



The Prince and I

Karen Hawkins

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Meet the Princes of Oxenburg... Fairytales with a sizzling, Scottish, and delightfully sparkling twist.

Gregori Romanovin, Oxenburg's warrior prince, is escorting his grandmother to a ball deep in the Scottish Highlands when he and his entourage are robbed at sword point by a group of ruffians. Led by a man dubbed the Scottish Robin Hood, battle-savvy Gregori senses that something's amiss - that 'he' is really a 'she'.

Lady Murian is a young, beautiful widow seeking revenge against the powerful earl who murdered her husband and stole his birthright. Living in the woods, she and her banished band of men rob wealthy nobles visiting the evil earl.

But when Murian ambushes the Prince's golden coach, she gets far more than she bargained for. And she's left fearing that *he* is the real thief...of her heart.

The Prince and I Details

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Author : Karen Hawkins

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From Reader Review *The Prince and I* for online ebook

Didi says

3.85 stars

Been a while since I last read Karen Hawkins's books and this just reminds me how I love her stories.

The Prince and I is book two of The Oxenburgh Princes series, which is also tied up with characters on *How To Pursue A Princess: Duchess Diaries 2* from Duchess Diaries series. However, this book could be read as a standalone.

The heroine in this book, one Lady Murian, was no milksop maid or ordinary lady of the ballroom; she was one brave, resilient and wily young woman. Max was a warrior Prince of Oxenburgh, a general in his country army, visiting Scotland on a mission. I loved their interactions and banters, also how both being a sport when they bested or outwitted the other on more than one occasions.

The plot itself borrowed the legend of Robin Hood, the twist being the heroine leading the merry brigands consisted mostly of widows and children. At the helm was Murian who had lost her husband and castle to vile and greedy Lord Loudan. Murian first bested Max when she and her widows army waylaid the Prince and his grandmother's entourage on their way to Rowallen castle. The conundrum factors of the highwaymen intrigued Max to hunt to look for them, but instead found the intriguing Lady and her people.

What I loved about Ms. Hawkins writing: the lighthearted tone, humor, a bit of puzzle thrown in and not over the top romance were all here in this book.

And I must say, though I was rather exasperated with Max's grandmother, the grand Duchess, that she was an entertaining character who certainly adds colors to the story.

I also loved how realistic was Max and Murian about their whole situations, which made the conclusion of the story (view spoiler) was a bit disappointing.

But after being without Ms. Hawkins's books for a while, this served as good reintroduction to her storytelling that I enjoyed immensely. I certainly wouldn't take longer time to read her other books.

Note:

ARC was kindly provided by the publisher via **NetGalley** for the exchange of an honest review.

Brooke Bryant says

With *The Prince and I*, the second installment in her *Princes of Oxenburgh* series, Karen Hawkins weaves a delicious tale set in the wilds of Scotland. Lady Murian Muir was once the mistress of Rowallen Castle and its people after having found love in a marriage arranged by her guardian. After a very suspicious duel, she loses her husband and is forced to flee her beloved home. Doing everything she can to gain back what is rightfully hers, she dons a "Robin Hood" disguise and along with her band of "merry men" (the displaced members of her household), they hold up guests travelling to Rowallen. One particular evening finds them

attempting to rob General Max Romanovin, the prince of Oxenburg. Sparks fly and they end the hold-up with a sword fight, with Max unmasking the highwayman after Murian slips and falls. At the request of his Tata Natasha (who deserves a novel all on her own), Max finds himself travelling with her to stay as guests of Lord Loudan at Rowallen but, it isn't until after they arrive that he realizes his grandmother has lost a very important heirloom to the blackguard Loudan that belongs to his country.

