



## My Highland Spy

*Victoria Roberts*

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## **My Highland Spy Victoria Roberts** **This Highland Laird won't bow to the Crown**

Laird Ruairi Sutherland refuses to send his only son away to be educated by the English. And he most definitely will not appear in Edinburgh to pay homage to a liege who has no respect for Scotland. So he does what any laird would do—he lies to the king. The last thing Ruairi expects is a beautiful English governess to appear on his doorstep.

### **But this lady spy might make him...**

Lady Ravenna Walsingham is a seasoned spy who is sent to the savage Highlands to uncover a nefarious plot against the Crown. Playing the part of an English governess—a job easier said than done—she infiltrates the home of Laird Sutherland, a suspected conspirator.

### **If she doesn't betray him first**

Ravenna soon discovers that the only real threat Sutherland poses is to her heart. But will the proud Highland laird ever forgive her when he discovers the woman he loves is an English spy?

## **My Highland Spy Details**

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Author : Victoria Roberts

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## From Reader Review My Highland Spy for online ebook

### Kathy says

I've read and enjoyed all of Ms. Roberts's books and this is my favorite. It is a fast paced, lovely and fun read with characters you care about. Ravenna and Ruairi's romance proceeds at a good pace without unnecessary angst and misunderstandings. They both are strong, smart and sexy. What more does a reader want? Kilts and Gaelic? You got it. For me what made the book special was that I really loved the secondary characters: Torquil, Angus, Grace, Elizabeth and Kat. You get to know some of them more than others but you will like them all. I hope to read more about each of them in upcoming books.

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### Angie Elle says

*Thank you to SOURCEBOOKS CASABLANCA and Netgalley for providing a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.*

### 4.5 stars

Can we just take a second to bask in the beauty of this cover? A kilt and a stunning background? Yes, please! I can't believe how long I let this book sit on my to be read list. I have really been missing out. I adored this story. The vernacular was much more modern than I would expect for the time period, but you know what? The author weaved such a wonderful tale that I ended up not even caring about that. I loved Ravenna and Ruairi. Ravenna was smart and compassionate, and Ruairi was a leader who cared about his people and would do anything to protect them. But when it came to Ravenna and his son, the man was a gentle giant. I enjoyed the suspense in this book. It wasn't over the top, but it was enough to leave you wondering 'whodunit?' and what would come next. Torquil, Ruairi's son, was a wonderful addition to the story. He showed us Ravenna's softer side, and I didn't feel at any point that he overwhelmed the story. Fagan was Ruairi's right hand man; he loved to needle Ruairi about his son's governess and cared about his laird and the people who depended on them. I can't wait to find out more about him, so I'm excited that his book is next! **My Highland Spy** was a wonderful read that flew right by for me. I started listening to the audio of this story at work, but it was so good that I switched to print when I got home so I could finish it ASAP. If there was one thing I wish this book had, it would be just a bit more time spent with Ruairi and Ravenna once they found their way back together again.

*This review was originally posted at Badass Book Reviews.*

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### Chryssa says

THIS book must be one of the most pleasant surprises of my latest book choices!

I just wanted a Highlander book and randomly chose this without having read any reviews or received a recommendation about it.

And then...**SURPRISE!** The story was about the English spy heroine that went undercover as a governess to the son of the Highland laird that was suspected of scheming against the Crown. It seems so cliché, right? Even so, the story developed in such a way with the right amount of funny dialogues (my time reading this was so pleasantly spent as I found myself laughing out loud very often), intriguing clan feuds and the **best of secondary/supporting characters** (amazing work Ms Roberts - you have made me **impatiently crave** their stories in the following books of the series).

A new follower has been born - Ms Roberts, glad to have read you!

P.S: And Angus! IN LOVE!

#### **4++ surprisingly unexpected stars**

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#### **Lori {Romancing the Dark Side} says**

My first Victoria Roberts' historical romance novel, but it definitely won't be my last...Ruairi and Ravenna had me hooked from the first page to the last!

MY HIGHLAND SPY is a story filled with intrigue, adventure, a sweet romance and my favorite...highlanders! Ravenna Walsingham is not your average English lady, she works with her uncle as an accomplished spy for the Crown and her latest assignment has brought her to the home of Laird Ruairi Sutherland in the Scottish Highlands, a suspected threat to the Crown. Posing as a governess to Laird Sutherland's son Torquil, Ravenna plans to uncover any conspiracy but soon realizes the only danger lurking is the possibility losing herself to the handsome and charming Highland laird and compromising her assignment.

