

THE LAIRD Excerpt:

Suddenly the door opened wide.

He blinked as light streamed in. Before them a wide staircase led down to a cavernous hall. Immense soot-laden beams held up a ceiling of what appeared to be tightly packed straw, and the walls were timber pylons reinforced with mud or clay.

A fire roared in a fireplace large enough to roast a whole cow. Two large soot-encrusted pots containing what smelt like some sort of stew hung over the fire. Peat blocks were stacked up at one side of the hearth and enough wood to keep a fire going for a week was piled up on the other side.

People sat around on stools or rough wooden benches. It was impossible to estimate at first glance how many there were. Everyone stopped talking at once, and a sudden eerie silence filled the hall as they all gazed up at them.

Liz crumpled in a heap at Andrew's feet.

"Liz, for heaven's sake!" Andrew went down on his haunches beside her, pulling her into his arms. The boy who'd opened the door stood with his mouth agape, staring at them as if they were apparitions. A giant of a man slowly lifted himself from one of two throne-like chairs that flanked the fireplace and, taking the steps two at a time came to tower over them, mouthing words Andrew couldn't understand.

"I'm sorry, but you'll have to speak English." Andrew wondered how he'd managed to get the words out, as picking Liz up, he went down the stairs and looked about for a soft place to set her down. The man followed him, and then faced Andrew, his hand on a deadly looking dagger-type weapon that was thrust through his belt.

The only likely place Andrew could put Liz was on a wide bench. It didn't look much more comfortable than the floor, which was strewn with heather, lavender stems and rushes. As Andrew set Liz down he glanced up. The man's scowl was ferocious as he scratched at his dark head.

His mass of thick black wavy hair reached past his shoulders, and his beard was just as black. He babbled on in the same strange tongue, and the rest of the crowd began to mutter and whisper, moving closer and doing little to disguise their almost childlike curiosity.

They were dressed in an odd assortment of clothing. Andrew had never seen anything quite like it. The men wore a sort of kilt without pleats. They all had leggings or bindings around their calves. Some, including the giant, wore shirts, others a sort of sleeveless vest. Most of the women wore ankle-length long sleeved shift-like dresses, belted at the waist. The children, even the boys, sported similar knee-length shifts, tied about the middle with cords or leather thongs. None of the children had shoes on, but the adults all appeared to be wearing soft leather moccasin type slippers.

A tall woman rose gracefully from the other high-backed chair.

Liz stirred, opening her eyes, muttering, "He wants to know what the blazes we're doing in his home. He seems to suspect we're more spies sent by some enemy or other. A guy named MacGriers. And he thinks you're my bodyguard." She giggled. Andrew sensed a touch of hysteria in her laughter. This certainly wasn't amusing. "He's telling the tall woman with the grey hair that you're an odd-looking sort. He's wondering where you got such fine footwear and that skirted garment. He can't make out your trousers. He reckons they're like nothing he's seen before."

"How the bloody hell can you understand him? I can't." Andrew glared at the man, whose strange kilt had a large clump of gathered material flung over one shoulder. The garment was cinched at the waist by a belt with a buckle bearing a design similar to the one on the cape Liz had draped round her shoulders.

"He's talking Gaelic," Liz said. "The woman is his mother." Sitting up, she put her fingers to her head. "I never faint," she complained as she straightened her hair, which had sprung loose, and was streaming about her shoulders. Andrew was awe-struck. He'd never seen her hair loose. She always wore it in a demure pleat at the office or on their dinner engagements. The change in her appearance astounded him. The giant seemed to be just as impressed, if his gleaming devil's eyes were anything to go by.

Coming to lean over Liz the Scot demanded, "What, may I ask, were ye doing in my round tower?" His stance was threatening; his long muscular legs apart, his fisted hands on his hips.

Liz stared at him in awe. This was incredible. Unbelievable. This great hulk was the image of the Travis in the portrait downstairs in the castle hall. She blinked a couple of times.