I was so excited to read this story. The chemistry between Max and Murian is palpable from the beginning and it was so refreshing when they didn't spend over half the book denying that chemistry. Murian has loved and lost, but she doesn't allow it to affect her negatively and cause her to be bitter as I've seen before in romances. She also isn't too proud to accept Max's help with the repairs and Max isn't as arrogant as one would think given that he is a prince. Both Max and Murian are down to earth which made reading all that more enjoyable and the verbal sparring between them, and the secondary characters, had me laughing out loud several times. The secondary characters were just as large as the hero and heroine; with the widows helping alongside the prince's men, and Tata Natasha threatening to turn people into goats and arguing that she doesn't snore. The Prince and I was a thoroughly fun romp into Scotland and I'm already sorry that it's over!

I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review

Bambi Unbridled says

This second installment of The Oxenburg Princes is a twist on the classic tale of Robin Hood. Only this time, the wily thief is female and our heroine for the story. Lady Murian has been robbed of her husband and home by the scoundrel Earl of Loudon. In an effort to provide for her people and win back her castle, she has taken to the ways of highwaymen and ambushes the earl's guests seeking donations to her cause. Murian was an admirable heroine. She was brave and bold and saucy. She had wild red hair, flashing silver eyes and knew how to wield a rapier. She also had a huge heart and cared for her people no matter the personal cost to herself. I loved the strength and selflessness she displayed at all costs.

Our prince in the story is Maksim (Max), the warlord prince of Oxenburg. Max has recently lost a close friend in the wars and has been in a very dark place. When he encounters Murian (is robbed by her and her band of merry men and women), he sees a little light in the darkness and is determined to find this mysterious "Robin Hood". Murian, of course, leads him on a merry chase. Max was a great hero and love interest. He was honorable, intelligent, caring, and just a tad broody. He also sounded quite dashing with his broad shoulders, thick black hair and piercing green eyes. I was able to form a great picture of him in my head in his red military uniform or his winter furs.

Of course we have more hijinks from Tata Natasha... only this time she is a bit shamefaced as she has done something very very foolish and must seek Max' help. That part of the story was quite funny. Loudon was a good villain as he inspired ire quite easily with his high-handed ways and poor treatment of those around him.

This was one of those sweet historicals that just made you happy to read. I received an advanced copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. 4 stars / 2 flames.

Melody May (What I'm Reading) says

Posted on What I'm Reading

First and foremost, I must say that the Grand Duchess, known to her grandson's as Tata Natasha is a menace to society and they seriously need to lock her up. She seems to find herself in a pickle every time. It also doesn't help that she's stubborn as a mule and she threatens everyone that she's not happy with to turn them into a goat. Glad to clear the air and on Tata, now I better hide before she turns me into a goat.

Okay, I couldn't put *The Prince and I* down. Seriously, I almost read this in one day. I thought this is a fun read. Then again I love the story of Robin Hood. There are so many versions out there, but my personal favorite one would be the Disney one. However, I'm digressing here. Basically, *The Prince and I* is a retelling of Robin Hood, but with a slight twist. Instead of the Prince being Robin we have Lady Murian who takes from the rich to give her band widows and children. I love how she does, because she doesn't force them to give up their possessions merely asks for donation for their cause. You have to admit that is pretty clever. So, we see Prince Gregori Maksim Aleksandr Romanovin (Max) is intrigued by this lady and decides to find out what is going. When he finds out, he feels duty bound to help Murian. Such a strong character. I absolutely love Murian's character, because during her adversity she didn't wilt and decide to give up. Which would have been totally easy, NO, she decided to fight for what was right even taken on the evil Earl of Loudan. The man is evil. He really played up the Prince John type character. You didn't see Loudan a lot in the story, but mainly his actions. Very sleazy guy, especially when he conned Tata in giving up a priceless heirloom. See Tata needs to be stop from herself. I feel bad for her grandsons.

Overall, Karen does an amazing job on retelling Robin Hood. I love that she changed the male protagonist in Robin Hood to a female. This makes it a unique retelling of the story. We see the witty conversation between Max and Murian. I have to say that was surprise by some of the parts of the story in a good way. However, I think one of my favorite parts of the story would have to be when Max figures out Murian was the bandits they came across on the way to the castle. He basically goads her, by saying the bandits had a malodorous. I lost it right there, because Murian was getting offended. Seriously, a light fun read, and will have you smiling at the end. I can't wait to see what kind of trouble Tata Natasha will cook up in the next book.