Everyone that reads my reviews knows my favorite kind of heroine is a strong, independent one with a smart mouth and Ravenna fits this description perfectly. This type of leading lady isn't so prevalent in historical romance so I knew Ms. Robert's story would be a real page turner. Ravenna is a smart, kind and determined woman who is extremely protective of her family and loyal to those she cares for, despite being a spy for the King. She has some preconceived prejudices against highlanders so it was great to see her guarded interactions with everyone when she arrives at Ruairi's home. I really enjoyed her character and love how organically she fit into Ruairi's world, as if she were always meant to be there. Ravenna held her ground with the smexy alpha and it was a great surprise to see a real heroine in this book, not a damsel in distress, which is common in this genre.

If there's an alpha hero I can't resist it's a highlander and Laird Ruairi Sutherland is as swoon worthy as they come! Territorial alpha males are welcomed but not mandatory in my books and Ruairi is a real fresh breath of air in this story. Like Ravenna, he's devoted to protecting his family (son) and clan, Ruairi is a great leader who doesn't mind sacrificing himself for the greater good. His determination to keep his son by his side after his wife's untimely death and not send him off to the English, tugged at my heart strings. He isn't the usual brooding male, he has a great sense of humor and his flirty banter with Ravenna are some of the most enjoyable moments in MY HIGHLAND SPY. The romance between Ruairi and Ravenna develops over time, even with their intense chemistry which made it all worthwhile..there was no drama between them. I

was relieved to learn that Ravenna is an experienced woman and not a virgin which means these two could heat up the pages without a proposal or marriage, it was great to see two grown adults give into their passion with no expectations. These two are perfectly matched despite their cultural differences and bring out the best in each other. I couldn't get enough of them!

Another character I must mention in this review is Ruairi's best friend and right hand man, Fagan. He stole the show from Ruairi a few times with his wit and charm. His friendship with Ruairi is really sweet and I hope that Ms. Robert's considers him as a possible love match for Ravenna's younger sister Grace. The small glimpse of the interaction between them left me wanting their story!

MY HIGHLAND SPY was a fantastic introduction to Victoria Robert's captivating romance and larger than life characters. There's enough adventure and tension to keep you intrigued, with a steady pace that doesn't feel too rushed and allows you to really connect with the characters. New and old readers of historical romance are sure to find this a delightful reading experience. I mean, who doesn't love a sexy Highlander who speaks Gaelic and wears a kilt, right? ;)

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*\*I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.*

This review was originally published on Romancing the Dark Side

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### **vicky says**

I went into this book with zero expectations, and I can solidly say that it's a book I've enjoyed the most out of anything I've read for quite a while.

the writing is good, the book is well paced (well, the romance is pretty quick but hey, it's a romance book, it's not pretending to be otherwise), the characters are interesting and it's got some decent plot twist and turns that make you feel all of the emotional spectrum.

I LOVED Ravenna as a protagonist, and i'm genuinely sad to see the other books in this series follow different storylines. I was living for the whole English aristocratic lady who's secretly a spy for the Crown but ends up finding a sense of belonging in the wild Highlands. a big criticism of the romance genre is that it can play into some sexist tropes, but I would call Ravenna a feminist lead. I also thought Ruairi was a fab love interest and got invested in him too and, by extension, the romance between the two of them. when things started to go wrong in the book I genuinely cared and couldn't stop reading to find out what happens. when I was getting ready to pick the book up and keep reading I was genuinely a bit excited, because the story was fun, the characters were brill and I was invested in it.

if you're a romance reader, definitely pick this up, but if you're not, neither am I but I still really enjoyed this so give it a try; you might end up being pleasantly surprised too.

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### **Vicki says**

5+ stars

Victoria Roberts knocked it out of the park with this one. I was hooked on My Highland Spy the second I started reading it. I loved Ravenna. She is a strong, feisty and independent English lady who is determined to succeed in everything she does. She is not happy to learn that she will be sent to live among the barbaric Highlanders and have to teach English to Laird Sutherland's son. She soon learns that not everything she has heard about Highlanders is true. Ruairi is the strong, handsome and rugged Highland Laird who would do anything for his son and clan, except turn them over into the hands of the English. I loved the bantering between Ruairi and Ravenna throughout the book. Their connection was instant and they tried to fight it but fate had other plans.

