

# **Rebellion Study Guide**

## **Rebellion by Nora Roberts**

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## Overview

Serena MacGregor, a young Scottish woman, refuses to believe her brother Coil's friend Brigham Langston, an Englishman, is loyal to the plan to place Bonnie Prince Charlie on the throne of Scotland and overthrow the hated English troops who have caused her family so much pain in the past.

Brigham refuses to let Serena's antagonistic attitude keep him from pursuing her and winning her love. As he reveals his heart to her, Serena learns to look beyond labels to see the true heart awaiting her if she only will let go of her fears.

## About the Author

Prolific romance writer Nora Roberts owes her career to a blizzard and a bad case of cabin fever. In 1979, while snowed in with her two young sons at their home in Maryland, Roberts decided to try writing down one of the stories she had made up in her mind since childhood. She put pencil to paper and the result, according to Roberts, "was really bad, but I got hooked, and it changed my life." She spent the next three years collecting rejection slips before her first manuscript was accepted.

Born in Silver Spring, Maryland, on October 10, 1950, Roberts is the youngest of five children. Her Roman Catholic upbringing plays a role in her first published work, *Irish Thoroughbred* (1981), and in several later books, including a minor one in *Rebellion*. Her first marriage ended in divorce, leaving her with two sons, Daniel and Jason.

She remarried in 1985 in true storybook romance style by finding love with Bruce Wilder, the carpenter who came to make repairs and additions to her home in Keedysville, Maryland. Roberts's novels revolve around family and relationships, which is not surprising considering her extended family. Many of her novels are interconnected along family relationships, including *Rebellion*, which is her first historical romance tying in with her contemporary romance series about the MacGregor family.

Roberts spends anywhere from six to eight hours a day honing her craft, and her dedication to her chosen career has paid off.

She is a charter member of the Romance Writers of America, an organization supporting and networking published and aspiring romance novelists, and she was the first author inducted into the RWA Hall of Fame in 1986. Her career achievements include five Golden Medallion awards from RWA from 1982 to 1986; Reviewer's Choice Awards from *Romantic Times* each year from 1984 to 1986; a Silver Certificate from *Affaire de Coeur* in 1985 for her MacGregor series; three Rita awards from RWA from 1990 to 1992; and numerous bookseller awards. In addition, she was the first author to receive RWA's Centennial Award for her one hundredth novel, *Montana Sky*, and the RWA Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997.

With the publication of *Heart of the Sea* in December 2000, Roberts landed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for the fifty-sixth time under her own name and her pseudonym, J. D. Robb. By December 2001, she had published 141 novels that had been translated into twenty-five languages. According to her website, one of her books sells every four minutes in the United States.



# Plot Summary

Coll MacGregor has returned to his home at Glenroe in Scotland with his close friend, the English Lord Bringham Langston, the Fourth Earl of Ashburn. The two have pledged their allegiance to the cause of replacing a Stuart king on the throne to reign over England and Scotland. Both Jacobites, they have come to Scotland to rally the clans in support of their plan to prepare for war under their beloved Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Langston's Grandmother, Mary MacDonald instilled in her grandson a strong sense of justice, making Bringham honor-bound to fight for the Stuart throne, unjustly usurped by the German Hanoverians. Marrying Coll's sister, the hot-headed Serena, and going to battle in Scotland, Bringham Langston must face the loss of his title, his home and Serena's home, and ultimately makes the decision to take his new family to the new world.

When Bringham first meets Coll MacGregor's sister, Serena, she presents a challenge for which he is unprepared, but one he is determined to overcome. Beautiful, sassy and sharp edged in her hatred toward the English, Langston finds her fiery temperament and hostile attitude endearing and appealing, and he will stop at nothing to have her for his wife. Serena, having witnessed the rape of her mother by English soldiers as a child, has a deep-seated mistrust of Bringham from the beginning, but eventually learns to love him.

When Coll and Bringham go off to war, Prince Charles' anticipated help from the French army does not materialize, but the small troops of vicious fighting Scots do an impressive job of taking Edmonton for the Prince. Just before leaving for the next battle, Serena and Bringham are married in the royal court of Edmonton called Holyrood. However, the Scots and Jacobites are soundly and finally beaten at Inverness by the English General Cumberland and his massive troops.