"This is a joke, right?" She let out a small nervous laugh. "You have a secret passage in the castle, and you sort of changed the walls about like they used to in—" Turning to Andrew she asked in English, "What was that TV program where walls used to change shape and rooms disappear?"

"I don't believe this. We're stuck here in God-knows-where, with this odd-ball character, and you're wondering about a TV show," he said, shaking his head.

"Well, that's what I think must have happened." She flicked her hair back. "We sort of went through some kind of barrier into another dimension. Or it's a big joke your Uncle Lawrence is playing on us." Even as she spoke she knew she was clutching at straws.

"I somehow doubt that crusty old devil on his deathbed would have the humor, let alone the energy, to pull a stunt like this. No, Liz, there's got to be another explanation."

The crowd moved closer, muttering amongst themselves and staring in blatant interest. But they didn't appear to be threatening in any way. At least that was what Liz told herself, while trying to ignore the flutter of fear inside her chest.

"What is yon fool saying?" the big man asked. His heavy brows lowered as he gave Andrew a look full of menace.

"He's not a fool. And he's wondering how we got here, and how we came to be shut in your tower," Liz explained. "And, as a matter of fact, I'm wondering the same."

"Dinnae play games with me." He tugged on his short uneven beard, and pointed a thick accusing finger at her. "Ye've been hiding out in yon tower. Who sent ye to spy on me? How is it ye're dressed so oddly? What explanations have ye for invading my home? How did ye get in? There's but one way in an' that is across the bridge an' into my bailey. I will send for my guards to draw forth their excuses. Someone will pay for his behavior this day. And what of this one?" He gave Andrew a taunting once-over. "He is yer body servant, aye? Or yer personal protector? I must say he seems a bit dim in the head. The fool cannae understand the simplest of words." He tapped his temple.

Liz couldn't help it, she spluttered. Then her hackles went up. "Now just a minute."

"What the hell's he going on about?" Andrew tugged on the waistband of the kilt, and then looked down. Liz saw the remorse move across his face when he realized he still wore the plaid garment over his trousers.

Andrew strode away a few paces, and the crowd stepped back to allow him a path through. This brought him to one of the long narrow slits in the outer wall. A curtain of plaited rushes kept out some of the cold wind howling about the building. He pushed this aside, and then exclaimed, "Good God, Liz. Come and take a look."

Liz kept one eye on the big man and went to join Andrew. The Scot looked rather savage, even if there was sometimes a twinkle of amusement at the back of his eyes. "I don't believe it." She gaped. They were in a high building, but the view outside was nothing like the one from the castle they'd been in a short while ago.

REVIEWS:

Deborah Brent for Romantic Times 5 stars

"This is a remarkable book, and Ms. McGill is an outstanding writer. There is rich historical detail of everyday medieval life, and characters who stepped right out of the annals of history. I love time travel books, and this one is exceptional."

5 STARS LOVE STORIES WITH A RUGGED HIGHLANDER by Minnie

Anything with a highlander or a man in a kilt and I am hooked. The Laird takes us back to the days when the highlands were unspoiled and the men who lived there were just as rugged.

5 stars By mrs maggie

"Smashing story"

5 stars By David larwood

"Excellent"

5 stars By S.A. Martin

"The Laird" is a wonderful time travel romance that draws the reader in and makes her feel she is there. Exceptionally researched and well written, the story centers around Andrew and

Elizabeth, who travel to Scotland to visit his uncle before the man dies. Andrew is serious and all business, while Elizabeth is more fun-loving but also well-versed in Celtic lore and fluent in Gaelic. The story starts in the present, but while going over items in the attic of the castle, they find themselves flung back to the 11th century. If that isn't bad enough, Travis, the lord of the castle, is a spitting image of Andrew and takes a liking to Elizabeth. Andrew is torn between jealousy of Travis and worry about getting back to their own time. Elizabeth shares his worries, but she can at least speak the native language, while Andrew is lost. But how can they return to their own time, to their own country of Australia? If they can't get back, they are stuck in the 11th century.