Victoria Roberts is a very talented author who will draw you right into her book and keep you hooked until the very end. I could not put My Highland Spy down and hated being interrupted while reading it. Ms. Roberts is able to make you feel her character's emotions and you feel as if you are right there with them. There is one scene where someone cracks their head open and the way she described it, I heard the crack and had to put the book down for a second to calm my nerves and find out what would happen to them. I laughed and cried along with the characters and was ready to jump into the book and throttle a couple others.

If you have not read a book by Victoria you need to! You will not be disappointed.

Thank you Victoria for another amazing book.

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### **Nicole Laverdure says**

I devoured MY HIGHLAND SPY, written by Victoria Roberts! She has done it again! She did not disappoint me! This novel is the first story of her Highland Spies series. Lady Ravenna Walsingham is a brave and independent young English woman. She is a spy for the English crown and her next mission will be Ruairi so she needs to become the governess for his son, in order to infiltrate his home. Laird Ruairi Sutherland is a rugged and charming Highland Laird, who refuses to send his son to be educated by the English. But as soon as Ravenna and Ruairi meet, sparks flare, and her mission will take another direction and go for a spin! Will her secret identity be revealed? Will he accept that the woman he loves is an English spy? Will the truth be discovered? Another amazing historical romance set in the Highlands. I highly recommend this Scottish adventure filled with tenderness and mystery! This book did not disappoint me. I will definitely be reading more books by Ms. Roberts and watch her next book in this great series! To be released September 2nd.

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### **Julie says**

Even a spy for the Crown cannot resist this Highlander in his sexy kilt.

This was the first book by Victoria Roberts that I have read, but it certainly won't be the last. I don't typically go for the historical romances, but something about the description of this one piqued my interest. I

am so happy I went with that instinct.

Ravenna has a mission, and despite her reluctance to go to Scotland to fulfill that mission she is determined to do it and do it well. She is going to pretend to be Laird Ruairi's son's governess while gathering information for the Crown. She intends to be focused and thorough in her mission. Then she meets Laird Ruairi. With his penetrating eyes and sexy kilt she finds it difficult to keep up her pretense.

"Ruairi couldn't say what surprised him more- the fact that Mistress Denny so blatantly approved of his handsome visage or the look on her face when she realized he understood every word she said."

Laird Ruairi has put off the king as long as he can and has not been set upon by a spy. He knows nothing of this and only thinks this woman is here to teach his son English. He also hasn't felt anything for a woman since his wife passed. Now Ravenna is here and has grabbed hold of his attention with both hands.

"He lowered his head and brushed a soft kiss to her forehead. 'A rose...for the bonniest lass who ever graced the Highlands.'"

With secrets being kept and two people with very different agendas falling in love, will loyalty or love win in the Highlands?

This book was such a wonderful surprise for me. I was slowed down at first by the language that I wasn't used to but the story was so engrossing that I overcame that easily. There was humor and excitement and characters so rich they each had their own voices in my head. I would recommend this book to anyone, whether you are a fan of historical romance or a newcomer to it, such as I was. I look forward to reading another book by Victoria Roberts very soon.

An ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review.

This review can also be found at [readlovelust.com](http://readlovelust.com)

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### **Secret Realm Reviews&Services says**

5 stars

This is by far one of the best books I've read in 2014. I can't tell you all how amazing this story is. There was great amounts of emotions, mystery, romance, and action. Ravenna is the epitome of an independent and feisty heroine. She knew what she wanted and was determined to not stop until she did it right. She had the type of morals any of us would envy and easily you could look up to her. Always the best advice and under control with a professional attitude. But things change when she is sent to the highlands on a undercover mission. Ravenna plays as an English governess for the handsome Laird's son. Ravenna has never been a lady to crack under pressure but slowly the Laird Ruairi takes a grasp on Ravenna's heart and suddenly everything she's been living for changes dramatically. Not only does her heart begin to soften, her feelings cannot be denied for the Laird's loving son. In the beginning it was a mission, get in, get your information, and do your job. Ravenna dreaded going to the highlanders and doing this job but she had never turned down one yet and she wasn't going to start now. Little did anyone know their lives would be changing forever.

