



Enlightened

Joanna Chambers

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This is a second edition of a book previously published by Samhain Publishing.

David Lauriston has been recuperating at Lord Murdo Balfour's Laverock estate for the last five months. At Laverock, he has regained his health and confidence and has found—with Murdo—more happiness and contentment than he has never known before.

David is all too aware that some day soon he will have to leave Laverock—and Murdo—and return to his legal practice in Edinburgh, just as Murdo will have to return to his life in London. But when David's mentor, Patrick Chalmers, asks David to return to Edinburgh to visit him on his deathbed, it seems that day has come sooner than either David or Murdo would have wished.

Chalmers begs David to undertake one last piece of business for him: to secure the future of Chalmers's daughter Elizabeth. But to carry out his old mentor's wishes, David must travel to London, with Murdo.

No sooner have the two men arrived in the capital than they encounter Murdo's ruthlessly manipulative father, who reveals a shocking secret that rocks David to his foundations. What's more, when David discovers Elizabeth is facing far greater danger than even her father feared, he is determined to help her, no matter the cost to his own safety.

As the stakes rise, it is Murdo who must choose what he is prepared to sacrifice to keep David at his side, and ask whether there is any possibility of lasting happiness for men like them.

Enlightened Details

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From Reader Review Enlightened for online ebook

K.J. Charles says

I adore this series, and this is a brilliant ending. Beautifully written, emotional, moving, but what's really impressive is the way the series as a whole is handled. So that what seems to be a minor subplot in book 1 and then a key plot element extraneous to the main relationship in book 2 becomes the solution to everything in book 3. This is a proper trilogy, with the relationship's progression and the rolling plot elements really well handled, while each book is intensely satisfying individually. You don't have to try many trilogies to see quite how hard that is to pull off.

Not an easy solution, and we see the cost of David and Murdo's HEA, but we have no trouble believing they're both happy to pay it.

I glommed this book in a sitting. I can't recommend this trilogy enough (don't give me 'I don't like historicals', you'll like this) and I am grumpy that it's over.

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

Love should not be denied.

I'm not sure how I'll recover from this series. I've read some remarkable historicals but this was exceptional and I fear my book hangover will be epic.

I read these in succession. Honestly, I don't know how you could read one and not them all. They're like potato chips and I'm infinitely grateful I did not have to wait between... chips. Provoked set the stage and drew me into this world just on the tail end of the Regency period in Scotland. Edinburgh plays as large a role in *Enlightenment* as any character which is told from David Lauriston's perspective. We follow him on a journey of self-discovery as he falls in love with Lord Murdo Balfour and finds his truest self.

David is a self-made man. He chose to go to university to study law rather than stay on his family's farm. He's... difficult, peevish. His views on the world and his place in it are practical and somewhat inflexible. He's got a vision of his life and, though lonely, he's committed to it. His morals don't allow much leeway thus he's decided to never marry and have to live a lie. He's gay and self-loathing about it because he's been indoctrinated in the fire and brimstone which makes his future happiness seem an unlikelihood if not an outright impossibility. This time period, as confining and provincial as it most certainly is, makes for a brilliant canvas on which to paint an exquisite romance filled with sexual tension, that lingers in the memory and is what keeps me coming back to this genre again and again.

He'd been convinced that his fascination with the act, his desire for other men, was a sign of a weak and sinful nature. Something to be suppressed at all costs.

I can't even imagine how difficult it would be to believe oneself anything other than abhorrent when constantly inundated with the sentiment that homosexuality is not only a sin but a crime, a crime with a hefty penalty. Chambers did a tremendous job of making this worldview the cornerstone of David's character. David's beliefs are based as much on the law as the views regarding homosexuality and his being a lawyer makes them that much more ingrained. Thus he only allows himself the occasional furtive and anonymous tryst then hates himself afterwards and turns to scotch as a panacea.

