit too smug, she suddenly got it. “There is no great love loss or another woman, is there?”

“Nay, but there *is* the satisfaction of seeing you experience what you do to others,” he said. “’Tis like that for most, I imagine. Being led in one direction by you only to realize ‘tis all false. That you simply had them where you wanted them.”

Her heart thundered into her throat at his gall and insensitivity, but she kept her cool. Deep down, it was easy because she knew he was right. Yet no man saw it let alone called her on it. They were too enchanted, too easily swayed.

All but Conall even *after* that kiss.

Something that most certainly had not affected him like it did her.

Or so it seemed.

She narrowed her eyes.

While some might argue it out with him and call him all the names he deserved, she did things differently. Arguing never got you anywhere. If he intended to think her incapable of feeling, because that’s what it sounded like, she would do the opposite to him.

“Obviously we’re stuck,” she murmured, her voice raspy and seductive as she rested her shoulders against the wall, thrust out her chest just enough and gave him a look from beneath her lashes than no man could refuse. “Maybe if you kiss me again we can magically whisk our way out of here.”

Conall gave her a look that spoke volumes. “You dinnae get put off that easily, do you, lass?”

“No,” she said softly as she rested her hand on his strong forearm. “Not if I see a possible way out.”

Lindsay didn’t miss the way his muscles tensed beneath her fingers or how his jaw clenched ever-so-slightly. She might not be able to get to him with words, but touch was a different story. So she sidled along the wall even more until she was nearly between him and the stone. Lord, he was large, but she liked it. Far more than she expected.

“We can’t get out of here, can we?” she whispered as she rested her hand on his chest. “At least not in the way you’re hoping.”

Conall’s eyes dropped to hers before they fell to her hand, more so her ring. “Mayhap not.”

“So you think it was the gem that shifted us through time?” she murmured as she moved her hand higher, more aware by the moment of the heat and strength beneath her fingertips. Here she was trying to seduce him simply for payback but was turning herself on instead.

“I think ‘twas likely the gem,” he conceded, his voice not quite right as his eyes remained locked on her hand. “That’s the only thing that makes sense.”

“But why at that moment?” she purred, now squarely between him and the wall. “What made it so special?”

Conall’s eyes rose to hers and held. “’Tis hard to know.” His brows lifted. “If I were to guess I would say standing on the brink of war, aye? Mayhap a need to protect you from imminent death?”

“Assuming the English meant to kill me.” Just look at how he navigated around talk of that kiss. “Which never would have happened with you protecting me.”

She kept her voice husky and her eyes with his. Though typically this would be the moment in a movie she pretended heat simmered between them, she realized she wasn't doing that in the least. Yet heat was still there, rolling over her skin like a fiery wave.

This would also be the moment the man fell under her spell.

"I wasnae protecting you," he said, dry amusement in his voice yet again. He was clearly not under any spell as he stepped away. "I was helping the cause."

How did he *do* that? Why was he not completely taken with her at this point? And that wasn't a cocky thought in the least. Not really. But more of a confused one because she had yet to meet a man she could not enchant, if she set her mind to it.

Though tempted to give it another shot, she was just too curious. About many things actually. Mainly him, but she would get back to that. "So, we're in your dungeons, and we can't seem to get out." She shook her head. "I don't understand."

"Nor would I expect you to," he murmured as he frowned at the wall and kept muttering chants that were doing no good.

Hell, did he ever quit being an ass?

"All right, I've had just about enough of this." She crossed her arms over her chest and frowned. "I refuse to be treated so rudely anymore. Especially when I just put *my* life on the line to help *your* country and *your* family."

"Aye, you *did* do that," he agreed, crossing his arms as well as he squared off with her. "And 'twas the only thing you've done where I havenae been able to figure out your motives."

"My motives?" She rounded her eyes. "I thought that was pretty clear. Get the English to rush Stirling Bridge, so history unraveled like it was supposed to, not how it was going to had I not put my life on the line."

