



Wings of Morning ***These Highland Hills – Book 2***

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Strathgryre House, Central Scottish Highlands, June 1566

All was in readiness.

The bedchamber was spotless, the linens so recently washed the faint scent of sunshine and fresh air clung to them still. The stout oak bedstead had been hand-rubbed with oil until it gleamed. The stone floors were scrubbed and laid with newly cut, summer-sweet marsh rushes.

Beeswax candles, impaled on tall, iron stakes, flickered and burned on either side of the bed. A fire smoldered in the hearth, adding its own warmth and light to mute the chill darkness of stone-damp castle and dreary summer night.

Still, seventeen-year-old Regan Drummond shivered, clasping her arms protectively about her nightrail-clad body. Gooseflesh tightened her fair skin. The thin, lawn fabric was, after all, not meant for warmth but enticement. Regan could only hope, after tonight, her wedding night, she'd be able to put away the ridiculously impractical gown forever.

But not just yet. Tonight, no matter how senseless all the bedtime ceremony seemed, she'd grit her teeth, keep her opinions to herself, and do her duty. Aye, do her duty, and not give dear Roddy cause to question her devotion to him. Already he was in such a state of agitation over their impending coupling, Regan had all but forced him into the inebriated arms of his younger brother and other male wedding guests.

“Give me a time to prepare myself,” she had urged her new husband. “A cup or two of wine won't harm a braw lad like ye,” she then added, motioning Roddy away. “Indeed, it'll ease the night to come for the both of us.”

Misgiving in his warm brown eyes, Roddy had reluctantly joined the party of revelers, leaving Regan to her maidservants and the bedtime preparations. If the truth be told, she was in no hurry

for the marital consummation. If the truth be told, she was as frightened and unsure of what this night held as he.

With a sense of foreboding, Regan walked to the big, four-poster bed, climbed in beneath the cool, linen sheets, and pulled the down comforter up to her chin. The sound of raucous male voices echoed down the long, stone corridor, voices thick with drunkenness and loud with crude songs. She shivered. It was the wedding party, at last delivering Roddy to his bride.

It was only for a night, Regan reminded herself, and only for a short while at that. Roddy would manage his husbandly duties, then fall asleep beside her. On the morrow, they'd rise, share breakfast, and fall back into the comfortable routine and relationship they had always known before.

Aye, Reagan thought. It was only for a night—well, the worst of it, leastwise. It was also, in the total scheme of their lives, a very small part indeed.

The singing and shouts grew louder. The remarks came again, crude and ribald. Hot blood warmed Regan's cheeks. The boors. The vulgar, insufferable boors!

Then they were at the door, kicking it open and spilling into the bridal bedchamber like a horde of Viking marauders. Hair disheveled, shirts wine-stained and half hanging from their kilts, the group of twenty or so clansmen, led by Roddy's younger brother, Walter, slid to an abrupt halt at the sight of her. Roddy, carried aloft by the other revelers, looked up from his perch and blinked in surprise.

It took only a moment, however, for his surprise to transform into a drunken leer. “Och, there ye are, my bonny bride,” he managed to slur. “Ready and waiting for yer man to make ye a woman, are ye?”

At that, Roddy's companions roared in laughter and resumed their unsteady trek toward the bed. Regan watched them approach, their grinning passenger held overhead like some precious cargo, her desire to dive beneath the covers warring with the impulse to leap from bed and pummel the lot of them. Only her fierce Highland pride held her where she was. That, and the hurt Roddy's insensitive acquiescence to this ridiculous performance stirred in her.

She had begged him not to allow the traditional activities that always culminated in drunken men milling about, making bawdy comments in the marital bedchamber. And he had given his word that no such escapades would mar their wedding night. Yet here he was, as inebriated and lewd as the rest, joining in with the most unseemly—and traitorous—enthusiasm.

But there was no time to dwell on his hurtful betrayal. The MacLaren men halted at the foot of the big bed. With suddenly the greatest of care, they lowered their laird and deposited him there. Apparently oblivious to Regan's murderous glare, Roddy immediately rose to all fours and crawled up to meet her.

“A wee kiss for yer husband,” he growled, his liquor-bleary gaze roving over her. “Show me how badly ye want me, lass.”

Regan steadily traded glances with him. "First, send them on their way," she said, her voice low but taut with fury. "What's between us, if indeed there's aught to be salvaged this night, isn't for the sight of others."