Murdo is David's opposite. He's hedonistic, charismatic, outgoing, witty, wealthy and maybe a little rakish. The Romantic Rascal, as it were. He's so easy to like. So easy. But I loved them both equally. Murdo's character isn't simplistic but he wears his heart on his sleeve which made him easy for me to read so I didn't mind not having his perspective. I think he fell in love with David during their first meeting that segued into a debauched back alley blow job.

“God, but I want to do everything to you. I want you in my hand. I want you in my mouth. I want to bury my tongue inside you and fuck you forever.”

David is such a challenge for him, though, and I think his pulling away was a way of protecting himself from heartbreak. When I realized that two years had elapsed between Provoked and Beguiled, I think I maybe had a touch of the vapors! But in those two years both evolved. Happenstance throws them together and from their first meeting I was riveted and ultimately dazzled by the second installment. I felt as though my heart were being basted with romance. Two years may have passed but it's clear neither of them forget the other.

The touch of Murdo's mouth made him feel alive, his neglected body given meaning by the attentive desire of his lover. Each kiss saying, you are here, in this world, with me.

Make no mistake, David and Murdo are the centerpiece of this series, but the inclusion of the cast of characters that make up David's inner circle drives the plot forward. These characters were all well constructed, can just as easily break as warm your heart and how their lives intersect with David's and Murdo's made for a couple of verklemp moments. I found I rather enjoyed the bird's eye view over the more commonplace myopic stories that focus entirely on the couple and their coupletry. It enhanced David, and to a lesser extent Murdo's, characterizations by showing how far they are willing to go in the service of a friend and each other thereby making for a richer story altogether.

One such act of selflessness leads them to Perthshire, Murdo's newly acquired estate, for a good portion of *Enlightened* where they've lapsed into an easy domesticity filled with fishing and walks in the country and unruffling some neighbors' feathers.

What moved me, and is making this series so difficult to let go of, were the subtle changes both these characters made due to the other's influence over the course of their story, how they begin to find a way if for no other reason than not to do so would leave them both heartbroken and their futures bleak. I do so love couples who bring out the best in each other and make each other happy. They still disagree and are truly awful at communicating their feelings but when it does finally happen, it's glorious. And so them.

Somehow, Murdo had become more important to him than anything else. Everything he'd worked for- respectability, a shining career, wealth-all of it would be ashes in his mouth if he lost Murdo.

"To hell with what I deserve," Murdo whispered. "All I want is you."

There is sex and chemistry between them, obviously, and it had its moments, but I think what I liked more than anything was how Murdo cossets David and how comfortable they are with one another. All the small, quiet moments between them-Murdo rubbing David's leg with liniment, pestering him about using the cane, David wearing Murdo's old clothes to go fishing, all the peccadilloes that you know and accept about another person that you live with and the rhythm of their shared life. All those things made it crystal clear how in love they are and how perfectly they fit together, but go unrecognized or are taken for granted until one is faced with the possibility of losing it forever. Their level of comfort truly shone in the epilogue. The epilogue that killed me dead.

The prose is lovely and stays true to the time with Chambers folding in a multitude of historical details that strengthened the narrative. I also really loved all the Scottish details-the streets, the cobblestones, the wet, the tiny pubs, Sir Walter, the kilts, the scotch-all reminded me of a wonderful vacation and how much I loved Edinburgh.

The whole series is magnificent and if you're a historical romance reader *Enlightenment* is simply a must read.

Review copies were provided.

Shile says

All the stars for the whole damn series

This book! This series!

The writing just flows, it was like i was transported to another amazing universe.

The Sex! The Sex!

Murdo! Murdo!

"It's just, I've loved you for so long, David.

assdjijldklkjldlnddjfjgsisspsshjnjjgfiufddbbfgnnbvvfgfdhjjkjjyfdhgruhgfdssfhjkkjffffddhjkjklknjfdsdsfhjjdkkddkld!!!!