Laird Ruairi hasn't yearned for a woman since he lost his wife two years before. But as the lovely Ravenna

walks into his castle he couldn't help the instant attraction. Hard to have her around, he continued on with his daily duties trying to act as if this intoxicating governess wasn't upon them but it was a feeble thought and action. I can personally say I loved the banter between the two of them. They both tried so hard to deny their attraction! The more they denied this, the deeper it became and the harder it became for them to ignore these deep feelings. There was such a budding romance happening before your eyes! You wanted to yell through the book at them to let their brains go and accept it and let the bodies do the talking for a moment. But what can I say? This made the book better, because they didn't just fall into one another's arms. The bond that begins with Ravenna and this castle of people is breathtaking, emotional, plenty of laughter, and a love that could last for eternity.

Can Ravenna convince Ruairi that she is trustworthy after it gets out she's a spy?

Will the Laird forgive her for a trust broken? Can he believe their bond is a true one?

Will their love and passion conquer all?

I would suggest this book to anyone. I could not put this book down, and I tried many times. But this book called to me and beckoned me to finish and I did gladly. I had tears, but they weren't really sad tears. I had tears of complete satisfaction. I would read this book again and again. I would suggest it to my best friends, give it out to my closest family members. I promise you this none of you will be disappointed. This book has become an addiction for me and I cannot wait to see what's next in this amazing Spy series.

-Secret Realm Book Reviews

\*I received a complimentary copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.  
my site: [www.thesecretrealm.com](http://www.thesecretrealm.com)

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### **Stormi (BMReviewsohmy) says**

Who doesn't love a Highlander, those kilts, that sexy accent....sighs. I want one. :)

This is my first novel by this author but I can't wait to read/listen to more. I am so glad I have the second one to dig into soon!

Laird Ruairi Sutherland won't bow to the king of England and send his son to England to be taught English. So to some that means he could be part of those who want to fight against the English King. So they send a spy to check him out in the guise of a governess to teach his son English. Lady Ravenna Walsingham is that spy. She has been working for her uncle since her parents died so that her sisters would never have to do anything like this or worst.

Ravenna figures that the Laird is going to be a horrible brute but she didn't think he was going to be so handsome. What was suppose to be a pretty easy assignment is about to get complicated when she falls for the highlander and his son. To bad he is going to hate her when he finds out she is a spy.

Laird Ruairi is a very head strong, handsome, and stubborn Scott. Sighs. I have a soft spot for Scots. They just make me melt, I love the Scottish accent and this Laird could melt any heart. He is a great father to his son and he won't give in on what he thinks is right. He won't fight the English unless they come after him even if it gets him in trouble with his ex father-in-law.

Ravenna is a pretty spunky lady which I love. I mean she is a spy, can't get much more spunky than that. She does have a fear of dogs, but lots of people are like that. And well Angus is not just a dog but a wolf so I will give her that one. She takes to the Lairds son quickly and has a lot of fun teaching him English. She also takes fairly quickly to the handsome Laird, bu I don't think I can fault her for that either...he would just talk to me in that accent and I would be a goner. :)

My Highland Spy was a very good sexy book and I enjoyed it very much. If you like Scots and historical romances then I am sure you will like this one as well. :) I think I just want the man on the cover...sighs. :)

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### **Farrah says**

An enjoyable, sweet romance, My Highland Spy was a wonderful read. I really liked this book. From the likable character, to the sweet romance, this book was lovely.

Ravenna was a good heroine. She was strong, clever, protective of her family, and a kind person in general. Though she served as the king's spy, she was first and foremost loyal to the people she cared about. I thought she was a great character and I really liked her.

Ruairi was wonderful. He was so sweet and totally devoted to the people he cared about, whether it was his son, Ravenna, or the clan he was so protective of. He was a sweetie and I really liked him.

The romance was lovely. Ravenna and Ruairi were great together. They both loved each other unreservedly, even with all the obstacles between them. And, of course, there was plenty of chemistry between them, with lots of steaminess going on. I thought they were great together.

The plot was well paced and, though I didn't get totally hooked for some reason, I was kept interested the entire way through. There were a couple of surprises along the way. I really enjoyed the story and the ending was lovely.

