



Tempting the Laird

Julia London

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Mystery and desire cloak the Scottish Highlands

Unruly. Unmarried. Unapologetic. Catriona Mackenzie's reputation precedes her everywhere she goes. Her beloved late aunt Zelda taught Cat to live out loud and speak her mind, and that's exactly what she does when Zelda's legacy—a refuge for women in need—comes under fire. When her quest puts her in the path of the disturbingly mysterious Hamlin Graham, Duke of Montrose, Cat is soon caught up in the provocative rumors surrounding the dark duke. Never one to retreat, Cat boldly goes where no one else has dared for answers.

Shrouded in secrets, a hostage of lies, Hamlin must endure the fear and suspicion of those who believe he is a murderer. The sudden disappearance of his wife and the truth he keeps silent are a risk to his chances at earning a coveted parliamentary seat. But he's kept his affairs tightly held until a woman with sparkling eyes and brazen determination appears unexpectedly in his life. Deadly allegations might be his downfall, but his unleashed passion could be the duke's ultimate undoing.

Tempting the Laird Details

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From Reader Review Tempting the Laird for online ebook

Frankie Reviews says

Oh, my word! This is incredibly good! I have been a fan of Julia London's work for ages now and I have been avidly reading this 'Highland Grooms' series with relish but this, I have to say is the best of the series, so far. I will admit that the last book; Aulay's story didn't live up to the previous book's, after reading Rabbie's and Cailean's stories I didn't think that this series could get any better and along come Catriona and Hamlin.

After her auntie Zelda's death, Catriona is left to run Kishorn Abbey on her own, for it is in fact a refuge for women who for whatever reason need a safe place to turn to. Catriona has had a lot to deal with, she was by her auntie Zelda's side through her illness and slowly she withdrew from society and public life and now she is practically a shell of what she used to be. To an extent that her family are worried, she is drinking heavily, unsociable and severely unhappy. She maybe proud of her spinsterhood and the fact that she doesn't want or need a man in her life, deep down she is lonely.

Which is why they plot against her and send her to recuperate at her uncle Knox's, Catriona doesn't intend to spend her days lounging about she fully intends to get her wealthy English uncle's support to help save Kishorn Abbey from being taken by the crown. But her well laid out plan's soon take a turn when she meets the mysterious and devilishly handsome Duke of Montrose. As soon as she sees him across the Inn for the first time in years she feels alive and intrigued by something.

Hamlin Graham is living under a dark and heavy cloud, of secrets, lies and scandal after the disappearance of his wife all of society think's that Hamlin murdered her. He has lived with that hanging over his head, it has tarnished his reputation blackened his good name and now driven him to live a lonely and isolated life. It would all be well and good if he didn't have his hopes set on gaining his seat in Parliament, after all Scotland were only allowed a handful of seats and he wanted one. He had plans to help and he could only do that once he gained that seat. But the scandal in his past and the secret he holds close to his heart are standing in his way.

That is until he meets feisty, determined kindred spirit; Catriona. Who brings the sunshine back into his dark life and makes his once dead heart begin to beat again. Catriona is the only one that knows Hamlin wouldn't have killed his wife, he may be a huge, brawny and monosyllabic man but he she sees the goodness, she knows beneath that rude persona there lies a gentle, sensitive man.

Oh, my goodness, what a stud! Hamlin is soooo swoon-worthy, he ruggedly handsome. Kind, generous, dark and brooding. Plus, he is very good with his hands in more ways than just welding a hammer to fix his own roof, he isn't your stereotypical duke. Part man part devil and when he looks at Catriona with those dark/black soulful eyes you melt. He is dark uncivilised and equally as sad as Catriona, they are a match made in heaven!

This really is so good, wonderful storyline that keeps you hooked, and keeps you turning those pages to find out what happens'. Character's that are engaging, intriguing and it's a joy to watch as their relationship blossoms and their personal characters develop.

As I said in the beginning of the review, this is the best of the series, it's thrilling, romantic, sexy with two of the best character's. London has outdone herself with this, it is perfection!

This was an ARC copy via the Author's PA in exchange for an honest review.

Tracy Emro says

Catriona "Cat" MacKenzie is mourning the loss of her beloved Aunt Zelda when a representative of the crown arrives and informs her father that the abbey Zelda used to house homeless women and children is being seized by the crown. Zelda was accused of treason for sheltering rebels after the battle of Culloden and therefore the abbey is being forfeited to England. Cat is furious, she had planned on continuing her aunt's work and will not accept the loss of the abbey. Her mother suggests going to visit her uncle Knox, the Earl of Norwood, he knows everyone and might be able to help her.