Marlene at FAR 5 angels! **and recommended read**

"Andrew and Elizabeth travel far in this novel—very far, indeed....

On a trip to the Scottish castle of Andrew's ancestors they're pulled back in time to a world where they know no one and find it necessary to fight for their very existence. They make many discoveries along the way and learn not only about the history of the castle, but about their future together. Liz intrigues Andrew, with her knowledge of Gaelic and her love of Scottish lore, and when a Scotsman named Travis shows her some attention his hackles rise. For her part, Liz is anxious to find a way home, if they can.

I enjoyed every minute of this book. Tricia McGill perfectly pulls the reader back in time along with Andrew and Liz, describing the castle and its inhabitants in such detail they fully come to life. Andrew's aunts, Tilda and Kitty, are gems whose unsolicited advice made me laugh out loud! The way Liz first imagines she's been swept into a television show is hysterical. The dialogue in this story is one of its strongest features, and coupled with an intriguing plot it is a winning combination...is a book I will probably order in paperback, just so I can curl up with it on a rainy day and reread it! It's that good!

Maura Frankman TRS 4 and a half stars Sensuality rating: Very sensual

"I am not usually a fan of this genre, but this book might just have changed my mind. I loved Liz and Andrew, and most of the time Travis, though sometimes he is just a little too full of himself and his power as laird. The author paints a vivid picture of Scotland in the eleventh century, and for once the images were not all of how the nobility lived. Andrew and Liz did have to rough it a bit, sleeping on the floor of the hall with the rest of the people. Though they lived in a savage time, Travis and his family weren't completely uncivilized, and it is no surprise that Liz is a little attracted to Andrew's eleventh century counterpart, they are more similar than just in looks. I found it a little annoying that Travis in his conceit didn't realize the danger that he put Liz and Andrew in with his flirting, but that same flirting added some necessary tension between the two main characters. Andrew seems to have had feelings for Liz for a long time, but still treated her like a piece of furniture, even asking her to buy gifts for his past and present girlfriends. Travis' attentions seem to wake him up a bit. There are many exciting scenes of battle and intrigue, and great descriptions of life in that time period, some of them so vivid that you can almost smell and taste the food. What a great story!!!"

JoEllen Conger 5 stars

"Andrew MacAllister reluctantly travels to Scotland to take his last farewell with his dying Uncle Lawrence, accompanied by his attractive personal secretary, Elizabeth Rowan. He's not looking forward to becoming the last of his bloodline. Once his uncle is gone he'll become Laird of the decrepit century's-old castle. While perusing the stored jumble in the attic, the

two are mysteriously whisked back into the past, to a time when Andrew's 1050 ancestor and Clan Leader, Travis McKenna has absolute rule over life and death of everyone in his keeping. While Andrew struggles to stay alive and on Travis' good side, Liz fights just to stay out of the heathen's bed.

Multi-published author Tricia McGill crafts an exciting, fast moving Highlander saga . This can't-put-it-down-story is guaranteed to keep you turning pages."

5 stars A. Dee Carey

"This Highland tale has all the majesty of a historical and all the magic of a time travel. However, this Scottish pair transcends the centuries in a way sure to surprise the reader. The heroine is a strong capable woman, one of many skills. The hero is equally strong and I imagine even has good legs as he is reputed to look dashing in a kilt.

My pleasure in reading this tale opened my visions as I allowed myself to be swept to the Scottish highlands. This is a story that takes you away from the daily mundane and embraces you in a far past time. This is the first of this author's books I've had the good fortune to read, but it will not be the last."

4 stars **The Laird: An interesting story involving time travel.** Amazon Customer

"The story has action and suspense. The characters are very interesting. I normally don't care much for the fantasy of time travel but this is an entertaining book."

3 stars By Angharad Gask

"If you like time travelling romances, but think you know exactly how the plot will develop, this will surprise you, and I think in a good way. It is quite well written and has pretty believable characters."