As if trying to fathom the meaning beneath her words, her husband blinked stupidly. A light of comprehension flared, signaling that a shred or two of sense still remained. He nodded slowly, then, half turning, looked behind him.

"Away with ye," he snarled. "I've better things to do than celebrate with the likes of ye."

"But ye haven't even crawled between the covers!" one of Roddy's compatriots shouted. "And we've yet to verify ye're properly bedded."

Roddy turned back to Regan. She could see the liquor beginning to regain its foothold, the uncertainty rise. "Send them away," she whispered. "Please."

"She said ye must leave," he muttered thickly, never taking his gaze off her.

"And since when does a wife tell her husband what he can and cannot do?" a voice rose from somewhere beyond the foot of the bed.

"Aye, bridle the filly before she takes the bit, and she's forever out of control," another man yelled. "Teach her to obey now, or ye'll never tame her!"

"And ye'd know that better than most, eh, Fergus!" yet another added, and they all laughed.

At that, something hardened, went dark and shuttered in Roddy's eyes. Despair rippled through her. She had lost what little influence she may have had over him. Or, leastwise, this night anyway.

The laughs and suggestive comments rose again, until Regan felt smothered in their dreadful, demeaning cacophony. She shut her eyes, attempting to block it all out. And then Roddy leaned close, took her chin in one hand, and slammed his mouth down on hers.

His kiss was rough and awkward. The taste of wine, the odor of smoke and sweat, was on him. Nausea roiled in her gut.

Suddenly, Regan couldn't breathe. Panic seized her. She struck out frantically.

Roddy tumbled backward, falling off the end of the bed. For a fleeting moment, his companions fell silent, then roared all the louder in laughter. It snapped the last thread of maidenly modesty and decorum Regan possessed.

With a cry of rage, she leaped from bed and grabbed one of the tall, iron candlesticks. Pulling the beeswax taper free, she tossed it aside. Then, swinging the candle stake's pointed end in a wide arc before her, Regan advanced on the clansmen.

"Out of here, I say," she screamed. "Get out before I run ye through with this!"

The sight of an enraged, nightrail-clad woman must have finally been enough to sober the assembled men, at least temporarily. They fell silent; their mouths dropped open, and they stared. She knew, though, she must press her advantage while she still could. The candle stake held before her like some battle spear, Regan advanced on them.

“Get out, ye leering, liquor-besotted swine,” she all but shrieked. “Out! Out of my bedchamber!”

She punctuated her demand with a sudden lunge forward with her lethally pointed weapon. With an indignant gasp, the men parted before her. Another sharp thrust, and they began to crowd backward toward the still-open door.

Like she would with a flock of sheep, Regan slowly but surely herded them out the way they had come. When the last man stepped back over the threshold, she finally set aside her weapon. Taking the door, she slammed it shut and bolted it.

There were a few defiant shouts and muttered curses, but from the footsteps now echoing down the corridor, it was evident all the revelry had at last ebbed from Roddy's clansmen. Soon, silence reigned once more. It took a time for Regan's anger to cool and her heart to resume a more placid beat. At last, though, the candle stake in hand, she turned back to the bed.

Roddy was sitting on the floor where he had fallen, a crooked smile on his lips. Though most times that boyishly endearing look was enough to erase any lingering anger or exasperation Regan might still harbor against her dearest friend, this night there seemed nothing behind that smile. Nothing, leastwise, that could come close to justifying what had almost happened here.

“Are ye planning to impale me on that wee spike, lass?” her now apparently contrite new husband inquired. “It wouldn't sit well with the clan, ye know, killing the bridegroom on his wedding night.”

“Yet almost ravishing me before half the men of the clan would?”

He gave what looked to be a half-apologetic shrug. “Well, mayhap I let things get a wee bit out of hand . . .”

Regan gave a disdainful snort. “A *wee* bit?”

Roddy heaved a weary sigh. “Fine, it got far too much out of hand. And I'm sorry, lass. Verra sorry.”

All the fight drained from her in one big rush. “Ye . . . ye promised, R-Roddy.” Despite her best efforts to contain it, her voice quavered. “And ye knew how badly I didn't want such a degrading spectacle on our wedding night. Yet ye . . . Och, how *could* ye go against yer word?”

