



Hold Me Fast

Lydia Michaels

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It's more than a mountain. It's a love story generations long.

Maureen O'Leahey has always hoped for a family to love, but with so many men returning from a lost war, she finds life to be a bit less romantic than expected—until she stares in to the blue eyes of Frank McCullough. Though the odds are against them, Frank and Maureen can't seem to keep their distance. Against her father's wishes, Maureen falls for the boy trying so hard to make it as a man and Frank fights to keep every promise made to the fiery red head that's captured his heart.

During difficult times, they find solace in each other. As Frank struggles to do right by his young bride and Maureen aches to be a good wife, they are taught the true value of patience and shown the strength of unconditional love in this memorable story of a devoted Irishman and an untamable woman with a remarkable spirit.

Hold Me Fast Details

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From Reader Review Hold Me Fast for online ebook

Trish says

There are not that many series that make me wish they were real and I could travel to for a visit . . . maybe stay for a week . . . or forever.

And one of my favorite series on that list is Lydia Michael's McCullough Mountain. Seven swoon worthy romances that have put me through the emotional wringer . . . and I have enjoyed every gut-wrenching moment. Every audible and slightly inappropriate snort of laughter. Every sob-fest as I lost it and could no longer see the words in front of my face.

I have fallen hard for this family. They have found a special place in my heart and burrowed deep. Hold Me Fast is the last book of this series and even though I am sad to see the end, I am very well satisfied how Michaels concluded their journey.

Throughout the series, Maureen and Frank McCullough have been the backbone of this Pennsylvania Irish family. Their roots are deep, their loyalty unshakable, and their love for one another unending. They have struggled to get to where they are and faced hardships. To finally get to see how Maureen and Frank get together is the supreme icing on such a delicious and spicy cake.

I have always loved Maureen. She has been my favorite secondary character throughout the series. Her sass and strength had me laughing one minute and crying the next. And I have to say, her style of swearing is epic. I have highlighted several sections on my kindle for Maureen's colorful and witty retorts.

Frank, although quiet, has had me charmed from the get go, as well. He's a lumberjack . . . logger. Not sure what the politically correct term is, but I envision nicely corded muscles. Thick arms. Tanned skin from hours out in the sun. Firm tush. Strong, capable thighs. Flannel. (Sigh)

He is such a virile hero--hard working, devoted, and . . . Irish. Yes, I admit I have a weakness for such things. But I guarantee it would be hard for any warm blooded woman NOT to fall for this man.

The first half of the book is how Frank and Maureen meet and their rocky beginning. They endure ups and downs, heartaches, and the struggles of discovering exactly who they truly are as individuals and what they want from their marriage.

The second half was especially awesome--as the reader gets to revisit with the rest of the clan. Kate, Colin, Luke, Finn, Kelly, Sheilagh, etc . . . have had some very interesting developments and it was great to catch up on their lives. Although . . . as a side note here . . . and in no way negative . . . I could have had more Kelly time. AHEM. But that's just my obsessive streak showing. There is NEVER enough Kelly time.

Lydia Michaels has done a fantastic job creating a series worth reading . . . and rereading . . . and falling in love all over again. I have no doubt I will be visiting McCullough mountain whenever I need a good laugh or an emotional cry.

Come to the mountain. It will be a journey well worth taking--you won't want to leave.

AJ's book-reMarks says

McCullough Mountain is a very special place in my heart. Maureen will always be a part of me that I will strive to become, witty, foul mouth, feisty woman who loves fiercely, defends and protects what she hold dear to her heart. I would recommend you read her story and about the family she created.

Vickie says

Fantastic book

I am so sad this is the last book in the series. I loved the McCullough's and don't want to say goodbye.

Miriam says

Lydia Michaels has done it again. Another super awesome read! Great wrap up on series. I can not express how much a truly enjoyed this book and it's cast of characters! I look forward to reading more this authors books in the future!

Vee Paige says

* 4.25

Five stars for part 1. Frank and Maureen are an awesome couple. *review to come

Amelie says

Dear Ms. Michaels,

Thank you for giving us more Finn and Mallory time. Thank you for creating a world so vivid that we want to pack up and move there too. Thank you for introducing us to characters who are really more like friends at this point.