Murdo! Murdo! Murdo!

Murdo and David! Murdo and David!

Just.. just...

I am just going to leave this here:

He grinned at that, his black eyes gleaming with humour, and David was swamped, quite suddenly, by a wave of helpless love and affection. Love for this complex, sometimes difficult man who was, nevertheless, capable of great kindness.

This man who'd once said to David, "Don't try to find a virtue in me, Lauriston. You won't."

David reached across the white tablecloth and took hold of Murdo's hand, lifting it up to his mouth to graze a kiss across the knuckles, loving the warmth of the skin his lips brushed, and the strength in the long fingers that curved about his own.

Murdo looked briefly puzzled by David's affectionate behaviour, but when David went to draw away, he tightened his hold on David's hand, and they stayed like that for a long while, finishing their ale and watching the fire burn down to nothing but ash.

Ok

Ami says

Joanna Chambers "*Enlightenment*" series have definitely opened my eyes to the wonder of MM historical romance and easily become one of my all time favorites. This story is the PERFECT ending to the whole trilogy.

"**Enlightened**" continues few months after the ending of *Beguiled*. David has been living with Murdo while he recuperates and it has been the happiest time of his life. I love the development of David -- he still has an endearing ingenuity flair, but he has definitely grown as well. Oh, David still has sense of justice and do the

right thing but he is willing to admit that he wants Murdo for himself as well.

While Murdo ... what can I say, he just wins me over. The moment he says "*Nothing about you could ever be ugly to me*" (which HELLO, similar words have been said by Jake to Adrien from Adrien English series!), there is no doubt in my mind that Murdo is completely besotted and in love with David. Even when there is the surprising news about him comes to light, I never worry. He will make it right somehow.

Then there's the problem with Elizabeth and Euan, and Elizabeth's husband. Let me just say that the resolution for that is well done. Another thing that makes Murdo a hero in my eyes.

I know my review is shorter compared to the ones I wrote for the previous two but I simply cannot say anything else. Sometimes when the book is that good, you are just rendered speechless. So I will just say that it's a perfect romantic tale and one of the most satisfying MM stories I've read. I have no complaints. It's flawless in every single way. Definitely one of those that deserves my 5-stars.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

I am enlightened.

There are some books that stay with you, and this book is going to stay with me for a very long time.

The Enlightenment series is one that you shouldn't begin unless you are prepared to dig into all three books. **In truth, they are all like one very large book that has been split up into three pieces.** You really need to read all of them to get the full story and appreciate the full breadth of the romance.

Joanna Chambers did an excellent job plotting this series because each book grows and builds on one another until the pieces slot together and make perfect sense at the end.

This is a series for readers who want an epic romance. Enlightened is a story of a hard-fought happily ever after, a story of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles and emerging victorious. It is a story that restores hope in *love conquers all* and makes you want to grab the ones you care about and never let them go. It is just a really special story, one that you have to experience for yourself.

The story isn't mushy or sappy or overly affectionate or extremely sexual. It is everything in balance. It is smart writing, smart characters, and an ending that will make you clutch your chest with a prickle in your eye.

Enlightened, and the entire series, is historical romance done right. And it won't let you down.

Copy provided by the author in exchange for an honest review

Judith says

PERFECTION

“It’s just, I’ve loved you for so long, David. I really didn’t think you felt the same way.”

I've been fully immersed in David and Murdo's story this week and my only regret is that I didn't finish this series sooner.

Trust me, if you're a fan of MM romance and Historical romance this series is a MUST read.

I'm very late to the party here, there are so many great reviews about so I'll just say....MURDO....I honestly couldn't love a character more...

I feel as though I should be quoting Shakespeare...something profound to explain how much I adored this character but I'll just show how much I was into him,

(view spoiler)

Highly Recommended!!