“Lass, lass.” He shoved to his feet, swayed unsteadily, and had to grab for one of the bedposts to keep from toppling over. Once more, a sheepish grin split his handsome face. “Let me make it up to ye. Come here. Come to me, for I fear I'll surely fall and crack my skull if I try to walk verra far.”

She knew what would happen if she went to him. Yet, despite what had just transpired, despite the lingering pain at his vow breaking, Regan knew she couldn't avoid the inevitable forever. And at least the bedchamber door was now firmly bolted against any intruders . . .

"I'm not thinking ye deserve aught from me this night," she muttered, even as she made her way back across the room, "but if ye give me yer solemn vow ye'll never do that again—"

Just as soon as she came within arms' length, Roddy grabbed her and pulled her to him. "Wheesht, lass," he said to silence her. "I promise. It'll never happen again."

With that, he lowered his head toward her. At first the kiss was gentle, even tentative, but as Regan moved close and yielded to him, his mouth slanted harder and more insistently. He crushed her lips with an increasingly savage intensity. His hands began to rove over her, touching places no man had ever touched before.

She wrenched her mouth away. "Roddy . . . please. Ye're hurting me!"

He lifted passion-glazed eyes to her. "Wheesht," he mumbled, his voice gone hoarse and frighteningly unfamiliar. "Ye've had yer apology. It's time ye give me what I've been wanting for years now. It's time ye begin acting the obedient wife."

Whirling around, Roddy forced her up against the foot of the bed. Regan fought to keep her balance, but her husband's greater weight and strength inexorably bore her back until they both fell onto the bed. And then his hands were tugging at her nightrail, wrenching the delicate fabric until it tore.

The sound of the ripping cloth sent Roddy past the point of reason. He threw himself atop her, his fingers entwining in her hair to twist the long locks painfully in his hands.

"Roddy," Regan cried. "Stop! Ye're going too fast!"

Her husband—the gentle man she thought she had married—was no more. A madness the like of which she had never seen before came over him. Terror filled Regan. Panic rose to nearly strangle her. Instinctively, she fought back, pounding at him, striking his head and face, all the while screaming for him to stop.

And then, he did. He went limp and slumped over her. At first, all Regan could do was struggle to catch her breath. Gradually, though, as her heart eased its pounding and the room ceased its crazed twirling, Regan realized he hadn't stopped of his own volition. Roddy had either succumbed to the vast amounts of wine he had surely imbibed this eve, or she had inadvertently knocked him out in her terror-stricken thrashing.

She shoved him off her and, for a long moment, lay there beside him. Then, rolling away, Regan slid from bed.

His face relaxed once more, Roddy looked again like the friend she had grown up with all these years. He looked familiar, comforting, kind—nothing like the madman of a few minutes ago. But

it didn't matter anymore. She had seen a side of Roderick MacLaren she didn't like. Didn't like at all.

Regan glanced down at her nightrail. Nausea welled. Suddenly she couldn't bear to be in the same room with the stranger who was now her husband. She shrugged from the ruined garment, hurriedly dressed, then ran from the room.

#

“The alarm's been raised, m'lord. Reivers have attacked Shenlarich and taken the cattle.”

Not another village, Iain Campbell thought late that evening, *and that only a fortnight since the last attack*. Though he loved the Highlands dearly, there were times when he grew mightily weary of all the lawlessness, plundering, and blackmail that were such an integral part of the Highland way of life. He had suffered enough at the hands of power-maddened, narrow-visioned men. All he wanted was to live in peace.

But apparently the fulfillment of that particular wish wasn't in the offing anytime soon. With a sigh, the laird of Balloch Castle and tanist to his cousin and clan chief, Niall Campbell, glanced up from his spot in the chapel pew. “And have ye word, as well, Charlie, as to which clan's doing the thieving?” he asked.

“It's likely the MacLarens, m'lord.” Charles Campbell's mouth lifted in an apologetic grin. “I'm sorry to be disturbing ye at prayers, and this well into the eve and all, but if we're to have a chance of catching them . . .”

Iain closed his prayer book, set it aside, and leaned back in the pew. “Dinna fash yerself. Clan honor won't permit such a humiliation. Best we see to the task forthwith.”

“Shall I call out the lads to ready themselves then?”

