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Heather Grothaus

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Nowhere in medieval England are three women so powerful—or adored—as the heiresses of Fallstowe Castle: Sybilla, the ruthless beauty, Cecily, the pure-hearted innocent...and Alys, the youngest sister, whose wild spirit has yet to be matched.

Lady Alys thinks everyone knows the legend: If a man and a woman meet at midnight within the ancient Foxe Ring ruins, they are as good as married. But when she finds a captivating stranger lurking there in the middle of the night, she discovers the one man who is unaware.

It's a deadly pursuit that brings Piers Mallory to the Fallstowe lands. But now that fate has attached the alluring, and curiously insistent, Alys to his side, it may work to his advantage to play by her rules, at least for a time. Yet the danger Piers courts is no game—and the passion he and Alys share is all too real.

Never Kiss a Stranger Details

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From Reader Review Never Kiss a Stranger for online ebook

Clarice says

lady Alys knows the legend of the ancient Foxe Rings, a place where a man and a woman meet at midnight within the rings, they are as good as married. She runs into a captivating stranger lucking there has no knowledge of the rings. It is a deadly pursuit that bring Piers Mallory to Fallstowe Lands, and the Foxe Rings and Lady Alys. The fates has paired Alys to Piers. They will share the danger that courts them both. Ending with the love and passion that will make the both of them whole.

Joelle says

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My thoughts....

My first book by Heather . This was a cute enjoyable read. Something different for a change would have liked to have seen a little more bit of romance to this book though. Lady Alys is being forced to marry. She goes to the Foxe Ring ruins looking for her husband to be. Its legend if you venture to the ring you will find your mate upon entering it if you mate is agreeable with the Lady they are married by tradition. But Piers enters with ring thinking the Lady is hurt and knows nothing of the legend. Lady Alys explains to him what has happen and calls him husband but he is not grasping this. He's been on the run as his step-mother and brother are trying to kill him. Piers is holding and object that with ruin there lives forever. Piers will not leave the Lady so they decide to travel together to London as Piers is on his way to see the King. This gives Alys a chance to work her way into his heart. This was a slow budding romance between the two which brought tiny smiles while living there romance and adventure between the two. The way the two strangers care for one another and fell deeply in love but denying they can be together forever .Sometimes fate has a way of working its way out ! Looking forward to reading this other again.

Hazel says

Fun and easy book to read. Lady Alys goes to the legendary mystic circle, the ancient Foxe Ring ruins, to take her chances on a husband "fate" sends her rather than accept the man her big sister choose for her. The legend: If a man and a woman meet at midnight within the ancient Foxe ring ruins, thay are as good as

married. Unfortunately "the man" Piers Mallory seems to be the only person not aware of the Legend, and really does not believe in the legend or want a wife. He has his own problems such as people hunting him to kill him before he can get to the king and claim his legacy. Add a monkey to the mix and well you will just have to read it...

Melanie says

Hätte ich vorher gewusst, dass die Geschichte im 13. Jahrhundert spielt hätte ich mir das Buch nie geholt. Aber für einen Mittelalterroman war es dann gar nicht mal so schlecht. Vorhersehbar und mit nicht besonders sympathischen Nebencharakteren, aber besser als nach den ersten Seiten erwartet.

Kelly says

I found this a delightful read that I enjoyed very much. I look forward to the next in the series, when it comes out. While the story of a noble woman defying her family and falling in love with a commoner only to find that he is also noble is not new, I found the characters endearing and the monkey a nice touch. The only thing that I found a little puzzling was the inclusion of the magical element that was not expanded upon, and therefore seemed superfluous. However, maybe it will be expanded on in future books. I am glad to see that the next book appears to focus on Cecily, the middle sister.

Jennifer C says

2013 review

This was the second time I read this book. I re-read it because I have the second book in the trilogy to read and I couldn't remember all the nuances of this story. I'm glad I took the time to re-read this book. I enjoyed it much more the second time and even changed my rating from a 3 to a 4.