~Volha~ says

I can honestly say that this is one of the best historical male/male novels that I have read. It's so genuine, so riveting - it's a historical page turner. It was a joy to spend time with Murdo and David. The best part about the book was finally seeing David accepting that he deserves happiness, that it's right here for the taking and finally grabbing it with both hands. And finally seeing Murdo's walls crumble down and his true self shine.

The book starts off some time after the event of the previous one with David still recovering at Murdo's estate. This gives both men a glimpse at the life they could have, at how happy they can be. But real life has a way of spoiling people's dreams and David and Murdo have to go back and face the reality and the fact that they might never see each other again. But I think Fate intervenes this time and keeps them together. Murdo is just a sweetheart under all the layers of aristocratic posturing and ennui. He tries to keep himself in check but we already know what's hidden underneath and it all comes spilling through the cracks in his facade especially when they reach London and all the nasty family intrigue and secrets come to light.

It's hard to see them both struggle but I am glad they decide to fight for who they love - for each other. David is promise bound to help Elizabeth and Euan and Murdo, the honorable man that he is, is always there to be that pillar of support to hold everyone up. He is always there for David. In the end it's his ingenuity and wit that breaks the chains that hold him captive and save David's friends who also become his own.

We finally see how both David and Murdo changed, how much they love each other and how wonderful life can be and they jump off the cliff together. The ending is lovely, sweet and oh so romantic. The picture of domestic bliss made me very lighthearted. Knowing that everybody is happy and content was the best! I loved this series and I highly recommend it! It's good for the soul!

Susan says

Book 3 in what has become one of my favorite series, *Enlightened* is...perfect.

It *kills* me how much I love this book....this story, this couple, this author. The writing is so precise...a story told so perfectly, giving the reader a true essence of the time period, the emotions and the struggles of the characters, the conflicts/turmoil both inside and outward...it's hard not to be completely lost in this book.

David & Murdo...THEIR LOVE...urghewlekjelkjewe0...just so freaking good! The EMOTION...I'm completely verklempt...I just...can't...GAH!!!!

The treat of this series is the growth of the characters, the 2 MC's separately, them together as a couple, and even all the supporting characters...it's a journey you get to take with them...and it's so worth it. But really...the true highlight is being witness to the BRAVERY it took for David and Murdo to be together and how much they committed to it, despite fear or doubt. And the glorious ending...THIS IS A TRUE CLASSIC ROMANCE!

I really can't gush enough about HOW MUCH I love this series. Joanna Chambers writes...deliberately and with purpose...but makes it feel effortless.

This series converted a non-historical-romance reader...and now all I can think about is horse-drawn carriages in Scottish countrysides.

You can also read Sara's review of the book at:

Ingie says

Written May 8, 2014

4 1/2 Lovely Stars - A great last part to an wonderful historical gay love-tale in 3 amazing good books

Book #3

I'm in love in these gorgeous men and this Enlightenment series.

The last part *Enlightened* was no exception.

Another funny, heartbreaking, tender romance story about two male lovebirds - David & Murdo, a love couple I'm not going to forget in a long time. ~ Yummy sweet and so very well told.

Big applause to a great romance tale, *Joanna Chambers* .

I'm a big admirer of the two first books;

#1 Provoked (4.5 stars) and #2 Beguiled (5 stars)

and for the first time ever I actually dared to wrote a letter to an author and I asked for the honor to get an ARC copy to read for an honest review. Ms Cambers was very nice and polite, answered and sent me a copy of her new novel.

Thank you, Ms Chambers! I'm so pleased you trusted me with this copy.

...Of course I planned to read this ARC book a bit earlier (view spoiler)

...My F.I.R.S.T. review written thousands of meters up in the sky (somewhere over the big Russia...).

...Perthshire Scotland - Laverock House 1823

This last installment in this *Enlightenment* series take off half a year after we left these men in book #2.