Copy provided by PocketBooks via NetGalley

1-Click Addict Support Group says

A real lady is never afraid to cause a ruckus! Scottish gentry, Russian royalty and a story that had me cheering for them all.

Wrongly stripped of her home, Lady Murian MacDonald Muir was interested in two things. First, regain her rightful home and the home of the people who served, and loved it, so well. Second, achieve the first by ensuring the villain who caused it all paid for what he did. Even if that meant being a prickly thorn in his side and his wallet. If his party guests got in the way, well, collateral damage.

Gregori "Max" Romanovin was a soldier and used to defending himself. Finding himself in the middle of a feud he didn't really care about, he became much more interested when he realized Murian was the 'bandit' so highly sought after.

I love this author and her ability to take me back to the Scottish highlands of centuries ago so easily. The characters she creates, and the situations they find themselves in, are incredibly relatable even if their circumstances couldn't be further from my own. High drama, for sure, but at the heart of it are always real people and honest situations that feel so normal, even if they happened hundreds of years ago. I mean, who doesn't think everyone needs a cranky, but lovable, granny in their lives?

Murian is young but has already suffered devastating loss. She is not going to just quietly take it though. She is going to fight with whatever means she can—a true Scottish warrior, if a pint-size version. Max is an unexpected supporter, especially given their *unusual* introduction. Talk about first impressions!

A soldier and a female Robin Hood make unlikely partners but they go together like heather on the highlands! Funny, steamy and enough adventure and intrigue to keep things interesting from start to finish. Och, I looved it! ~ Diane, 4 stars

Lover of Romance says

This review was originally posted on Addicted To Romance

Summary

Max Romanovin, is Oxenbrug's Military General as well as one of its princes. Max has dedicated his life to serving his country and the military and fighting along side his men. He has spent years and resources building his army strong and resilient. Max is escorting his grandmother up to the Highlands, to a house party to recover a item that his grandmother needs from the owner. Along the way, they get stopped by a band of highwayman thieves, and is led by a young man who intrigues him, a local "Robin Hood". Now this Robin is not what he or she appears to be. Max is interested and is quick on his feet and is intelligent enough that he notices something more and intends to hunt down this mysterious "Robin Hood" and his band. Lady Murian, is a widow and is bent on getting justice not just for her husband's death, but for herself and her servants who were cast out. To survive, they found a hut village in the woods, and are barely making it by. She is driven to get her land back and for the man responsible to pay for his crimes. Then she meets the Prince of Oxenburg, and for the first time in a long time she is captivated, but knows there can never be a future with him....or can there be?

The Hero

Max, or also known by his official name Gregori Romanovin, is a fierce protector and a battle ready prince. He is always on guard, and ready for anything. He is cunning and quick-witted about the little things. Ever since he lost his closest friend in battle and had to reveal the news to his friends wife and their son, it devastated and changed him. Max is determined NEVER to marry, no matter what. He refuses to put a woman he loves to suffer so much from his death. He is content with this life as it is, with his family and fighting for his country and the people he loves. Max is honorable, kind, stubborn and playful. He is the type of character you immediately gravitate towards. He is a fierce warrior but has a loving heart. You see this instantly with him and from the first page you are drawn to his character. There is so much more depth to him, and the reader senses it from the very beginning. We see how creative and crafty he is, and how much he notices in the little things. Hawkins is so talented in writing her heroes, and Max I fell for hard, I surely wish he was real, though. Max is the type of hero that has many strengths, but some flaws too that makes him seem more real and alive to the reader. Sexy and passionate!!