Hamlin Graham, the Duke of Montrose is a murderer, if gossip is to be believed. Cat is fascinated by the tale of his marriage and the disappearance of his wife and decides to learn the truth. She doesn't really believe he killed his wife, but the woman is missing, so something happened! She meets Hamlin and his delightful ward Eula when they pay a call to invite him to dine. Hamlin is taken aback by this vivacious woman, she is lovely and very bold, a combination that he is unwillingly drawn to.

Hamlin is basically an outcast, everyone believes he killed his wife Glenna, who was universally adored, but only a couple of people know the truth about her and her disappearance. Hamlin desperately wants to gain a seat in the House of Lords, a feat that seems almost impossible with the rumors of murder floating around. So when he is invited to dinner, his secretary insists that he attend, he needs to convince the voting members of the house, that he should be voted in. He reluctantly goes and is mesmerized by Cat – she is incredible!

They end up spending more and more time together and finally become lovers. Both know that theirs is not a happily ever after love story. He can't marry someone with her tainted background if he wants to get a seat in the Lords and she has the abbey to manage. But neither can seem to walk away. They are so happy together and they begin to contemplate how they can stay together and what they are willing to give up for their love, when the truth of Hamlin's first marriage comes roaring into his life.

Both Cat and Hamlin are heartbroken, but there is no way they can be together without hurting someone. They part and in a surprising moment of compassion, Cat makes an offer that will ensure they are never together, but will guarantee him a seat in the Lords. Hamlin is overwhelmed by Cat's generosity and vows that she will never regret him – he will spend the rest of his life making sure she doesn't.

I really enjoyed this book, but it will rip your heart out and stomp on it – it is entertaining, steamy, witty and heartbreaking. The love between Hamlin and Cat is a beautiful soulmate type love and your heart will break right along with theirs, the secondary characters are delightful, especially Hamlin's ward Eula, the ending is completely breathtaking and sigh worthy! And if that was not enough, there is a wonderful epilogue as well as very informative Author notes and a glossary! While this is the fifth book in the series, but it can absolutely be read as a stand-alone title and I am happy to recommend it.

REVIEWED FOR BURIED UNDER ROMANCE

Jen (That's What I'm Talking About) says

Catriona (Cat) Mackenzie lives her life on her own terms and does not care what polite society thinks. She, along with her Aunt Zelda, runs a shelter for less fortunate women: those that society turned its back to. However, when Zelda passes she not only loses her mentor and partner, Cat discovers the British Crown is going to repossess their make-shift home. Petitioning her English uncle to help with the cause, Cat finds a new mission to occupy her time until she can return home; she plans to uncover the truth about what happened to the Duke of Montrose's beloved wife.

Hamlin Graham, Duke of Montrose, stays in his home with his loyal servants and young ward. The town folks all believe that Montrose sent his darling wife away, or worse... he murdered her! However, the truth is much less thrilling, and more damaging to his reputation, so he lives with the gossip in order to win his bid to enter the House of Lords. Life continues as is until Cat blows into his world, turning it upside-down and breathing new life to his existence.

Tempting the Laird is a lovely standalone romance set in Ms. London's Highland Grooms world. Although we've met Cat in previous titles, readers know nothing of this dynamic heroine. She lives in the shadow of her vast and powerful family, doing work that no others would even consider. She is passionate and kind, with little time for gossip and cruelty. Although this book is set in the past, Cat is very much the modern woman, making her relatable to most current-day readers. I love her strength and the way she can laugh at those who criticize her work and beliefs to her face. And while she is content with her lot, she is also strong enough to understand that in her heart she would like to find the love and happiness her siblings have enjoyed.

Hamlin makes for a wonderful historical hero. A duke of some note, he is shrouded in mystery and carries the burden of gossip over the disappearance of his much beloved wife. No one dares visit his estate, never mind confront him, until Cat arrives. She convinces her uncle that they should pay visit to his closest neighbor, and Cat is instantly taken by Hamlin's direct ways. He's dark, mysterious, a gentleman, and stands up for Cat when others would dismiss her: all very swoon-worthy! Plus he cares for and loves his former wife's abandoned young cousin. He covets his time with Cat and although both know it can't lead to anything, it doesn't keep them from being together and falling in love.

In the end, Tempting the Laird is a lovely historical romance sharing the unlikely pairing of a Highland lass and imposing duke. Their journey is filled with joyous times and difficult decisions. The story flows smoothly from start to end, finishing with an HEA.