We wish we also had Kate and Ant's story, but we don't want you to think we're greedy, ungrateful b-words. We wish (desperately!) that Frank and Maureen have another forty years together. We wish the saga didn't have to end, and you'll publish book after book chronicling their day-to-day experiences (like the bathroom being flooded from holding all the pee of a dozen pregnant women, the Pop-a-Lula-etc. lemonaid stand taking off, Maureen yelling about not getting free flowers, and then yelling some more when she does get some), but that's probably not practical.

You know what else is not practical? Waking up at three am just to finish the book, and then re-reading it at 9 am after having a toast break. This is probably going to be an unproductive, shower-free weekend. But

seriously, give the daily chronicle idea some serious thought, will ya?

Sincerely,
A greedy, ungrateful b-word.

Laina Dumrigue says

I wish I had read this sooner.

I was crying the whole time I was reading the last chapter .Thank you Ms.Michaels for writing the McCullough series . I loved Maureen and Frank's story .And I get to read more of ashlyn&Kelly and Colin&Sammy's sweetness .

Shannon Gorilla McGee Winston says

"Like me? Why?"

He shrugged and pointed to his chest. "It's here, in the way my chest gets tight at just the sight of you and I want to hold you fast, but never feel like we have enough time."

Thank you Lydia Michaels!

This installment to the McCulloch Mountain series is a 100% treat for the fans. After reading the previous 6 books, we all wanted to know more about Maureen and Frank and how this large, loving and crazy family came to be. The first part of the book is Maureen and Frank's love story, it could be read as a standalone as a sweet novella, but the second-half of the book is really for fans only because it's catching up with the rest of the kids as Frank and Maureen celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We find out how married life and parenthood are working out for everyone and it's a perfect end to the series.

Though I loved the book and felt as if it were a fitting end, I loved the first half so much more than the second. Maureen and Frank's tale was so sweet and funny (mostly because of Maureen's crazy, profanity-laced humor) that I tore through the first-half in record time. Once the "where-are-they-now" portion began, my enthusiasm waned a bit and I took it slower.

Maureen alone is worth reading this book. I just loved her, even when she was being difficult. She kept me cracking up.

Entertainment for Men," the cover read. Opening the magazine she gasped again as her bottom dropped to the bed.

Woman after woman posed topless. Some were even completely nude. She grumbled and snapped her tongue against her teeth. "Honestly, who plays guitar in the jungle without their knickers? Fastest way to get a tick bite."

This whole series is great and I recommend it to anyone who loves big-family series. There's something for

everyone: Would-be priest falling for brother's girlfriend, Hot-twin falls for the BBW, man-whore falls in love with the shy virgin, M/M, older-man-younger-woman, special needs children, fertility issues and lots of steam and laughs. Great Stuff!

Ms. D. Reader says

My heart is full and I have a big smile on my face after finishing this book. What a fitting final story for the series! I laughed, cried, paused to reflect, and savored every word. I was so happy with Frank and Maureen's story as well as the individual stories about each of their children that helped the readers to catch up with the latest news and additions to the McCullough clan. I tried to read the book slowly to make it last, but it was over all too soon. There were so many wonderful moments that touched my heart in each book, and it was great to relive so many of those happy feelings with this last book. I was deeply moved by so many of my favorite characters in the series but especially by Maureen and Frank's love story. I started high school around the time of their courtship, so I could relate to that time and their old fashioned values. I will always be thankful that my posting buddies at the Amazon Rants and Raves romance discussion thread introduced me to this series. It quickly became a favorite that I will read again. Well done Lydia Michaels, well done!

Lauren at Live Read and Breathe Reviews says

Loved It!

5 McCullough Loving Stars!

Source: eARC for Honest Review Courtesy from Author

"I love your mother very much, Luke. I may not always say it or show it, but that woman is the breath of this family and my soul."

I have to admit that this series is one of my favorites. I wasn't sure how I was going to feel about Maureen & Frank's story, but I LOVED it! Their story was perfect and a great way to finish off the series.