She did not raise her voice.

She wouldn't give him the satisfaction.

"And while we're on the subject of you questioning my motives with such distrust," she continued. "What was your take-away from me doing my best to make sure your cousin, Laird MacLeod was not tortured to death by the English? Because I get a funny feeling you weren't all that impressed by that either. That my motives weren't what they seemed to be." She planted her hands on her hips and shook her head. "Because God forbid it be basic human compassion."

"I am grateful for what you did for Bryce," he said softly, yet that same edge leveled his voice. "As I know he is too."

"Oh, right," she whispered, eying him. "He's a sore subject, huh, because I might be his to claim if the gem in my ring shines the color of his eyes?" She yanked the ring off and shoved it in her pocket. "Well, don't worry about that because this ring will dictate my love life over my dead body."

Like Milly's had, it seemed the gem at the center of Lindsay's Claddagh ring would eventually match the eyes of her one true love. To hell with that. She chose who she loved. No man, not ever, and it would stay that way.

"Why did you risk your life at Stirling Bridge?" Conall said, back on topic. "I truly want to know."

"And *I* want to know why you want to know," she countered.

"I already told you," he replied. "Because 'tis the only time I cannae quite ken your actions."

"I love that you think you understand the other times," she muttered, trying to come up with some excuse for her actions at the bridge. "If you truly want to know, I did it for Milly."

His brows snapped together. "Milly?"

“Yes.” She nodded once. “I knew she would be staying in Scotland and the only way for that to go smoothly was if I helped history get back on track.”

“You are lying.” Arms still crossed over his chest, he cocked his head and narrowed his eyes. “Why will you not tell me the truth?”

How could he possibly know that? What was with this guy and his ability to see right through her?

“I am,” she said.

He shook his head. “You are not.”

They eyed each other as she continued to search for an excuse. Yet as the moment stretched and she considered the conversation she’d had with Grant, Lindsay realized he had never told her *not* to tell Conall. Even so, something held her back. Unexpected compassion for him despite what a douche he was being to her.

“What is it?” he said, his voice a deep rumble of unease as he clasped her upper arms. “What are you keeping from me, lass?”

Lindsay again held his eyes for a long moment before she finally came clean. “Your grandfather and I were able to talk on occasion when we were in the English encampment.” She swallowed. “Grant told me things. About how all of you are on a mission to save Scotland’s history. How your country would be wiped off the map if you didn’t. It would cease to exist in the future.”

“But that is not why you did what you did,” Conall said, his grip firm but not painful. “Is it, lass?”

His ability to read her was getting a little uncanny.

“No,” she finally relented softly. “I did it for you and Grant.”

“I dinnae ken.” She was surprised by a flicker of something other than distrust and dislike in his eyes as they searched hers. “Why would you do it for my grandfather? For me?”

“Because,” she managed, her heart suddenly in her throat. “You deserve to have your father back...and the only way that might ever have a chance of happening is if that battle took place like it was supposed to.”

Click [HERE](#) to find out what happens next!

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~

Viking King- Book One
Viking Claim- Book Two
Viking Heart- Book Three

~The MacLomain Series- Later Years~

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

~The MacLomain Series- Viking Ancestors' Kin~

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

~Viking Ancestors: Rise of the Dragon~

Coming Summer of 2018

~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.

Purington loves to hear from readers and can be contacted at Sky@SkyPurington.com. Interested in keeping up with Sky's latest news and releases? Either visit Sky's website, www.SkyPurington.com, sign up for her quarterly [newsletter](#), or sign up for personalized text message alerts. Simply text 'skypurington' (no quotes, one word, lowercase) to 74121 or visit Sky's [Sign-up Page](#). Texts will ONLY be sent when there is a new book release. Readers can easily opt out at any time.

Love social networking? Find Sky on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Want a few more options? “[Follow](#)” Sky Purington on Amazon to receive New Release Kindle Updates and “Follow” Sky on [BookBub](#) to be notified of amazing upcoming deals.