David Lauriston was injured in Edinburgh (view spoiler) and his lover **Lord Murdo Balfour** took him to his country estate, *Laverock House* to recuperate. David still limp and his hip and knee aches a bit but he have truly had the best time in his life these months with Murdo.

‘..., the richest, happiest monhts of all his life, he admitted to himself, in a single trunk.’

I don't want to tell too much about the plot but, as always in these books, it was both tender, steamy and grandly romantic. And as in the previous books added with some exciting "thrilling" moments. We will again meet some of David's dear friends and get to know more about what happened to them all.

As always is this beautiful David man a bit stubborn, so very careful and almost a bit 'slow' in his hopes for him and Murdo. He don't even dare to think that they maybe could have a chance to a good chared (loving and hopefully HEA..) life together. He is still so afraid and angsty about Murdo's plans of his (theirs) future.

To be fair, David maybe has to be, but sometimes he actually made me a bit sulky when he didn't tell Murdo why he was sad, felt angry or hesitated etc. ~ **Why don't men even try to talk to each other?** Anyone here who can explain that? ~ ...but of course I loved him this third time as well. David is a truly sweet and very pleasant man.

Lord Murdo on the other hand is the big, sexy alpha hunk and a very brave Scottish (...'Oh Yeah' a real highlander) hero. He is just amazing ~ everything a smut reader (like me) could whish for.

The lord didn't dissapoint this time either. Murdo was just so awesome cute, tender and in a gentlemanly way took care of a lot of important 'things' and the grand love of his life. ~ A true *larger-than-life hero* as my nice GR friend SueBee usally call 'them'.

'It was just breathing at first; their lips resting together, the air from their mouths mingling.
Impossible intimacy. Impossible tenderness.
So unbearably sweet it was a barb in David's heart. He felt it like a physical pain, like physical joy.'

I sincerely recommend this historical M/M series. **The very best in it's kind.** This third part *Enlightened* was a big enjoy to read from the first to the last page. The story just flow over the pages and I just wanted more. ~ I truly belive in these two mens love and future together. I will miss them.

"So you'll come back with me, then?" he whispered. "To Laverock?"

If you want to try a smexy gay romance, set in Scotland two hundreds years ago, don't hesitate; - Go and "grabb" the first book "Provoked". It may be three books (view spoiler), but don't let that scare you, they are not that long and very easy to read.

These novels are all filled with so much joy and fun, witty banters, a lot of dialogue, some suspense, thoughts about important (human rights) issues, huge feelings, believable lovely (and some nasty) characters and of course -as every great 'nowadays' romance - they are also filled with smexy yummy moments.

I've big hopes and am so much looking forward to more enjoying gay romances, set in older days, from this authors talented pen. ~ Cross my fingers then it's somewhat hard to find a lot of really good M/M HR. A genre I love.