Though understanding for his reluctance burned in his captain's eyes, Iain knew his men would leap at the chance to avenge the thievery. They'd be eager for a late night's rousing ride, thirsty for retribution against a band of other clansmen likely out for naught more than a bit of excitement and a few cattle to prove the mettle of their manhood. Still, the crofters who had lost their beasts were poor folk and could hardly spare even one less animal. Even more importantly, they were Campbells and looked to him, as their laird, for a reckoning.

“Was any crofter seriously injured or killed?”

Momentarily, Charlie's weathered brow furrowed in thought. “Nay. Daniel, the smithy, was banged upside his head, and old Fergus got a foot stomped on by a passing horse, but no one was much in the mood to defy armed men. Most just stood back and watched.”

Things might not go quite as peaceably for the MacLarens, Iain well knew. Once his men's blood was stirred to recapture their cattle, the possibility was strong that lives might be lost. MacLaren lives, as well as the lives of his own men.

Iain grimaced. He'd had enough of fighting and death in the past two years to last him a lifetime. He'd had enough of treachery and misguided Highland honor. Yet few seemed to share his sentiments. Few Highlanders, at any rate.

"Well," he said, rising, "though we didn't start this absurd custom of reiving, we've no other choice but to end yet another instance of it." He shook his head. "As if Roddy MacLaren and his clan are on the verge of starvation, now that he's gone and wed that Drummond heiress."

"Mayhap he intends to present the cattle to his wee bride as a wedding gift." Charlie chuckled. "The MacLarens are themselves, after all, poor as church mice. And a man, even a poor one, has his pride."

Iain gave a snort of disgust. "So a stolen bridal gift is better than no gift at all, is it? Nay. I don't see it that way, and never will, Charlie."

The older man stepped aside for Iain to slip from the pew and head down the aisle of the ancient, stone chapel. "Nay, m'lord," he softly called after him. "But then, ye're not like most men, are ye? And thanks be to God that ye aren't. Aye, thanks be to God!"

#

"R-Regan? Regan, are ye all right? Regan, wake up!"

Cold, stiff, and miserable, Regan awoke in the pale light of dawn to a sweet, childish voice. For a fleeting instant, disorientation, as thick as the morning mists hanging heavy on the air, swirled about her. Then, as she tried to stretch her drawn-up legs—and found she couldn't—remembrance returned.

She was in the garden, crammed between the high, stone wall and the yew bushes that formed a backdrop for the fountain with its crumbling statue of an archer. Her gown and woolen cloak were damp with dew. Her toes, clad as they were in a pair of thin leather slippers, were numb.

"Regan?"

She looked up and, through the parted branches, saw Molly. Roddy and Walter's little sister gazed back at her with frightened eyes. Regan's heart went out to the seven-year-old. Likely she had heard the noisy celebration last night. And, just as likely, she had been awoken in the wee hours to Roddy roaring about like some wounded lion. No wonder the bairn was confused and afraid.

"I'm fine, lassie." She attempted a reassuring smile. "I was just playing a game with Roddy and Walter, that's all."

Molly's pert little nose wrinkled in puzzlement. "But Roddy's not even here, nor is Walter. So why are ye still hiding?"

Good question. "Och, well, I suppose I dozed off while I was waiting. But now there's no reason to hide anymore, is there?"

“Nay, there isn't.”

With a sigh, Regan rolled to the side and crawled from her hiding place. It was past time she face the world again, whatever time it actually was. Fortunately, no one was about in the garden, and the mists effectively blanketed her from view of the tower windows.

As she climbed to her feet, however, a chill breeze swept through the little, enclosed courtyard, sending needles of ice to pierce her sodden garments. Regan shivered and wrapped her arms about her. If she wasn't careful, she'd surely catch the ague from the past night's sorry refuge in the garden.

Served her right, she supposed, for running out on Roddy last eve. Not that he had long remained in his drunken stupor. Scarcely a half hour later her husband had roused and taken to storming though Strathyre House, shouting her name and demanding she join him posthaste. For his efforts, Roddy had stirred anew his still-inebriated clansmen, who had then proceeded to add to the pandemonium.

Not that any of the blustering and threats had pried her from her secret bower. Regan was no fool. Roddy was a man changed when under the influence of liquor. A man whom she had only recently discovered she neither liked nor trusted. Or, leastwise, didn't like or trust when he drank. No matter how he bellowed and pleaded, she had refused to face him again last night.