The Heroine

Lady Murian, is young and a widow. Murian cared much for her husband that was killed. She was shocked when she was booted off her own land, as well as the innocent people that worked for her and her husband

and were also cast out. Murian was forced to make some difficult choices and is the leader of their group. By banding and working together, Murian and her people have created a small village in the woods, mostly widows, and young children. She has devoted everything she has to seeing to their needs and well-being. But she is also driven by the need of finding the truth about her husband's death and bringing the man that stole everything from her to justice. Murian is a fighter and was taught well, but she is also smart and loving. Murian was a heroine that was so down to earth and I loved how easy it was to relate to her. You see, as the reader, how much you can connect with her, and relate with her on many things. I love her protective nature, she has spirit, but also is kind and gracious and sees the good in others. She does what needs to be done, no matter the cost to herself.

Plot and Story Line

The Prince and I, is a story I have been waiting for quite a long time. Ever since these prince brothers were first introduced to us in her previous series, The Duchess Diaries. Let me first shout out how truly AMAZING this book is. It's one of those books, where from start to finish I was smiling the whole time because it was so good. Now I love Karen Hawkins, but I love what she has done with this series so far. This series is based on a royal family, brothers and each brother plays a different role in running the kingdom. Then we have the grandmother, I thought I should mention her first in my review because she plays a role in all of the books where these brothers step in. And she is one lively character. She is romany, and is quite crazy and intent on all of her grandsons getting married. Nothing stands in her way. She is definitely a force of nature and wildly entertaining. Now I believe that this series and the Duchess Diaries series could be in the same series because they are connected to each other. But I do see why they are a bit separate. This series is a focus on the family.

Now it begins quite quickly and way easy to get into the story. In case my readers are wondering, this is the type of book you need to be careful when you start reading it. I made the mistake of starting it late and staying up all night (or day, since with my profession I sleep during the day and stay out all night....I would be a vampire, but I don't suck blood hehe)And I mean all night...till 5 and I loved every moment of it. I honestly hope this review can portray how wonderful this book truly was for me. In fact, top favorites are the category I will place this book in. It begins with the scene of Max and his grandmother traveling in their carriage up to northern Scotland and they get held up by forest brigands. Now Max, from the first moments, is thinking with his head, not his brawn (which is another thing I loved about his character). He is cunning, and he watches every tiny detail. The play between our "Robin" and the prince is quite entertaining, and Max stays one step ahead of them. I loved this scene because you see so much from both sides, and it really sets the stage for the rest of the story. We even get a bit of a fighting scene between them...boy was that fun!!

Now after this scene and both sides go on their merry way, we also find that these two are very much intrigued by each other. Max is fascinated with this Robin Hood and wants to find her. And through a course of events, these two have a bond one that is both flirty and building a friendship of sorts. We see that they are attracted to each other, but don't act on it immediately. They pace themselves, and the focus is more on learning each other and building a trust. We see then the danger that Murian is in, and her people and Max has his own reasons for helping out. But you see that even though he has something he needs from the "villain" of the story, we also see how much he and his own band of merry men cares for both Murian and those she protects. Then this is where we get some plot twists, and a mix of danger and a little thrills that build up the pace of the book. What was most intriguing was seeing how well Hawkins balances the plot and the relationship of Max and Murian.

The romance that develops between Max and Murian is quite endearing and seriously...I just couldn't put this down. I tried because I was exhausted and tired, but I just had to know more. It was interesting seeing the process of Max and Murian finding a balance with each other. Which when they weren't being interrupted all the time (which was quite funny right when certain things were getting a bit heated), they really connect with

each other. There were so many different elements to their relationship that makes this story so unique and delightful. There were a couple of times I felt it was predictable, but then something would happen that I definitely didn't see coming and would throw me all over the place....and when I loved every delicious moment!! This is a book that is a must read for any romance lover, now I know I recommend many books. But honestly this book was so fun, sweet, lively and full of those enchanting moments where it steals its way slowly into your heart and stays there!! This is not a book you want to miss out on....READ NOW!!

The Cover

I ADORE this cover, I LOVE this cover, I lust after this cover!! I love everything about it. So romantic, love the sweet pose, with the hero behind her, and what a uniform, his hand on her chin ---loves that, and I love her dress and she even has her bow and arrow!! And what a lovely forest setting too...which definitely connects with the story. Its so playful and fun and makes me want to jump right into it!!