My Rating: B+ Liked It A Lot

Originally posted at [That's What I'm Talking About](#)

Review copy provided by Netgalley

Dottie Legatos says

The next installment of Julia London's Highland Grooms series, Tempting the Laird, was one of my favorites so far. I know I say this for all of Julia's books, but she just has a way to make me feel so

comfortably engaged from the first chapter. This story, of Catriona Mackenzie, can be a modern day tale, with a very independent woman who hasn't needed a man to make her life complete. Of course, in 1800's Scotland, she is looked upon as "on the shelf" since she is in her early 30's. Nonetheless, she provides shelter to women and their children who have no place else to go after the Battle of Culloden. Because of politics, the future of the shelter is threatened. This turn of events leads Catriona to meet the Duke of Montrose, who has a very dark past. The relationship between two people who are set in their ways makes this story flow so wonderfully. Two very strong and interesting characters, as well as a cast of secondary characters made this such a delight to read. I highly recommend this book and this series.

Mari says

I liked this one better than the previous book in many ways. Though I've only read a couple of books in this series I can say I liked this one best of them. Catriona is an interesting character, outspoken, fierce, a bit brash yet reclusive. Both she and Hamlin share this sadness about them. Hamlin is secretive, he earned a reputation from the death of his wife, lonely from past events becoming an outcast of sorts. Catriona is intrigued by this man and wants to find the truth behind these claims.

I like that in a way they are kindred spirits yet Catriona is that lovely feeling he needed again. She believes in him despite what people think of his rough appearance. Hamlin is actually great nothing like people assume actually the opposite of his reputation, he may be brooding but definitely good looking but no less kind and giving. There's a depth to him that may come off dark but he and Catriona get each other so it works.

I'm more engaged with this story and makes you keep on reading wanting to know what happens next. Watching Catriona and Hamlin's relationship grow is wonderful. The storyline is not your usual but it's well done and makes you root for the main characters. I grew to like Catriona and her distinctive personality, honest yet a bit different and still likable.

**** Arc provided for an honest review ****

Sofia Lazaridou says

I am going to give 3.5 stars to the book because I feel generous today. The book wasn't one of my liking. I would have loved some romance that actually feels like romance. The developing love between Catriona and the Duke fell short and I would have liked something more passionate. We had many sub-plots that stole the spotlight from the couple. At least we got to see them slowly go from acquaintances to something more, so it's wasn't that insta-love theme that has found its way to the historical romances too. What I like about the highlands is that they are not as restricted as England was at the time and women are able to express themselves more than the average English woman. I loved the duke and his ward. I wish we had more scenes with just the two of them. They were acting like father and daughter and they were cute.

The book was easy to read and I read it very fast. The pace was good, but I wish we had dived a little bit more into the characters and the things that made them act like they did. I also wish we had seen the duke at the parliament since in my head it's a great scene and it would add a lot to his character. With a little hesitation, I would recommend the book.

Pelusa Rivera says

Rcvd an ARC at no cost to author.(netgalley) Man this book will keep you on your toes and I had forgotten how uch I love historical fiction and this one was a doozy my friends..So we have Catriona "Cat" Mackenzie who if you ever read a historical know that at the age of 33 you are on the shelf, considered an old maid and Cat is just that but she is an awesome commendable lady who to me is beyond her time, she lives her life and doesn't really care what anybody thinks, good for Cat. She ends up meeting and falling in love with the "Dark Duke", who has that name due to rumors...There is just so much I can say about this book, but I am going to implore you to read it, you will not be bored..Enjoy!

Rosemary K says

Catriona Mackenzie is a woman on a mission. She needs to save the abbey and the women who are sheltered there. The English King wants it forfeited as a punishment. Can this fiery woman accomplish her goal? Catriona leaps off the page and pulls you in with her passion for life and her desire for social justice. I cared for her. I wanted her to be successful. When she meets the dark Duke, she's intrigued by the mystery surrounding the disappearance of his wife. She doesn't believe the rumors that he killed her. Hamlin may be a Duke but society has shunned him. I sympathized with him. I disliked how he was treated. The way he cared for his ward showed the Duke's real character. Catriona brought love and laughter into his life. Their dialogue was humorous and sassy. These two are perfect together. They deserve happiness. I wasn't sure it was in the cards. Julia London has a writing style that makes these characters come alive. I couldn't put down Tempting the Laird. I fell in love with Catriona and Hamlin.

Stacee says

I had read a few of the other books in this series and couldn't resist.

I liked Catriona and Hamlin. They're both similar in ways I didn't expect and it was delightful seeing them find their happiness. I loved how sassy she was and how stoic he was and how together they were compatible.

Plot wise it was fairly repetitive. Lots of dinners, traveling to and from the dinners, riding to a secret glen, riding back from the secret glen, and so on. I get that a good portion of this story was that Catriona needed to have some time for her own life, but it was boring.