My Highland Spy was a wonderful historical romance. It was a sweet, enjoyable read that I really liked. Romance lovers, you might want to check this book out.

\*I received a complimentary copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review

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### **Melba says**

I was hooked on My Highland Spy the second I started reading it. The plot was well paced and, I was kept interested through the entire book. The main characters connection was instant and they tried to fight it but fate had other plans. I always enjoy a book with witty humor and sarcasm, this book doesn't disappoint.

My Highland Spy was a wonderful historical romance. It was a sweet, enjoyable read.. Romance lovers, you might want to check this book out.

I can't wait to see what is next for the Highland Spies

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### **Jenny Jo Weir says**

Let me explain. I only read this because I wanted to read book 3 in the series and figured I would start with book 1. Was it great? No. Was it trash? No. it was a perfectly adequate book. A little predictable and a little dull but entertaining enough to not make me quit. I liked it well enough.

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### **Vivisection says**

Meh.

Too many anachronisms

Not enough exposition

Boring heroine

Boring hero

Winsome tyke not so winsome

Evil nemesis not quite evil enough

Political intrigue not that intriguing

Three more sisters means three more books

And for fuck's sake, what kind of British governess/"spy for the Crown" canna read French?

At least there was Angus the wolf to hold the narrative together.

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### **Ø???? [Punya Reviews...] says**

**My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts as I went with the book... for more, visit Punya Reviews...**

My Highland Spy, book 1 of the Highland Spies series by Victoria Roberts was an overall fun read of the fluffy kind, especially if you harbor the love of all things Highland and Highlanders like me. ;) This is a completely new series which talks about a family of Spies, who have been working for the Crown for some generations.

The family in question is the Walsinghams. Even though Lord and Lady Walsingham have passed away, their 4 daughters remain; the eldest Ravenna, the next, Grace, then Elizabeth and Katherine. Lord Walsingham was a spy for Queen Elizabeth, so is Ravenna's Uncle Walter, Lord Mildmay. Their mother initially didn't know about this. She was proud nonetheless when she had finally been told everything. Since

Ravenna has no brothers, she was chosen to follow her father's footsteps by the Queen's people.

At somewhere in her mid 20s and without any prospect of ever marrying due to her secret life, Ravenna considers herself a spinster. She has been busy with her 'job' for a while now, though, unsurprisingly, none of her sisters know anything. She'd like to keep it that way as long as possible, fear of danger following from such discussions. It also maybe the fact that her sister Grace, an 18 yr old, is rather annoyingly nosy. She never takes the hint and doesn't know when to shut up, jumping into conclusions... wrong conclusions if I might add. Personally, I didn't care for her much. Ravenna loves all her sisters and would do anything to protect them as the proverbial 'mother hen' but even she gets exasperated by Grace's constant prodding about her whereabouts, especially if she's out late. Ravenna has to go out at nights, often in disguise. Grace, who obviously has been spying on her big sister, would go on a tirade because she wouldn't get any straight answer from her. \*eyeroll\*

All Ravenna's missions are brought to her by Lord Mildmay. He's the one who gives her instructions etc. on behalf of the Crown. So it was no wonder that one day, he drops by with a new one; this time Ravenna has to travel to the Highlands of Scotland to gather information. For that, she has to be 'set up' at a particular Laird's residence. These Highlanders, as he'd say, are 'barbarians' and the Crown would like to know what they're plotting inside. Besides, Laird Sutherland was summoned to the court by King James, yet he has never made an appearance, citing his wife's illness. The King wants his son to learn English, and apparently, Laird Sutherland is neither fond of the language, nor the people who call themselves 'English' and has no intentions as of yet to comply with the King's wishes. So Ravenna will masquerade as a governess to his young son, the best way to gain entry inside her 'destination'.

Ravenna is not that happy to be traveling so far away, leaving her sisters behind for... not sure how long. Her uncle is all but adamant she has no option but to do as it is commanded. When she imparts the news of her impending journey to her sisters, Grace is unhappy and starts making crazy assumptions as to where Ravenna is headed, which almost always comes down to a secret lover and her being pregnant. Don't even ask. Ravenna can only shake her head at Grace's antics. She knows their uncle will have his hands full taking care of the girls, but she must be one her way. And so, Ravenna finds herself on the way to the proverbial 'unknown' masquerading as Mistress Denny, governess to Laird Sutherland's son, Torquil.