Overall View

The Prince and I is a "robin hood" themed romance that is bound to keep you entertaining and entranced from the first few pages. Karen Hawkins will charm you with this story that is guaranteed to win hearts over!!

The Prince Who Loves Me (1)

The Prince and I (2)

The Princess Who Wore Plaid (2.5)

Hannah says

ARC REVIEW

The Princes of Oxenbourg book two by Karen Hawkins, The Prince and I, is a funny role reversal on the classic Robin Hood tale. I was hesitant to read this book because it is book two but it sounded too good to pass up and I'm glad I didn't. Murian is a headstrong and loyal woman, Max is tortured warrior Prince, and the comic relief is in the form of a stubborn old woman, Grand Duchess Natasha Nikolaevna and self acclaimed Queen of the Gypsy and Max's grandmother. The story is inventive and romantic. I love Karen Hawkins, she's a great writer and following her facebook page is quite amusing.

Lady Murian is a young widow who is seeking the revenge for the murder of her husband, Lord Robert, against the man, The Earl of Loudan, who supposedly won the estate of Rowallen Castle on the gaming table then later killed Robert in a "duel". Exiled with the rest of the castles retainers Murian has taken up the subterfuge of a highwayman to keep knocking Loudan down a peg, and to be used as a distraction when Murian has to search the castle for proof that Loudan gained the estate through foul play.

General of the Grand Army of Oxenbourg, Prince Gregori Maksim Aleksandr Romanov is traveling with his Tate Natasha to a house party in the wild Highlands of Scotland. Why she agreed to this is baffling but Max

has his own reasons for escorting her. On the way there they are stopped and asked to donate goods to the their cause. Max knows almost immediately that the leader of this band of bandits is a woman. She stays in his mind not because she had the nerve to rob him it's because she almost bested him in a swordfight. Max is able to track her down when found he finds out her story and sides with her. He uses his own men to help repair the houses in preparation for winter. Murian has to continually sneak back into the castle to find a dairy Lord Robert always wrote in and she knows that if she can find it then she can prove Loudan is a scoundrel. Max finally finds out why Tate Natasha accepted the invite because Loudan pushed Tate into gamboling something that she had no right to betting and lost it and is now taunting her with maybe buying it back. The more Max learns about Loudan the more suspicious he becomes about the about Loudan and the real reason Max is there.

The attraction between Max and Murian is pretty much instantaneous and they both agree to an affair but with Murian devotion to her people and Max being a soldier and not wanting to subject Murian to that life as a soldiers wife they are hesitant to commit to anything else. But Tate is more cunning than she lets on and knows just the thing to save all.

Overall, I really enjoyed the story, I love the role reversal of the story. and the supporting characters really make the story.

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyrarkyker says

Started off with promise, a re-imagined telling of Robin Hood. Our Robert is dead but his widow, Lady Murian, robs from the rich to give to the poor and leads a band of widows, a giant, and Will in a community in the woods.

I was a big fan of our hero, Prince Max. He is not the heir but the General of the country's military. He was sexy competent and occasionally stubbornly take charge. Murian and him worked very well together but after their first feisty meeting, their romantic relationship gets boiled down to repetitive moments of trying to find alone time to make out and getting interrupted.

The villain storyline, Murian trying to get into the castle to find a journal to prove the new Lord of the castle cheated her husband and Max's grandmother trying to get back an item she lost in a card game to the same lord (which was kept secret for far too long) all felt needlessly dragged out, especially when we the readers never really get to know the villain or see him.

Our couple had good chemistry but I didn't really feel the romance here as their relationship didn't really have any build up. I am interest though in reading the third now as I want to see Nikolai, the heir and who looks to be possibly wonderfully broody, get his happily ever after.