Overall, it was a quick read with more drama than I would have liked, however, the characters really carried the story and kept me reading.

****Huge thanks to HQN Books for providing the arc free of charge****

Esther says

ARC provided by NetGalley and Publisher. I voluntarily read and reviewed an advanced copy of this book. All thoughts and opinions are my own

Review closer to publication date.

Sissy's Romance Book Review says

Tempting the Laird by Julia London is book Five in the Highland Grooms series. This is the story of Catriona 'Cat' Mackenzie and Hamlin Graham, Duke of Montrose. I have read the previous book but feel this can easily be a standalone book.

Cat is mourning the loss of her Aunt Zelda when they get word that the abbey that Zelda housed women and children to help they is being taken by the Crown because Zelda was thought to be a treason for sheltering rebels after the battle of Culloden. Cat's mother speaks of Uncle Knox, the Earl of Norwood might be able to help her. This puts her on a path to meet Hamlin who is rumored to have killed his wife and lives on the fringe of society now. Hamlin is taken back by the outspoken Cat who doesn't seem to hold or believe his reputation against him. Cat always thought that she was happy but meeting Hamlin has awoken a need in her that she didn't know she had.

This was a book that was so hard to put down...you just wanted to know what would happen next and would they get their happy ending.

Loved it!

eyes.2c says

The shadowed duke!

What a great read! I loved the character of Catriona Mackenzie, aka Cat. Her passion for her cause, her humor, her way of disarming a situation. The brooding yet resigned duke, Hamlin Graham, Duke of Montrose, who the neighborhood is convinced murdered his wife. His ward Eula is such a poppet. It was charming the way Eula insisted on calling him Montrose and each time he would patiently correct her. As when Eula was tying the Duke's silk neckcloth,

' "You look very fine, Montrose," [Eula] said, eyeing him closely. "Your grace," he reminded her. "Your grace Montrose," she returned with a pert smile.'

To be applauded and noted is that Cat is older than most leading ladies, in her early thirties, and, 'For whatever reason, fate had not seen fit to lead her to drink from the trough of marital bliss, and now, frankly, it was too late.' So Cat turned her energies elsewhere.

As I said before Cat is stout hearted and particularly passionate about those she's set out to help. Cat and her Aunt Zelda have sustained Kishorn Abbey as a safe place in the Highlands for abused and discarded women. When her aunt dies, the English authorities want to seize the abbey (the Culloden retributions continuing).

Cat is in Edinburgh visiting her uncle and trying to fight that decree.

In the midst of all this happens the troubled Montrose. Our Cat is ripe for falling in love. Montrose is a brooding man with a tender heart, and Cat is drawn to him like a moth to flame.

Their dance is lively, with lightening flashes and despairing shadows when trouble comes calling.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

I knew it was going to take a special someone for Catriona MacKenzie to fall in love with and *Tempting the Laird* tells us that story of her finding the love she's been long waiting for. Catriona MacKenzie has been sheltering women and children at an abbey after the Battle of Culloden and has recently been told that it is being seized by the English. She turns to her Uncle Knox for help and hopes he and his connections can get this act overturned. She meets her uncle's neighbor, the Duke of Montrose, Hamlin Graham, and hears the rumors that he is a murderer for killing his wife. Is this the truth or is he holding another secret close to his vest? She's going to do what she can to figure out the truth.

Hamlin Graham is about to get voted into the House of Lords and doesn't want anything in his personal life to prevent him from getting accepted but rumors surround him. What he can't escape is Catriona. When Catriona introduces herself and barges into his life every chance she gets he finds it harder to keep his feelings in check because she makes him want things he didn't think he'd ever have in his life. Love, family and children. Catriona makes special effort to help him with his young ward, Eula, and Eula couldn't help but to fall under the spell of her loving attention. Eula connected Hamlin and Catriona in the beginning but then they find any excuse to be together. Hamlin wasn't a complicated man but had a big responsibility of his dukedom and felt the constraint society held him in check. Only with Catriona he allowed himself to feel as a man and not the Duke. His grand gesture at the end just shows me how much she meant to him to stand up for her and face any consequences.

Catriona is a wonderfully written character because she is more than the outspoken and independent woman and her depths are slowly revealed. You get glimpses of her many layers of this complicated woman. She may have the independent streak like her aunt Zelda but she wants a family and love of a man as well but the times made it difficult for her to find one. I love that she doesn't feel sorry for herself but makes the best of her situation and moves on. Her love affair with Hamlin might have started as a summer romance but quickly turned into something more when she found herself falling deeply in love with him. Catriona is a lucky lady that she was allowed so much leeway growing up surrounded by family and loved ones. She has a big heart and wanted to help as many people as she can, even those that don't deserve it.