Upon reaching the Sutherland keep, despite her fear and other doubts, Ravenna can only think how beautiful the Highlands look. Soon, she'd learn that everything she has heard about these 'barbarians' are not true either. She meets the Laird upon her arrival and immediately is struck down by his... er, manly beauty. He's tall, good looking, sporting that skirt-like thing she knows as 'the kilt'... and he's scowling at her as if he'd like nothing better than to throw her out. Hmm, this certainly doesn't bode well in an unknown territory, for Ravenna knows no one here but her trustworthy coachman, whom she brought with her as... what can you say, protection?

Then there is another man with him, obviously someone close to the Laird. He introduces himself as Fagan, Laird's right-hand man and the head of his army. Fagan seems friendlier, with a perpetual smile that promises all sorts of deviltry. He's handsome too in his own way. As he warmly welcomes her in the Sutherland keep, in English, Ravenna thinks she has found a friend here already. Too bad that the Laird himself doesn't speak English. How is she going to gather any information if she can't understand what they're saying?

This led to a funny scene with Ravenna and Ruairi, when he decides to show her around the keep, a bit reluctantly admitting that she's staying after all. It's obvious he doesn't want trouble with his King, however much he despises the idea of an English governess for his son. At one point of the tour, Ravenna couldn't

help her horny thoughts on his sexy, kilt-clad body. The Laird answers her in perfect English, laced with that sexy accent, that leaves her embarrassed as hell. Lord, I was laughing so hard, imagining Ravenna's face at that time. :p

So, the truth was out! Ruairi didn't want the governess to know that he can understand her perfectly but after hearing her 'thoughts' on him, he had to. It was imperative that she knew he appreciates that she finds him so appealing, for Ruairi has been having the same kinds of thoughts about her. Mistress Denny, though English, is a beauty. Ruairi can't help but be attracted to her grace and charm, and her quick wit. Also, the fact that he made her blush like a young girl with his reply. He's still weary of her arrival though, not knowing what to think of his King's intentions but she has to stay for the time being and teach Torquil English.

Ruairi also doesn't tell Ravenna that his wife, Anne, has been dead for over two years, when he finds that she's under the impression that it's more of a recent incident. Her sympathy burns him for he didn't mourn her loss. Anne was the daughter of the power hungry Laird of Gordon. I still don't know why Ruairi married her in the first place but that woman, who has always taken her father's side in everything, nothing short of ruined his life. Gordon is an idiot, and as empty as they come, as we see soon enough. He wanted the Sutherland forces joined with his for more power over the Highlands. But Ruairi wants peace and prosper for his people, not blood and gore. Obviously, both father and daughter were very disappointed not being able to manipulate him in any way. Moreover, Gordon never shed a tear for his daughter, always blaming Ruairi for Anne's demise, which is simply out of spite and not based on fact.

Ruairi's marriage was rather a sham too. After Torquil was born soon after their marriage, he stopped sharing his wife's bed. But I think he was true to his marriage vows. Not sure if he has been with anyone after Anne's death but it was obvious that Ruairi is rather disappointed and heartbroken. The women in his life, apparently, always caused him grief, rather than love and peace. It was also becoming rather clear that he's essentially a good man who wanted to have a family of his own. Right now, Torquil is his world and would be his heir once he passes away. Before that, through right plans and determination, he'd see that his clan prospers without a war or wars to destroy it all. Now, this new governess might pose a threat to what little peace of mind he has as Ruairi would like to get to know her better, no doubt!

Ravenna's best moment had to be her meeting with Torquil. The motherless boy takes to her instantly. Though he doesn't like to study as any kid who'd rather run around and play, he otherwise loves spending time with her. There was another of Ravenna's 'fans', if you can say so, that she could do without. Torquil's, or rather the clan's pet wolf Angus. When she first 'met' the wolf, she thought he was attacking Torquil. Though that confusion was cleared up later by the Laird himself, Ravenna doesn't want the *special* attention from that creature. Because of a childhood trauma, Ravenna doesn't like anything that resembles a dog... or a wolf. But Angus has decided to become her 'Unwanted Protector' and there's no stopping the beast. It was kinda funny to see Ravenna trying to shoo it off when it's near her or waiting to catch her, more often than not unawares.