Susan (susayq ~) says

While unpacking my boatload of books that I moved during the Christmas holidays, I realized I owned about 7 or 8 books by Karen Hawkins and I hadn't read not a one of them LOL So, I randomly grabbed one, and this was the lucky winner. It wasn't too bad, but I am not falling all over myself fangirling. There were some laugh out loud moments involving Prince Max's snarky Gypsy grandmother, Tata Natasha and Loudan was a jerk extraordinaire, much befitting his role as the villain. It kind of irritated me that neither Max nor Lady Murian were willing to admit their feelings and attempt to compromise on being together. Yes, you both have responsibilities, but they weren't even going to address trying to compromise. They would rather pout

about the other walking away. At least Max finally spoke up and found a way for it to work...not that I found his way very believable (view spoiler)

Anyhoo, it was a good read and I'll get to the rest of the books I have by her at some point in the future :)

Rosy says

This review was written for The Review Diaries
You can read the full review [here](#)

Thanks to Netgalley and Pocket Books for sending me a copy in exchange for an honest review

I've never read a full novel by Karen Hawkins, but I have thoroughly enjoyed several of her novellas, so I was looking forward to this novel before I even saw the blurb. Then I saw that it was a play on the Robin Hood tale set in Scotland and I was sold.

It's a thoroughly enjoyable book, one I stormed through in a matter of hours and loved getting lost in. It's not my favourite romance, but it definitely had a lot going for it that meant I'm very eager to check out the rest of the series.

It's fun and plays really well with the Robin Hood story, with a few surprise twists and a gender bend on Robin himself. I loved the opening scenes with the robbing, it definitely got the novel off to a fantastic start!

It's also peopled with incredibly vivid characters that really jump off the page. I did find it a little difficult to keep up with some of the secondary characters (there were just so many of them!) but the main players are very well done.

Both Murian and Max have accents – his some sort of Russian/Romanian hybrid and hers thick Scottish, so it does take a while to get used to reading the accented dialogue, but it meant that the voices really came to life and brought the story right off the pages. I could hear their voices in my head whilst it was reading, always a good sign.

However there were a few things that marred my enjoyment a little, and they were three fold. Firstly the modern language that crept in from time to time. It's a pet peeve for me when modern language and phrasing finds its way into historical fiction, and whilst this was by no means the worst case I've read, it was frequent enough to be distracting.

Secondly the pacing lagged a bit in the middle and I found my attention waning. There's a lot of longing looks, heated kisses and riding around moping. The action slows right down and it fails to maintain the pacing that the beginning and end have.

Thirdly, some of the romance. Sadly I wasn't as swept off my feet as I was hoping to be. I did love both Max and Murian, but the chemistry just didn't click for me which meant that the heat I was supposed to be feeling for them just never really fanned into a blaze. That happens from time to time with romances, not every couple is going to be everyone's cup of tea, so whilst it didn't quite work for me I know other people are going to be swept off their feet by these two.

It's still a very good story, light hearted, fun and with some really vivid characters – all in all a thoroughly enjoyable read. If you're after a quick romance to transport you to the Highlands I'd definitely recommend picking this one up. Now I can't wait to go and find the other Oxenburgh princes...

Donna says

The Prince and I is a delightful take on the legend of Robin Hood. Traveling with his entourage to visit the Earl of Loudan, Prince Gregori Maksim Alexandr Romanovin, leader and general of the Grand Army of Oxenburg, is waylaid by bandits. He is accompanied by his grandmother, Grand Duchess Natasha Nikolaevna, and is concerned for her safety. Max is shocked when he discovers the leader of the group is a young woman as they engage in a sword fight. The band disperses after procuring a few spoils of the battle and an enraged Tata discourages them from obtaining more.

Young widow Murian is relieved when they escape with some bounty to help them through what promises to be a bleak winter, although they still need much more. She is angry for being attracted to the prince because he associates with Loudan. She is unaware she appeals to the prince as well. Murian needs to breach the earl's castle to prove he obtained his bounty through nefarious means. Murian is not the only one with a grievance against the wicked earl.

This is a book you should read for the sheer enjoyment. The second instalment of The Oxenburg Princes is a worthy follow-up to The Prince Who Loved Me. Max and Murian's serious attempt to retrieve what rightfully belongs to her is tempered by the humorous interplay among the characters. There is a carefully placed traitor among their midst and Tata's antics will entertain even the most jaded reader.