Tempting the Laird is an all-consuming passionate romance and the author swept me away with the storytelling. There was drama and mystery, passion and love, and had me well engrossed into finishing it long into the night. I could not have asked for a better story for one of my favorite characters. The love she has waited for finally came and it is everything that she wanted for her life.

Donna says

Catriona Mackenzie helped her now deceased Aunt Zelda give women and children shelter after the battle of Culloden as they had no other place to go. They lived at Zelda's Kishorn lodge far into the Highlands and used a partially destroyed abbey for the women and children. While celebrating her Aunt's life, Rhona MacFarlane who works in the abbey, arrives to tell her they have visitors. Years after Culloden, it seems that

the crown wants the Abbey and she has 6 months to vacate. Her father informs the government agent that they were loyal subjects and there has been no aiding or abetting on his land. Her mother advises her to go to her Uncle Knox, an English Earl who has a small estate in Scotland and is currently there with several guests. Her Aunt had left a letter for him and when she delivers it, he may be able to help her keep the Abbey.

While visiting her uncle, she meets the mysterious Duke of Montrose, Hamlin Graham, and his 10-year-old ward, Eula Guinne. Eula is a cousin to his deceased wife. She likes the Duke and wants to solve the mystery of his wife. Eula adores her, and Catriona spends time with her, and Hamlin. She likes that his politics align with hers and other things about him. But there are questions to be answered (is his wife dead or alive?) and problems to be solved (what happens to women at the abbey?) before they reach their HEA. You'll have a roller coaster ride of emotions. I think this is one of Julia London's best and it will be on my keeper shelf. I loved it and can highly recommend it. Thanks to the author and publisher for allowing me an ARC.

Malissa says

This is one of those books in a series that you anticipate from the very first book, yet have to wait until the end or near end to get it, but it is always so worth the wait. Catriona, the outspoken, determined sister of the Mackenzie clan finally get's her story but not with out great cost to her emotionally.

I adored this story because it gives us a headstrong woman who is not afraid to live her life by her own rules. A woman who is not afraid to fight for those she loves and for those who can not fight for themselves. She is a woman who has a gentle soul, a woman who fears that she will never have the dreams she aspired to as a young woman, but will create new dreams for herself and will not be put 'on the shelf' just because she is a grown woman with no wanted prospect for marriage. I also love that her family standby her though they worry for her. There could not be any easy love for dear Catriona, it would take a man just as head strong, just as compelling, just as beautiful inside and out to capture this characters heart and wow do we get him, Hamlin, the Duke of Montrose!

Hamlin, is a man who is living a lie...a lie that he allows to be perpetuated because he can not tell the truth. While a dark cloud may surround him do to secrets untold Hamlin is a bright spot in this story. I instantly fell in love with his heart and soul, his compassion for his ward and the people who rely on him.

Hamlin and Catriona's story is one of fighting against their times societal expectations, rules, and norms. It was at times heartbreaking to see their love suffer because of the ideals of other people but I love how they still managed to come together, to find a way to make not only their love work but also their dreams for the future of their country and it's people, especially the disenfranchised. I loved the passion of these two, both that they had for each other and also that they had for making their world a better place. It's hard to really put into words how wonderful I think this story is for not only the romance but for what the author is showing us about the shaping of society, as well as a reminder of how we need to be more gracious in our own dealing with people who have 'lost all' and have no one left to turn to, especially toward the ones that deserve your grace the least..though I will say my vindictive side wouldn't have minded a little less happiness in the end for a certain some one, but again, this book is a nice reminder of why I need to set that little devil on my shoulder to the side. ;-)

On top off all that there is Uncle Knox, oh Uncle Knox, how I adore you. His gregariousness, his love for his

family, his honor, his generosity...but even more now, how I love him for what he gave up. I wish that we could see him getting an HEA especially knowing now all that he walked away from so he could be the man he is 'today'. It is a bit heartbreaking in truth and I wonder how much pain he hides behind his boisterous personality.

It was lovely getting a small glimpse at all the couples that came before Catriona, to see how they thrive and continue to grow. I have come to love this little Scottish (or not so little) family, their loves, and their trials. Tempting the Laird is a truly sweet romance, with a touching story that transcends the 'simpleness' of romantic love and gives us a story of suffering and triumph over other's expectations. If you are a fan of Historical Romance these books are a must read and they can be read as standalone, though as I often say, you might as well start at the beginning because when you finish this one and fall in love with these characters you'll want to go back and read them all.

~ HAPPY READING ~