One betrayal in her life was far more than she could bear. She'd not risk her heart again.

At the irony in that thought, Regan's lips lifted in what she imagined was a parody of a smile. Roddy's abandoned promises last night had been an unexpectedly savage wounding. It might indeed take a long time to heal, if it ever did. But she hadn't really been thinking of his shameful behavior. She had been remembering an even more troubling, long past ordeal.

Odds were, though, that Roddy and his clansmen would return soon. After a time of searching the tower house, her husband had given up his efforts to find her. He and his men had ridden off, apparently in pursuit of the nearest tavern. She only hoped the drunken lot had managed not to fall from their horses and been trampled in the doing. That's all she needed. A hungover *and* injured husband.

“Er, shouldn't we be going inside?” Molly asked just then. “It's verra chilly out, ye know.”

Regan glanced down at the little girl. With a mop of long, blond curls, big, blue eyes, and the sweetest smile, Molly was the sister Regan had never had. She had been born late in Roddy and Walter's father's second marriage, and her birth had killed her mother. Regan, with the help of the servants, had essentially raised her.

“Aye, ye're right as always, lassie,” she replied. “It *is* verra chilly out.”

Taking Molly's hand in hers, Regan skirted the flower beds that angled out from the fountain, then headed down the flagstone path between the two, long rows of herbs and vegetables leading to the ground-floor entry. Slipping inside, she made her way to the turnpike stair leading up to

the first floor, which opened immediately onto a large kitchen. Cook and her two helpers were already hard at work, preparing what Regan realized, with a start, was the noon meal.

“And what've ye been about,” the older, pleasantly plump woman demanded as she caught sight of her, “to be slinking into my kitchen like this?” She shot Molly then Regan a quick, assessing glance before returning her attention to the bread dough she was kneading. “Ye look a drenched cat, ye do, Regan MacLaren. Best ye hie yerself up to yer bedchamber and have Isabel draw ye a nice, hot bath. Meanwhile, I'll prepare ye a wee bit of breakfast to tide ye over, and have it sent up. The young lord has yet to return. Ye've still time to prepare yerself, not to mention gather yer wits about ye.”

Regan could feel the warmth flood her cheeks. She looked down at Molly. “Why don't ye go over and see if Sally has any sweets left from last eve's meal?”

The little girl seemed to like that idea and scampered off. Once she reached Sally's side, she tugged on the woman's apron.

“And why would I be needing to gather my wits about me?” Regan asked then, sidling up to Cook even as she faced the humiliating realization that her and Roddy's marital spat was indeed known by all.

“Why else than to show that man of yers the proper way of things?” Cook gave a hoarse laugh. “He acted the craven boor last eve, and well ye know it. Ye mustn't let him off lightly. Not if ye've even an ounce of pride in ye, at any rate.”

Cook meant well. Indeed, over the years living at Strathyre House she had been the closest thing to a mother that Regan had had. In the end, though, she was now a MacLaren. Her first loyalty must ultimately be to Strathyre's laird.

“I've my pride,” Regan muttered. “But I'll deal with my husband in my own time and way, thank ye verra much.”

The expression on the other woman's face fell. “Och, I beg pardon, m'lady. I didn't mean aught by my comments. Of course ye must deal with the young lord as ye see fit.”

She had bruised Cook's feelings. Compunction filled Regan. “Och, I didn't mean aught by my unkind comments! I value yer advice, truly I do. It's just that . . . well, I've a lot to think on before Roddy returns.”

“Aye, that ye do.” Cook smiled in sympathy. “And it'll all go better after ye've had a bite to eat and a nice hot bath.” She made a shooing motion with her flour-dusted hands. “So off with ye now. Just as soon as ye hie yerself to yer room, I'll send up my two lasses with the buckets of water.”

Regan's mouth quirked in gratitude. “Thank ye. I don't know what—”

A cry went out from high overhead. It was the sentry walking guard on the tower house parapet. Regan and Cook's gazes met. It was surely Roddy and his men, headed home at last from their night's escapades.

Now that the moment was upon her, Regan wasn't so certain she was up to facing her husband. Perhaps it was best to take to her chambers for a time, then find Roddy in a less public moment. But that smacked of some beaten dog slinking away to hide, and she had nothing to hide or be ashamed of.