I was given a galley of this book by the publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Booknut says

Best part of this book? The Scottish accents!

So, so beautiful. I will admit to actually reading parts of the book out loud purely so I could hear the sweet music that is Karen Hawkins' Scottish dialogue. I think I fell a little in love with the word 'about'...or, as the Scots say, 'aboot'!

"'Lass, 'tis one thing to sneak into the castle when the earl and his men were oot, and peek aboot the lower levels in the study and sittin' room. Bu' to invade the earl's own bedchamber, especially now tha' the castle is so heavily guarded— Nay. Just nay."

"Ian is right," Widow Reeves said. "And e'ery month the earl hires more thugs to guard the castle. 'Tis too dangerous now."

"We'd get caught, we would, especially now tha' Will botched things oop."

Say it out loud. I dare you! And tell me you don't feel a spark of Scottish pride come to life within you (despite, perhaps, your lack of Scottish heritage! ;))

Pamela says

Well...it looks like I've found an author to add to my growing list! This was an engaging and spirited twist on the Robin Hood theme.

The opening scene was a great way to start and introduce us to the leads. Max and Murian were witty and charming. Ian, Will, Orlav and the rest were fully developed, Loudan was despicable and then there was Tata Natasha. What a corker she was! I can't wait to see what she gets up to in the future.

Good characters, witty dialogue, strong plot and a great setting makes this a highly entertaining read. Enjoy!

****Thank you to the publisher and Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.****

Susan says

Good book with a twist on the Robin Hood theme. Max is accompanying his grandmother on a visit to Scotland when they are waylaid by a group of bandits. As an experienced soldier, he realizes that there is something different about them. A confrontation with their leader, which he barely won, reveals that "Robin" is actually a woman. When they have what they want, they disappear as quickly as they appeared, leaving Max frustrated and intrigued.

Murian is the widow of the former owner of Rowallen Castle. Her husband was killed and the castle stolen by the Earl of Loudan, who evicted Murain and all those who served the castle. Determined to find the proof of what happened, she and her people have moved into the woods, and harass the Earl and his guests on a regular basis. She gets more than she bargained for when she stops Max's coach.

I loved their initial confrontation. Max's frustration at being caught unawares was obvious, as was his surprise at the efficiency of the group. I loved the request for "donations" instead of demands (this is important later on). I also liked Max's keen observations that revealed more about the bandits than they realized, leading to a fun exchange with the Grand Duchess about some chickens. The sword fight was exciting, and it was fun to see Max having more difficulty than he expected. The whole confrontation ends up in something of a draw, and Max and company continue their journey to the castle.

We see Murian and her people as they live their lives in the woods, trying to survive while at the same time looking for a way to succeed in their goal. Murian's care and worry for them is obvious, especially as the cold weather approaches. Their worries are worsened when villagers who have helped them are attacked by the earl's people. At the same time, Max has been searching diligently for Murain. When he finally succeeds, he's surprised to find the reasons for her actions.

I loved Max. He can be very imperious, as a prince and a general of his country's army. But he is also loyal and loving to his family, as shown by the way he cares for his grandmother. She irritates him, but he loves her, and will do almost anything for her. He is also very observant, and I loved the way he recognized the straits that Murian and her crew were in. He wanted to help and brought his men to make repairs without talking to Murian first. I liked that he saw where he had gone wrong and apologized, without getting all

sulky. He's also very protective of her, and gets a bit overbearing when he's trying to keep her safe.

Murian was awesome. Her marriage had been an arranged one, but she and Robert fell in love. She had felt right at home with the castle and the people. When Robert was killed while she was away for a few days, she was stunned and heartbroken. When she discovered that the castle had been taken by the earl, she was certain that there had been trickery of some kind and was determined to prove it. I loved her way of getting even with him, by taking all the contents of the castle that could be moved within those few days they had to vacate the castle. She was also incredibly clever, thanks to the unusual education she got from her guardian, and I enjoyed seeing her use those abilities to confound the earl and also Max at the beginning. She is also very stubborn and it is hard to make her see reason when her activities become more dangerous. I did enjoy seeing her stand up to Max when he needed it.

