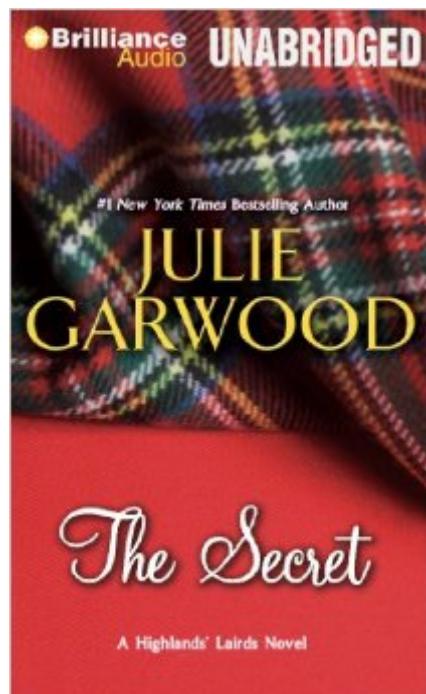


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The Secret (Highlands' Lairds)



Synopsis

New York Times bestselling author Julie Garwood captures the Highland splendor of medieval Scotland in this breathtaking love story. The inspiration for her acclaimed bestseller *Ransom*, this classic tale is a passionate masterpiece from one of the best-loved storytellers of all time. Judith Hampton was as beautiful as she was proud and loyal. Her dear Scottish friend from childhood was about to give birth, and Judith had promised to be at her side. But there was another reason for the journey from her bleak English home to the Highlands: to meet the father she had never known, the Laird Maclean. Nothing prepared her, however, for the sight of the Scottish barbarian who was to escort her into his land...Iain Maitland, laird of his clan, a man more powerfully compelling than any she had ever encountered. In a spirited clash of wills and customs, Judith reveled in the melting bliss of Iain's searching kisses, his passionate caresses. Perplexed by her sprightly defiance, bemused by her tender nature, Iain felt his soul growing into the light and warmth of her love. Surely nothing would wrench her from the affection and trust of Iain and his clan...not even the truth about her father, a devastating secret that could shatter the boldest alliance, and the most glorious of loves!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I know I have one, and this book is definitely in the top tier. There are some books by romance authors that you can just go and read over and over again, and I find that this is one of the best. The story starts out charming and doesn't stop there. You're introduced to two little girls -- Judith and

Frances Catherine, who should not be friends -- because one is English and one is Scottish. Of course, that never stopped anybody! They become best friends and maintain this bond through the years. Fast forward a bit and Scottish Frances Catherine is expecting her first baby, and wants English Judith to be at her side. The laird, Iain Maitland, figures that Judith will say no to this request, and takes 3 of his men to go get her. To everyone's surprise, Judith is not only ready, but she's practically begging to be taken away from her abusive household. Along the way, Iain and Judith fall in love, and the Secret of Judith's past threatens to tear them apart for all time. Of course, it won't because this is a romance novel, but there is still a lot of mystery and conflict surrounding the refreshingly innocent Judith. There is a ton of humor in this book -- you will laugh over what the Scottish men say when they discuss Judith. You'll laugh over Judith's actions as she worries herself into a panic. I laughed my head off at the beginning of the book, with the strange friendship between Frances Catherine and Judith. It is obvious that Julie Garwood has a love for life and loves to laugh -- it is inherent through her books. I cannot stress how much I love this book! Judith is very innocent and stubborn, and has had a hard life. You'll find yourself really cheering for her as the story goes by, and wanting everything to work out for her.

The story begins with the formation of a friendship between two little girls who normally would have never been friends. Judith Hampton is English but her loving aunt and uncle live on the border between England and Scotland and take her to the border festival where she meets Frances Katherine Kirkaldy. A punishment rock and a vicious little bee forges the girl's friendship forever. Now it is years later, Frances Katherine is about to have her first child and Judith has promised to be there. Frances Katherine defies her husband's clan and requests that Judith be brought to her, despite the fact that they hate the English. Convincing the council of her bond with Judith, Iain Maitland, the clan's laird and Frances Katherine's brother-in-law agrees to go to England and retrieve Judith. Besides, Judith is not only a woman but English, she will never keep to her word and agree to follow the barbarians into the Highlands. Judith Hampton is packed and ready to leave when Iain Maitland and his warriors arrive at her home. Shocking the warriors by leaving without any hesitation, Judith begins the long journey to the Highlands and into Iain's heart. As the book progresses Iain struggles with making Judith understand that he is laird and she should obey all of his commands. Judith has a hard time understanding all of the Highlanders rules. Once they reach the clan, Frances Katherine is overjoyed with Judith's presence. Fearing for her life with the birthing of her babe, Judith soothes Frances Katherine by telling her all of the knowledge she had acquired in the last few years about being a midwife. Her knowledge turns into the clan's saving grace from

the current evil midwife. Now Judith is finally making her place with the clan.

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