She squared her shoulders and lifted her chin. "The time for gathering my wits, I see, has passed. I must go and greet my husband."

Understanding flared in Cook's eyes. "Aye, m'lady, ye do. Naught else would be fitting, would it?"

"Nay, it wouldn't." Regan hesitated, her glance alighting on Molly now seated at the table, her face smeared with strawberry jam from one of the tarts she was eating. "Best Molly stay down here. Until I've had a chance to speak with Roddy."

Cook nodded. "Aye, best she do. We'll keep an eye on the lass, we will."

"My thanks." With that, she turned and left the kitchen.

Though Regan's intent to have it out with her husband had sounded confident back in the kitchen, as she made her way to the stairs, then up another flight to the Great Hall where she intended to await the men, fresh doubts assailed her. How should she receive Roddy? What should she say, or should she say aught at all? Might it not be best just to let him do all the talking?

One thing was certain. He must understand, and understand thoroughly, that his behavior last eve was reprehensible and wouldn't be tolerated ever again. He must, or there was no hope of salvaging their marriage.

She removed her cloak and laid it on a bench as she passed into the Great Hall. Her gown was still damp, but no one would likely notice in the excitement of the homecoming. There wasn't aught to be done about her hair, but then, the dampness only made the thick mass of chestnut locks even wavier, and Roddy was well used to that. Regan doubted he'd note aught amiss in her appearance.

Drawing up before the hearth fire, she first took a seat in one of the high-backed, carved wooden chairs placed there. Finally, however, when it began to seem Roddy and the others were taking an interminable amount of time to come inside, she stood and began to make her way across the wide expanse of rush-covered floor. Before she could traverse even half of the room, however, the MacLarens walked in.

Regan jerked to a halt. Between the double file of clansmen, they carried what looked to be a length of tautly stretched plaid. For an instant, she stared at them in puzzlement. In the yet

gloomy day, it was difficult to make out what they carried between them. Then, as the men drew nearer, Regan saw a body lying on the plaid.

She noted now that many of them were bloodied, their shirts torn, and some wore bandages. Fear stabbed through her. What had they been about last eve?

Her glance searched them more closely now, seeking but one face in the mass of men approaching her. Walter, his face twisted in anguish, strode along at the side of one of the men carrying an end of the plaid. Regan's hand went to her throat. Nowhere did she see Roddy.

And then she knew. They carried Roddy!

With a strangled cry, she ran to them, shoving her way past the men, crowding up to stand beside her husband. The men halted, and she could finally see what had been hidden before. Roddy lay there, pale and unmoving. She reached out, touched his cheek. It was cold.

"How?" Regan forced out the word. "How did this happen?"

No one replied.

"How?" she repeated on a thread of hysteria. "How?"

"He wanted to prove himself to ye," Walter said at long last, moving to her side. "He wanted to make amends by giving ye a fitting bridal gift. So we went on a wee ride into Campbell lands to lift a few fat cattle."

She turned a horrified gaze to Roddy's younger brother. "Ye . . . ye went reiving? On my wedding night?"

"It wasn't my idea, lass," Walter said. "I tried to talk Roddy out of it. Ye can ask any of these lads here. They'll vouch for me, they will."

"What happened?" Regan dragged in a shuddering breath. She gestured to the lifeless form of her husband. "How did *this* happen?"

"The Campbells weren't in a verra forgiving mood when they caught up with us. We found ourselves fighting for our lives. Finally, Roddy cried out to the Campbells that we yielded. That seemed to satisfy them, once we had thrown down all our weapons. I thought then that we might actually live through this, especially when the Campbell leader next ordered us to depart. Things got a bit confused then, in the darkness and all, and I lost track of Roddy. Soon thereafter, a shot rang out.

"The clouds momentarily parted and, in the moonlight, I saw Roddy fall. I wheeled about, just in time to catch a flash of a silver pistol, in the hand of the man who had just fired it. Fired a bullet into my brother's back." His mouth contorted in hatred. "The cowardly, cold-blooded knave!"

Time stilled. Blood pounded through Regan's skull until she thought she'd scream. All the while, though, a chill calm spread through her. Roddy was dead, and the man who had murdered him still lived.

“Who?” she gritted out the demand. “Who killed Roddy?”

“The laird of Balloch Castle, no less,” Walter hissed. “None other than Iain Campbell himself.”

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