This is a typical historical romance, you have a headstrong girl, a commoner who is being denied his birthright as a Lord and even a cute little sidekick in the form of a Monkey. I love stories with Monkeys in them, They always lend a little humor to the story and I was not disappointed in this book. Once again there was sarcastic humor that I enjoyed and I enjoyed the relationship between Piers Mallory and Alys Foxe. I feel the relationship moved along at a believable pace, that the love between the two characters didn't come too easy or too difficult. I like the simplicity in the story so that you could focus on Alys and Piers. I also enjoyed meeting Ira and I like the fact that he wasn't Alys' biggest fan and, again, I felt their relationship evolved at good pace. I look forward to reading the next installment in this trilogy which deals with another of the three Foxe sisters.

What I Liked:

I liked the humor in this book.

I liked how we saw Alys row up before our eyes and take ownership of her actions and start to act out of knowledge and strength instead of childishness and selfishness.

What I Disliked:

I disliked how the author, in a couple tiny spots eluded to magic or witchcraft. I don't think that was

developed really well and probably should have been left out of the book as it didn't add anything.

I also disliked how the book is a cliffhanger. If you want to know the story of why the king and Sybilla are having a battle of wills, you have to read on. Perhaps as I read on I will find out more about this elusive "magic" but I don't think that will change how I feel about its presentation in this book.

2011 review

A little slow in the beginning but then I got caught up in the story of a young woman finding herself and her love on a journey to right wrongs done to all. I will definitely read the next book in the series to find out what happens next.

April says

NEVER KISS A STRANGER by Heather Grothaus is an exciting historical romance set in 1276 England. It is fast paced, full of adventure, danger, and witty banter between the hero and heroine. This is the story of a commoner, Piers, who is actually a nobleman. He has been betrayed, his betters (his stepmother & stepbrother) after his father's death attempt to kill him, try to discredit him and hunt him down when they find out they did not kill him. For he is headed to see King Edward to claim his rightful place as the Lord of Gillwick. In route he meets young, beautiful, innocent Lady Alys, the youngest sister of the Fallstowe Castle sisters. She is determined to undermine her eldest sister who is the Queen of the Fallstowe Castle, since their mother's death. For Sybilla, has betrothed Alys to someone Alys hates. So Alys knows the legend of Foxe Ring ruins: If a unmarried man and woman meet at midnight within the ancient ruins, they are married. Rather by fate, legend or destiny Piers comes upon Alys sleeping within the ruins, yes with none other than an excited Monkey, who Alys rescued from her soon to be betroths mother. Who by the way is rather hateful. Although, Alys and Piers have an usual adventure through the woods of England, being pursued by not only Alys, sister, who fears Alys is in danger, but also by the very people who tried to kill Piers. Together they find love, happiness and a great adventure. Piers, not only finds a family member he didn't know he had, his destiny, his rightful place as the Lord of Gillwick but he also finds his true love. Alys finds not only her true love, her place in the world, at her husband's side, but also that her sister, Sibilla, has only been looking out for her best interest. If you enjoy reading a story with witty banter between the hero and heroine from the beginning to the end and where the characters not only grow but also find themselves right in front of your eyes then this is definitely the story for you. This book was received for the purpose of review from the publisher and details can be found at Kensington Publishing Corp and My Book Addiction and More.

Barbara ★ says

My major beef with this story was the use of the F-word. Now I have no problem with using that word myself but then again I don't live in 1276 where I can only imagine such a word wasn't used. According to Wikipedia, the first known usage of this curse was in 1475 - 200 years after this story took place. The overuse of this word by the hero (and I use that word loosely) just seemed wrong and inconsistent with the times.

Since superstition was alive and well in medieval times, I understand the allure of the Foxe Ring and believe that true love would happen to those found together in the ring at midnight of the full moon. So the fact that

Alys Foxe fell in love with our anti-hero Piers Mallory didn't surprise me. What did though was Piers attitude towards Alys and her continued begging and pleading to go with her "husband". His continued acrimony and plain old nastiness towards Alys should have had her running back to her sister regardless of said sisters behavior. It was 1276 after all when women just weren't safe outside the home and honestly Piers looking like a homeless bum could have been anyone intent on harming Alys but did she give a single thought to her own safety? Nope! She clung to Piers like a darn barnacle.