I LIKE - enormously - a grand series finale

~~~~~

*ARC kindly provided by the author, in exchange for an honest review.*

Woot!! - Joanna told me in a email that she "...may write a short 1.5 story (ie between books 1 and 2) from Murdo's POV this year..." Please, I'm already waiting for it!! I so want to know more about the year Murdo spent in London.

The Enlightenment series:

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### **Ele says**

What did we learn from this experience? We learnt that Renee is always right, and we should never doubt her.

I'm utterly in love with this series. Undoubtedly my favorite historical after A Seditious Affair. The resolution was BRILLIANT. Read it!

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### **Jan says**

\*\*\*\* 4.5 Stars \*\*\*\*

I have a weird aversion with historical. They are not my cuppa and I don't really know why since the few I remember reading - mostly by Anne Stuart - were really good.

Enlightenment series is another winner to add to my little historical collection. I had a blast with them. Not really a surprise with so many fantastic reviews by my friends. However, I wasn't expecting to read one book after the other with no breaks in between.

This last book was genius! All the pieces falling in the right place, nothing forced or OTT. It was brilliantly done and I loved that.

The story put me to think though. Not only romance wise (love between 2 males) but also what meant to be a woman in those days.

What can I say people? The world came a long way since that times and I am over the fucking moon about that!

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### **Jerry says**

4.5 stars

I love novels where I am totally involved with the characters and immersed in their time and place. This was quite the arch of a story over three books and quite the love story at that. Beautifully written, full of the vocabulary of the time with the food, customs, manners, dress and scandal as well!

At times I get quite peeved when a story is divided into multiple books, but this is such a gem that I am quite willing to pay top dollar for it.

I am sure there were men like Murdo and David in real life, but could they have really had this actual life? I am a gay man living in a time where I can be out with my marriage to my husband (of almost 35 years) to

our neighbors, friends, family, work and even church. It is therefore hard to imagine this time and place where everything had to be concealed. The romantic in me wants to believe it could have been like this. Recommended to those who believe in love.

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### **Sofia says**

This being a trilogy I decided that I'll write one review for all the books which I read back to back. I've kept one rating throughout the 3 books to reflect this as well.

Idealistic, pragmatic, chivalrous David meets Murdo. Both come from a land of fleeting one time encounters and they now struggle with the surprising need for more. A struggle, which makes them question their beliefs, values and way of life. So we get the push and pull of their wrestling with this new need in their lives, playing hot and cold with allowing themselves a taste of more and then denying it.

I liked that the story is played out at a real time pace with no insta-love. It's full of the usual h/f tropes but Chambers made it work for me. I think this was due to the fact that although the story has melodramatic goings on, this is left to the actual things happening. The characters themselves David and Murdoch are not melodramatic. They do not wear their hearts on their sleeves and are not prone to vapours so they end up being very relatable. Both of them are the kind of people who I admire. People who do not sit back and let life and other people beat at them and then turn to us for us to pity them. An example of this was Murdo doing what was necessary to gain his financial independence from his father. Or his realising that what he was holding on to was not what he needed and having the gumption to let go, change and continue. That's the kind of everyday heroes I admire. Men and women who find solutions, adapt to needs and circumstances and continue without a lot of yodelling about.

BR marathon with Maya, Therese and Irina. Thanks for the fantastic read girls.

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### **Simone says**

*"David," he said, when they broke apart. "David."  
He said David's name like it meant something all on its own.  
Like a vow.  
Like a promise.*

Gahhhhhh.... this book floored me and I'm officially in book heaven! I don't remember the last time I finished a book with more than 200 pages in one go, but this was one of those rare occasions when I simply forgot everything around me, so completely engrossed in the story and even tempted to neglect my horse. Nah, not really, but I might have hurried up a bit, because I guess the alternative of running through the stable with my eyes glued to my Kindle would have yielded me some funny looks, not least from my horse.

The ending to Murdo and David's story was simply perfect and even one day later I'm sitting here with a dopey grin on my face and my mind still in the Scottish Highlands.

By the way, sorry for swamping you with Murdo visuals, but I just cannot help it. #sonotsorry

Sooo, ... still any doubts how much I loved it? ?♥

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### **Elsa Bravante says**

Último libro de la historia de Murdo y David, aunque hay otro más en la serie con un personaje secundario del segundo libro como protagonista.

Aunque empecé un poco dubitativa porque el comienzo no me resultó muy entretenido, la historia de amor entre Murdo y David va creciendo con ellos a lo largo de la serie, con un buen reflejo de la época y con un tono muy clásico, me ha recordado mucho a esas novelas históricas que leía hace años, lo mejor de ellas. Hay romance, por su puesto, mucho amor, pero también hay aventuras, muy entretenido y con un estilo muy ágil que hace que resulten muy fáciles de leer.

Un primer libro de presentación que está bien, un segundo que creo que es el mejor de todos, y un tercero donde todo se va colocando en su sitio.

Muy recomendable, protagonistas y secundarios maravillosos que prometen hacer pasar al lector un rato muy muy agradable.

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