It doesn't take long for Ruairi to become smitten with Ravenna and work on their mutual attraction. The outings with or without Torquil brings them even closer. It was Ruairi who begins to open up to Ravenna because he was already beginning to trust her. On the other hand, though Ravenna feels attracted to him, she's pretty much determined to finish her duty here and return to England. For a long time, it didn't feel that she has any genuine feelings for Ruairi, even knowing what a splendid Laird and father he was. Her thoughts were always on her 'duty to the Crown'. For some reason, I didn't like it much. I knew heartbreak was ahead, probably for Ruairi, when her secrets are finally revealed.

True to her 'duty', Ravenna begins to eavesdrop and follow Ruairi secretly, sometimes getting nothing, something coming up with useful, if a bit hazy, information. Even though she loves here in the Highlands, the Clan and Torquil, she doesn't think her life is here. Then again, I couldn't blame her entirely. She had 3 orphaned younger sisters to think of after all. But that doesn't mean she can't indulge herself in an affair with the Laird in the meantime, right? She's no virgin (no clarification on that), so they end up in bed soon. Ruairi is only too happy to have the beautiful Ravenna in his bed, and I was thinking, Poor Guy, will have another shock when he learns of her true motivation, because Ravenna sure wasn't gonna talk about it herself. \*sigh\*

The Gordon stops by, again, to pinch poor Ruairi about a new revolution around the Highlands, where he and his so-called allies mean to rule. As usual, he wants Ruairi to join forces with them. They plan an upheaval but Ruairi has no interest in blood and gore, definitely not when Gordon and his cronies are involved in that. He knows better than to trust that creep. Ruairi already suspected that the dead cows from his land and that of Ian Munro's that were turning up were Gordon's ploy to force them to join. Killing of the valuable livestock seemed to be the right kind of 'push'. Rest assured, neither Ruairi nor Munro is happy about any of this.

Ian is Ruairi and Fagan's childhood friend. When he stops by, he zooms in on Ravenna for a flirtation but soon gets the hint from his friend that she's off limits. Then the friends talk and Ian is none too happy about the developments. Besides, they catch two men who confessed that it was the Gordon that paid them to dress in Munro's color, then kill the cattle, obviously to create trouble between the two allies. But the idiot should've known better, for Ruairi would never believe that Ian was trying to harm him, just as Ian wouldn't.

This time, after the Gordon and his vengeful younger daughter's latest visit, when Ravenna snoops around, she finds the interesting information she has been looking for. She gets an idea of the upheaval and what the Gordon has been planning. Maybe this was what her uncle asked her to look for here! Though Ravenna was happy about her success, I was rather unhappy that she didn't seem to feel any remorse for doing what she was doing (or about to do); playing with Ruairi's trust, for he was still in the dark about her 'secret'. When he asked of her life, Ravenna would become vague, not giving him any real answer. Ruairi also didn't force her, though he has, by now, opened up a lot about himself.

When it seemed that the war between him and the Gordon's are apparent, Ruairi asks Ravenna to leave for her own safety. He wouldn't want her harmed in a feud that has nothing to do with her. Ravenna doesn't want to, but she has no other choice. She sends word at home and asks Grace to be in Edinburgh soon, so that they can journey together towards England.

Unfortunately, at the same time, Torquil is gravely injured in an accident. The boy remains unconscious for long. This breaks Ruairi's heart. No... that's not even close to what he was feeling I gather. It's like his world was coming apart, as we find him thinking to himself, would he never have a little peace in his life? He tries to stay calm and strong as the Laird of his clan, but in secrecy of Torquil's chamber, Ruairi can't hold back his tears. This time though, Ravenna seems much affected by the developments. She instantly cancels her journey to be with him and Torquil, and for that, Ruairi is grateful to her. Ravenna feels helpless just as anyone, not knowing how to help the boy regain his consciousness, because the more days passed, the less likely he'd ever wake up. So sad and depressing! I really felt sad for Ruairi. Not only he had this happening to his son, but also he had to suffer through Gordon and his loony daughter's ravings in trying to avoid any bloodshed. :( To make matters worse, Ravenna goes to snoop in on the daughter in search of some blasted information, against Ruairi's wishes if I might add, a step she later regrets. She finds that the woman is crazy and mean to harm the Sutherlands. I would give her a point for backing away in time and relaying whatever she got from that woman to Ruairi.