When Alys found out who Bevan's father was, why did she not tell Ira (Piers grandfather) when he rescued her before Piers saw the King. This is information that would have been invaluable to Piers in his time of need. So why did someone who loved him to pieces not turn over this vital information especially since she was leaving with her sister? I just didn't understand this behavior towards someone she l-o-v-e-d.

Now I do own the other books in this series but honestly I hated Sybilla and can't imagine enjoying her story and the other sister is so preachy and God fearing and headed to a nunnery that I can't even imagine reading her story never mind enjoying it. So this being the best sister of the lot and her story was just so-so, I won't be continuing this series. It's a shame since I've loved every other Heather Grothaus book I've read. I'll definitely read this author again just not this series.

Jessi says

I give this romance extra credit for being set in medieval times rather than the standard Regency or Victorian. I really enjoyed the story arch of Alys, who must grow up a bit through the book. I loved Piers, our hero. I sometimes had trouble suspending my disbelief, but I was able to manage because a) I liked the romance between the two characters and b) I love the road trip trope in romance. Also, I really need to find out if there were in fact tribes of people living in trees in England during the dark ages. I've come across this idea in Robin Hood movies and now in this book and I find the idea of living in tree houses utterly enchanting but I always wonder if this has any basis in fact. I am utterly intrigued by Alys' two sisters and am looking forward to their romps.

BRNTerri says

The story takes place in England in 1276. I think the story only spans about a month or so. The heroine is eighteen year old Alys Foxe. She's got pale blond hair and brown eyes. She's the youngest of three sisters. Her parents are deceased and her older sister, Sybilla, runs everything. Alys runs away because Sybilla is making her marry someone whom she doesn't want to marry.

The hero is thirty year old Piers Mallory. He's poor and on a mission: to claim his birthright from the King. He comes across Alys sleeping at something called Foxe Ring. It's a stone ring outside that is supposedly where you go to meet your future spouse. Alys becomes convinced that they're now husband and wife. I found that to be very annoying.

At the beginning, Alys is given a monkey, whom she names Layla. The vicious monkey is on almost every page of the story. I didn't care for that at all. That too was very annoying. I don't believe a romance book should feature a pet. The monkey was very distracting and pointless, really.

Piers suffers a terrible attack by two people who are very close to him. I like those characters because I feel all books, even romance, need a villain or two. I think they add to any story. I don't think the ones in this story were given enough time to develop their characters. There wasn't enough character development with both hero and heroine either. Piers lost his mother when he was just six. We don't really know anything of his life before he met the heroine. Same goes with Alys. What was her life like, especially with no parents? We learned nothing about their pasts.

Almost from the start she claimed she loved Piers and not long after he claimed he loved her too. That was way too rushed, came too fast. They don't really even know each other. They were sort of thrown together and they didn't have anyone but each other during a stressful, scary time. Their feelings for one another grew faster than most, I guess, because of it.

I also didn't like the 'wood' people, who live in trees, literally. I thought that was bizarre and unbelievable, more like something you'd read in a Grimm's fairy tale. I guess it was a bit creative but a little too out-of-the-box for me.

Overall, I found this to be silly and I was disappointed. I grade it a C/3 stars.

Bookaholics says

Never Kiss a Stranger by Heather Gothaus
Historical Romance –March 1st, 2011
4 stars

Never Kiss a Stranger is a medieval romance which features a tortured and noble hero that romance fans will adore!

Alys Foxe is young and impetuous noble woman who is somewhat spoiled. Alys rebels when her overbearing older sister tries to tame her by arranging a marriage for her. Alys is determined to find another, more suitable husband of her own choosing! But Alys is a bit romantic and believes in the magic of the Foxe ruins where her parents met and found love. She visits the site in hopes of finding her own true love there, too. There she meets a stranger named Piers. Piers wants nothing to do with Alys. He was nearly killed by his murderous step-mother and step-brother. Piers is the true heir to his father's small estate and is on a journey to see King Edward and plead for his lands returned. However, Alys sees her chance in Piers and blackmails him into taking her as his traveling companion to London. But their journey has not gone unnoticed by Piers's enemies or Alys overprotective and powerful sister.