In the first part of the book it's about how Maureen and Frank became a couple. It's here we get to really understand how this amazing family came to be. Maureen's a bit certifiable but that is one of the reasons that I love her. She's strong, determined and knows what she wants.

**Staring at the heavens he opened his hands in a pleading gesture.
"She's a lunatic, isn't she? You sent me a faulty model." Grumbling,
he marched after her. "Maureen"**

Right from 17 years old Maureen has known who she is what she wants. Thankfully Frank is on board with this plan. As we already knew from the rest of the series that Frank is a misunderstood quiet man, but also he's the cement of this beautiful family.

"You are a romantic soul, Frank McCullough. I'll not tell the other boys to protect your reputation."

It may have been love at first sight for these two but it wasn't an easy road. Especially since Maureen's such a spit fire.

. . . Apparently, sex was why men got married, according to her sisters. Maureen wasn't so sure. Her father had always said a man was incomplete without a wife but once married, he was finished. . .

"You think I have nothin' better to do than wait around so you can legally take my virginity? You can think again, Mr. McCollough. I have standards and they aren't the sort that crumble for some blue eyed, silver-tongued Irishman wantin' to put his lips on me. I'll be expectin' a gentleman, next time I see you, if your lips will be gettin' anywhere near me-"

"I have a healthy appetite for beautiful women, love. There's nothin' wrong with that."

"Aye, well if you wantin' this woman you'll lose your taste for all others, do you understand?"

Loving an Irish woman isn't always easy but Frank is up for the challenge.

Gah! I loved these two together and it was such a beautiful journey to see, even through their hardships. For them, these trying times did nothing but strengthen the love between them.

"You undo me, Maureen. Every knot inside of me tightens when you're not around as soon as you're near all the tension unravels and goes away. How do you make that happen?"

After we get a good feeling about the love of Maureen and Frank we move on to part two in the book, where we wait to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. In this part we get to see more from all of the other McCullough's. We get to see how their lives proceed after the end of book 6.

"It doesn't matter what you are," Kelly said. "You married an Irish woman. They're all sweet psychopaths. Best to do as she says and keep your balls."

It was great to re-visit all of them and especially to see how Luke, Tristan and Sheilagh fair out with their new addition. This story was beautiful and perfect. I'm so sad to see the end of this series. However, Lydia Michaels is one of my faves, so anything she writes I will be diving in. It may not be the McCullough's, but I'm sure it will be just as amazing. The McCullough Mountain series is definitely a recommended read, as it will fill a big place in your heart after you read this series.

"It's a sacred thing we celebrate by the water today. With the passing of time, your skin

has changed, but your hearts have only grown fuller. What was once chaste, now knows no bounds. There is no faking a love such as this, no truth forsaken in the presence of such affection. And as years go by, tears will sometimes come, but I have faith there will be more joy than sorrow, so long as you hold fast to each other and never let go of the incredible love you share."

My Reviews of Books 1 through 6 of the McCullough Mountain Series Here

All quotes taken from pre-published eARC & may be altered or omitted in the final copy.

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Tamara says

A Fabulous Ending to a great series. Maureen has always been my favorite McCullough and I was so happy to finally read her and Frank's Love story. Hold Me Fast was a wonderful emotional journey, so keep the tissues handy. I cried bucketsful while reading this book, both happy and sad tears. I also laughed like a loon. While you don't necessarily HAVE to have read the previous books in the series to read Hold Me Fast, I don't think it will have the same emotional impact if you haven't read the rest of the series.

maggieandteddy says

As I read each book in the McCullough Mountain series, I enjoyed each McCullough sibling's (love) story. I also enjoyed their mother- Maureen McCullough. Larger than life? Just about. She just about stole every scene that she was in. The two books that I noticed her the most were: book 4 "Faking It" (Sheilagh's book) and book 6, "As Tears Go By" (Braydon's book).