Bringham, critically injured, and Coll return to find their family hiding in a cave, the beautiful Glenroe manor in flames. Uncertain that her husband will live, Parkins, Serena and her sister Gwen nurse Bringham back to health. Their baby boy is named after Bringham's father, Daniel. Wanting to make a fresh start, Bringham, Serena, her brother Malcolm and Bringham's long-time loyal servant, Parkins, depart for the new world in search of a new life.



# Prologue and Chapter One

## Prologue and Chapter One Summary

Set in Glenroe Forest in 1735, Serena MacGregor is a young child who is disappointed not to have been allowed to go hunting with her brother and father. After setting fire to neighboring houses, Captain Standish and his dragoons break into their house, striking Fiona MacGregor and locking Serena in the nursery with her younger siblings.

Threatening Fiona with a false accusation against her husband, Standish rapes her violently. Serena comes to her naked mother's aid, wrapping her in a blanket, and taking care of her siblings. Serena vows revenge against the English.

London, 1745

The Earl of Ashburn, Brigham Langston has received a smuggled letter from Prince Charles Stuart informing him that the time had come to fight for the reinstatement of the Stuart crown, which has been unjustly usurped by German Hanover regime, a pretender to the British throne. Brigham tells Coll that the Prince has been hoping for support from King Louis XV of France, but the support is not materializing. The Prince will be sailing to Scotland. Coll assures him that there are many Scottish clans who will come to their aid, and the two depart for Scotland. Coll tells Brigham about his sisters, and about the incident when the dragoons came to Glenroe and raped his mother. Being the dead of winter, this is a cold, hard and long trip through wild forests, small villages and barren country. Their mission is secret, which takes them through back roads and rough terrain, spending the night at taverns, which are much more common than the Earl's normal surroundings. The two are ambushed by four members of an enemy clan, the Campbells, and although Coll is seriously wounded in a swordfight, Brigham manages to kill three of them. They finally arrive at Glenroe and are greeted by the concerned Serena, who is rude and furious toward Brigham, as he carries the injured Coll into the house to tend to his wounds.

## Prologue and Chapter One Analysis

A hideous experience for a little child, Serena is forever scarred by the violence toward her mother. Although she is able to bite Standish, she is helpless and sees her mother in a state she has never seen.

Roberts is introducing her characters one at a time, letting her reader get a feel for their temperaments and intentions. Coll is a tough Scottish man who likes to drink and party, but who is fiercely loyal to his family, illustrated by his salute at the crest of the hill when they arrive at Glenroe, despite the fact he is wounded. Brigham is a fancily dressed, refined gentleman whose sentiments are more rough and ready than he appears. Although he is dressed in lace and finery, he is also a drinker and a tough fighter. He and Coll, although from different backgrounds, are fast and devoted friends.

Serena is cruel and rude, and so scarred from her childhood experience that she immediately hates Brigham because he is English. Coll has already described their sister Gwen as an angel, and their younger brother Malcolm as a wildcat, which seems to be a compliment for a Scot.





# Chapter Two

## Chapter Two Summary

Gwen, Coll's youngest sister, is competent with medical treatment and expertly stitches his wounds. Serena is loathe to help Brigham with his smaller wound, but is gentled by the smell of him. Brigham is immediately attracted to her but aware of her volatility. They exchange racial insults, and she dishes up his food telling him not to choke on it. Serena calls him a "Sassenach, Gaelic slang for an English invader. Ian MacGregor and Malcolm return from their hunt, and Brigham leaves them to ponder Serena's judgment of him, reminding himself that he is proud of his own heritage.

Ian MacGregor summons Brigham and drinks to his health. Brigham confirms that his MacDonald grandmother was from the Isle of Skye. They drink to the true king and proceed to talk for hours about the upcoming fight. Later, Brigham contemplates the cooperation and teamwork within the MacGregor family. On his way to bed, he stops by Coll's room and sees Serena tending to him. Brigham and Serena, through agitated verbal sparring, acknowledge the differences between them and discuss Shakespeare's MacBeth. She tells him how her family was hunted like animals by the Campbells, raped and slaughtered, and that she will not forgive or forget. She realizes Brigham cares for her brother, as he helps her administer to the fevered Coll. They work together throughout the night and when morning comes, Brigham touches Serena, who does not entirely object. However, as he leaves the room, her mistrust returns.