I loved the development of their relationship. It started out as friendship and Max's sense of justice compelled him to help her regain the castle. As they spent days together working on the village repairs, that friendship started to change. There had been sparks of attraction from the start, but both tried to ignore them, until they became too strong to do so. It wasn't too long until they were taking every chance they could get to get their hands on each other. But both have very definite views on the idea of a relationship. Max is a soldier who has seen too much death and unhappiness. He doesn't intend to marry because he never wants to put a woman through the grief of losing her husband. Murian has no intention of deserting her people, and falling for a man who cannot stay in Scotland is something she doesn't want. But hearts can't be denied, and decisions will have to be made. When the end came, Max's solution was perhaps implausible, but definitely romantic. I thoroughly enjoyed the epilogue, both for the view of their future and the setup for the next book.

I also adored the Grand Duchess. She is quite the piece of work, with very definite opinions and her own set of morals. Her part in the confrontation with the bandits was hilarious, especially when it came to the chickens. She also had her own reasons for wanting to visit Rowallen Castle, though Max had a terrible time getting her to tell him the whole story. I just had to shake my head when she finally got around to telling it all. She also has quite the mind of her own, and no qualms about using her Gypsy heritage to bend people to her will (something about turning people into goats gets their attention). Her appearance in Murian's village was unexpected, and watching her and Murian put their heads together for their own plan to find their missing items was pretty funny, as was Max's reaction.

The mystery of the truth behind Robert's death and the loss of the castle was very well done. The earl was definitely a bad guy with no redeeming value. His actions against the Grand Duchess were also so very wrong, and the discovery that she wasn't the only one to lose to him at cards wasn't really a surprise. I loved how he got what was coming to him at the end, with the coup de grace coming from an unexpected connection to Max's other reason for being there.

I also loved the descriptions and characterizations of the other members of Murian's village. Each one was unique with their own personalities and quirks. I loved Ian's protectiveness toward all of them, and how he tried to keep Murian from going too wild with her plans. I also enjoyed the various widows and their attempts to push Murian and Max together.

Julie says

The Prince and I, by Karen Hawkins is a 2015 Pocket Books publication. I was provided a copy of this book as an XOXpert, the official street team of XOXO After Dark.

The Prince and I, is a divine and enchanting spin on the Robin Hood/ Maid Marion story.

Murian is a widow whose castle was stolen from her family by an evil Earl. With the help of her loyal friends, she is determined to sneak into Rowallen castle as often as possible in an attempt to find her late husband's journal, which is she is positive holds evidence against the Earl.

Disguised as highwaymen, Murian and her motley crew of friends stops the prince of Oxenburg, only things go off script and a duel is called. When Murian best the Prince, then escapes, he is determined to find her. But, when he finally locates her, he sees a lovely, red haired beauty in a bad situation. So, Gregori Maksim Romanovin, the Prince of Oxenberg, decides to come to her rescue.

The price is traveling with his elderly grandmother who also has a bone to pick with the earl, after losing something quite valuable in a card game.

What a fun story! Karen Hawkins has always written stories laced with wit and humor and this one is no exception.

The Prince's grandmother was absolutely hilarious and was a scene stealer a time or two.

The Prince is bogged down with the after effects of war, having had to deliver too many death notices to wives, but he is also suffering deep grief over the loss of his best friend. He is so numbed by it all, he has decided he couldn't risk love or marriage because he may not be able to promise forever.

Murian is sharp, strong, and brave, a real spitfire, full of life, determined to prove the truth behind her husband's death, never stopping to consider the risk to her own personal safety.

The perfectly paced story of action and adventure, with a little side order of intrigue, also offers up some keen dialogue, and clever plotting, especially since the Robin Hood theme is at play.

I really needed a fairytale romance this week, so this was a timely read for me. I knew Karen Hawkins would come through, because her novels are the perfect choice for a light romantic adventure.