Although this story starts with Alys, I really became involved with Piers journey to reclaim his rightful birthright. Alys was initially difficult for me to warm up to because she was sometime hard-headed and seemed spoiled and immature at times. But as the book progressed, I admired her backbone and support in Piers. (Not just how she could use him to avoid her arranged marriage.) Piers is the perfect hero. He has a high sense of honor even though he has been treated poorly, which only made him more worthy. He is a highly sympathetic hero who will tug on any romantic reader's heart strings! I was also fascinated by Alys's powerful sister, Sybilla. Although Sybilla was initially cast as a villain for arranging Alys's arranged marriage, I really began to admire her spirit and strong character as she tried to do what was best for her

lands and the sisters she cared for. She and Piers were my favorite characters. Now that Piers has found love, I cross my fingers that the author's next book will feature the indomitable Sybilla!!

Reviewed by Steph from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Ellen says

This was incredibly well written. At first I thought like Piers that Alys was a spoiled selfish girl. She wasn't, she was smart and as Piers see that so do we.

Likewise Sybilla seemed like a total bitch and yet, despite her many flaws Grothaus shows us that she is strict and harsh and mean, but she means well and deep down she is a good person. Sybilla holds Fallstowe keep, denying the king's summons and generally pissing him off, alone as an unwed woman. She takes lovers which was shocking and yet I was struck by how awesome that was. Especially the moment of weakness she has in private after sending away her latest lover (yes she definitely slept with him, its not rumor) and how she longs to have a man of her own.

Cecilly is known as "Saint Cecilly" and at one point says she's not like her mother or sisters, she doesn't pretend to see colours or cast spells to be special. Which makes me feel for her.

It was well done, at first we see only what society of the book sees, a ruthless beauty, pure hearted innocent and the wild one; but then we see beneath the surface. One of the best example of showing not telling.

Piers was such a strong hero, trying to keep Alys safe and send her home in spite of her wilfulness and insistence that they are married. He's trying to claim his birthright over his step brother and his evil step mother (such a cliché to use but she was, an evil conniving cow).

I believed Alys and Piers together and I loved it.

For people who pick this up and find Alys annoying - hold on because for me almost immediately after I noticed that she was a selfish girl she matured.

Sha Mslvoe says

The beginning was a little bit slow but once Alys run away from her keep with her monkey, it held my attention and make me want to keep reading.

A clean romance with full of adventure and magic.

Ps : how I wish I can see the pagan ruins of ancient foxe ring

LaFleurBleue says

More like 1.5 stars, but I thought the overall rating way overestimated and the other comments too lenient

with this book.

I cannot say it is poorly written, but neither is it nicely so. Some sentences ringed out of time to me.

I never liked ANY of the characters and could not care for them. Alys is a childish brat, who finally realizes how she's been and hopefully will redeem herself in the future (after the ending of the book); however she's rather stupid and it's quite painful to hear her whinge. The so-called hero does not have much for himself; the only words that come to my mind thinking about him are plainer than plain, boring and lonely loner.

The overall story does not hold much, and to my opinion is rather poor. I never understood where the blooming love between the H/h came from. The feelings of the characters are never described, which does not allow for a lot of emotions bonding.

What irritated me the most however were the regular inconsistencies / stupidities done by the characters.

First Alys whinged she could not go home on her own as she truly did not know the way - the author justified that. However two days later, when they were further away from her home castle, she still knew the village where to go to get food. Secondly, in this village she begged for food and told a tale that having food would help her get back to her Mom and be forgiven; however a few minutes later she asked the woman the way to London and thought herself so witty for having misled her into thinking she would be on the road to London. Last one, when Alys was rescued from the villains just before Piers was to see the King to get his rightful title and property, she reluctantly agreed to leave but did NOT tell the information she learnt that would make the difference for Piers, despite her claiming she loved him and would do anything for his wellbeing and happiness. And the hero was not wiser than the stupid chit; he also did something really stupid, which obviously turned bad.

Adelais says

Nothing special