I mentioned in previous reviews, Maureen swears-a lot-usually with a humorous twist. Trust me, it's funny most of the time. This book starts off with Maureen just about to turn 18, and just as she's about to graduate from high school. I usually don't like to read a remembering the good old days kind of story. This was not that. I really got into the young Maureen. And I got to know the young (25 year old) Frank. I wanted to know what this quiet man was all about. Maureen's older sisters Colleen and Rosemarie were dating Frank's two friends, Liam and Paulie. Frank and Maureen kept meeting and had a growing attraction to each other. Their love story had to wait for her to turn 18. Maureen's dad... well , in a previous book there's a story about a shotgun....

I really loved how Frank's personality came out. His dad had been in the Vietnam war and had PTSD and major depression and had become a recent widower. It was hard to read about his dad. I could relate to this, since my dad didn't do so well after the war. Frank was determined not to follow in his dad's ways. I found myself getting emotional and teary-eyed even when it wasn't a sad part. I just loved the sparking between these two. There was no flashing back & forth in time. I was very happy about this. I was really caught up in this young couple. Maureen and Frank were as young or younger than their kids when they were starting out. There were some fights and arguments. I loved how they each would give a little, sometimes a lot. They said "sorry"(!). There was a point that I wondered how they'd make it. Frank had some tough decisions to make if he wanted them to stay together. I've said that the older Maureen reminded me of my mom. That's what made me tear up. The younger Frank reminded me of a little of my own husband.

At 60% or so, the story continues into present day. We catch up with each couple and Frank and Maureen have several grandchildren. It was a little difficult to remember who was with who, but it came back to me. I especially liked Maureen's interactions with Mallory (Finn's wife). Oh. My .God. What a pistol! Maureen has a way of telling someone to back off. Whoa, I wanna be on her side! I loved the house building part. I needed Maureen when I was picking out tile and grout!

I loved this book, some sad, happy and tense times. I didn't want it to end.
Of course 5 stars.

ARC provided by the author & my review is honest, but biased 'cause I already loved Maureen. Now I love Frank too.

Thank you again, JLC for introducing me to this author & and this series.
YAY for W.R.R.& R Amazon & GR thread.

Amy ~ Love At 1st Read says

What a fabulous culmination to this wonderful series about a family that radiates love and togetherness. I love books about families. Reading all the good, bad, ugly, and crazy elements that make them who they are. To see their flaws, their struggles, and their victories. Lydia Michaels pens the perfect conclusion to the McCullough Mountain series in Hold Me Fast. What better way to end the series than to see the love story of Frank and Maureen, the heads of this loving, chaotic family. It was so much fun to see Maureen and the crazy aunts as young girls. They were hysterical. And I loved seeing that Frank, who usually only grunts in response to Maureen, had quite the silver tongue. He may be a man of few words, but when he speaks, he speaks from the heart. Like Maureen, I melted. I knew Maureen was a force to be reckoned with and it was fun to see the beginnings of all that energy. Even back then she was stubborn when she set her mind on something, and she wanted Frank. Their courtship was fast but they knew from the start that they wanted

each other forever. Like many married couples starting out, Frank and Maureen suffered difficulties, but they were there for each other through it all. Partners. Knowing Frank and Maureen in their youth gave me so much more insight into their children.

The second half of the book was delightful. It allowed me to revisit with all the McCullough clan as they prepared for Frank and Maureen's 40th wedding anniversary. It was heartwarming to know that Frank and Maureen had set this beautiful family in motion. Though I'm sad to see the series end, this one ended as it should, assuring me that, thanks to those fabulous McCullough genes, McCullough Mountain would continue to live on.

Spunky N Sassy says

SNS Rating: 4.0

~~~~~Lindsey's ★★★★★☆ Review~~~~~

I absolutely love anything Irish and anything historical. This book was the seventh in the McCollough series and now I want to go back and read the others! This book has romance, adventure, and danger, everything I look for when reading a historical piece. The author has definitely done her research of the time period and really knows how to grab her readers. She writes an amazing story and I will for sure be checking out the other books in this series, as I think everyone should!

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## **Carla Dragon says**

It is a beginning and an end. I have loved this family since Page 1 and truly wish they would adopt me. We get to see \*finally\* what really happened between Maureen's father and Frank! We also get to touch base with all the couples, all the kids, and some spares in order to celebrate all that is the McCulloughs.

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