At last, after torturing his father and the whole clan for a while, when Torquil opens his eyes, it felt that the heaviness was lifted off the environment! Everybody is exuberated, happy to have the little guy back. At the same time, Angus, who was doing poor, starts getting better too. Later it was found that he was poisoned by the Gordon men. Damn those creeps!

All these incidents had Ravenna thinking about ‘confessing’ but then, she’d be change her mind. I’m not sure what she would’ve done or if she’d ever tell Ruairi, if Grace, the airhead, didn’t bumble in to ‘rescue her sister’ from the barbarians. Oh the drama of her entrance, had me rolling my eyes all the way! And it doesn’t end there. Because of her, Fagan, who accosts her before anyone else, realizes that Ravenna is not who she made everyone think. I was so annoyed at Grace that I wanted to slap her real hard. This shouldn’t have been how Ravenna’s cover would’ve blown. Ruairi, IMO, deserved the confession from her mouth without these added ‘incentives’.

After that, there was only one thing left for Ravenna to do, to tell Grace *and* Ruairi about her secret life.

Grace, well, at first, shows some signs of remorse, maybe for the first time in her life, for mucking things up for her big sister. Then she’s determined she’s also going to follow Ravenna’s footstep (about which I shudder to think of, just as Ravenna). And when Grace makes up her mind... let’s say, it’s difficult to sway her from her decision. Ravenna certainly doesn’t want her sister in the spy business, as this was one of the reasons why she kept her life secret from Grace even though she was old enough to know the ‘family tradition’. Fagan, on the other hand, is clearly feeling betrayed because everybody in this keep liked Ravenna and welcomed her with open arms. While I could understand the anger coming off of Fagan, I was more concerned about Ruairi’s reaction.

Ruairi, have to say, fared better than I thought. He is mad and disappointed, asking Ravenna to leave this place right away, which she does. Before that, she promises never to speak about any information she gathered from here. I wonder how Ruairi even trusted her to let her go. But it was more because he couldn’t stand her to be near him anymore. Poor guy is heartbroken. Right after Torquil recovered, Ruairi expressed his love to Ravenna, who thought it was better to nip it in the bud because she was very sure that they had no future together. So you can say that Ruairi was hurt all over again, by another woman. What a mess! To surmise, when Ravenna leaves, she leaves behind a tail of broken hearts, which not only includes Ruairi’s but also Torquil and Angus’s. I must say that though I expected this outcome, it still made me unhappy. To me, trust can only be gained with trust and Ravenna betrayed Ruairi’s.

The last few chapters were kinda dragging. There is a war of sort with the Gordons, where Ruairi is able to ‘deliver’ his message to them; that he’d never make any kind of deal with the Gordons.

After months of a rather downcast existence, Ruairi finally has had enough. He decides to find Ravenna, and if possible, win her back because for good or for bad, his heart is hers. To him, it’s worth a try. So when Ruairi goes to London, he didn’t journey with a lot of expectations. Thankfully, Ravenna, in the space of these few months, has come to realize that she has fallen for the Laird too. But because of the way things were when she left, she figured she won’t be welcomed back. It felt like she rather gave up on Ruairi ever coming for her, which was disappointing IMO. I thought she’d fight for her love, if she, indeed, loved him. It was probably a good thing that she didn’t have to wait for long, right? Imagine her surprise when her uncle brings in a stranger to meet her, alone, in the garden, who turns out to be the man she has been thinking of constantly, day and night! The rest was rather easy, for I knew if Ravenna possessed an ounce of common sense, this time she’d not turn him away. And she didn’t. 4 stars.

My Highland Spy has me intrigued enough to look forward to the next installment. I’m pretty sure Grace and

Fagan would be paired off, which is most unfortunate (or can be fun, depending on how Fagan ‘handles’ that idiot) because I like him. When I last saw them together, they were facing off, literally. Grace was determined to show off that she can ‘defend herself against a barbarian’, while Fagan was praying for patience so that he doesn’t end up beating her for being so annoying. You get the picture. I wish Fagan all the luck in the world on that one.

PS: I never knew why everyone seems to be ‘smirking’ so much throughout the story. Believe me, someone or the other was smirking in each paragraph, so much so that I actually begin to notice the word. Pretty weird, considering all the drama and the heartbreaks. Hmmm.

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