## Chapter Two Analysis

Early in this story, an ongoing theme is already being established that concerns the value of teamwork. Brigham and Coll fight the Campbells in perfect synchronization. After carrying his injured friend into the house, Brigham later notes that the MacGregors' response to Coll's injury was not hysterical or emotional, but they each did their part to get the situation under control. After Gwen has taken care of the wound and gets Coll stabilized, Serena insists on staying with him. Later in the night, Serena and Brigham work in tandem to tend to Coll while his fever rages, and it brings them closer together. As Brigham works with Serena, she realizes that she cannot continue to hate him simply because he is English. The tension between Serena and Brigham and his attraction to her makes it clear that they will become involved romantically, despite her unpleasant disposition toward him.



# Chapter Three

## Chapter Three Summary

Parkins, Brigham Langston's valet, is fiercely loyal to him, but has been left behind in London. The refined and well-dressed Brigham is expecting his larger wagon to arrive with the trunks of his belongings. He eats breakfast in the parlor with Fiona MacGregor and learns that she is aware of the upcoming rebellion.

Coll is awake and he and Serena are bickering over his eating breakfast, and soon she is bickering with Brigham over his flirtations. Brigham meets ten-year-old Malcolm MacGregor who asks whether he is the English pig, an obvious reference to Serena's opinion of him. Brigham's carriage arrives and, surprisingly, contains the valet, Parkins, who refuses to leave his master. Jem, Brigham's horseman, makes friends with young Malcolm, whose mare will foal soon. When Brigham meets the mare and promises to ride with Malcolm, he and Malcolm become friends.

In the stables looking for her brother, Serena comes across Brigham. She has decided that it was her fatigue that caused her weakened, pleasurable reaction to him the night before. She assures him that she despises him, as she hates all things English. He kisses her forcefully, she relents, and then kisses him back with the expertise of a courtesan. He hurts her feelings by asking her where she learned to do that. He apologizes to her, but Serena is angry.

## Chapter Three Analysis

There is a sense of comfort in this chapter because Coll is going to be all right, Brigham has finally slept, his belongings have arrived, and Parkins has arrived to care for him. Also, meeting and bonding with Serena's family members has solidified his friendship with them. Even young Gwen is attracted to Brigham, and he has already been of great service to the family.

The cat and mouse teasing and anger games that Brigham and Serena play are typical games of young people who are sexually attracted to one another. In this time period, it was inappropriate even to kiss a woman in the stables as if she were a mere tavern maid, but these two have some hot passion between them that is not going to go away.

Parkins and Jem are both interesting characters. Jem is coarse and has to be warned to watch his language around Malcolm, while Parkins is thin, reserved and loyal beyond the call of duty, revealing that serving Brigham is his life's work. Serena kissed Brigham with her instincts; when he asks her where she learned to do that, it implies that she has had more experience than he realized.



# Chapter Four

## Chapter Four Summary

Serena is thoroughly angry with Brigham, feeling he had no right to kiss her so passionately after she had been hospitable to him. She enjoys violent thinking and has fantasies about hurting him. Serena has a bad temper that she often loses, and then feels guilty.

Mrs. Drummond, the family's cook, is a widow with hands like a farmer. She advises Serena to think more nicely about men and wonders if Rob MacGregor has come around. Serena tells her she does not want to marry and be bound to a man, but Mrs. Drummond has fond memories of marital relations. Mrs. Drummond notices the tension between Brigham and Serena, and she has her own eye on Parkins.

To take a break from heavy household chores, Serena takes a ride into the country. Fiona had tried to go to school for six months, but hated it and quit. She relies on her mother for her learning. She now imagines being at an elegant ball and begins dancing to the music in her head and fantasizing about Brigham, who appears in the flesh before her. They exchange flirtations and bicker, Serena defensive and offensive, Brigham enthralled. He suggests to Serena that she cannot insult him, dressing and talking like a man, then hide behind her petticoats when he returns her sarcasm. She still resents his fancy clothes and manners, and feels he does not know what her people have been through and finally goes too far in her insults. In his rage, he holds her neck, and she kicks his shin. They begin physically fighting, Serena biting and Brigham trapping her with his legs. She claims to want to kill him but instead they both become highly aroused. Realizing that he may have bruised her and feeling regret, Brigham assures her that he will restrain himself, and she rides away on her horse.

## Chapter Four Analysis

Serena is referred to as a "wildcat" but in today's society, she would be in anger management therapy as well as other kinds of counseling. She is at odds with herself over Brigham - in love with him but hating what he stands for. Determined not to give in to her feelings, which she knows she will, regardless, she fights like an angry child in resistance. Somehow, Brigham knows she wants him and takes the chance of being brutal with her to break through her anger. Her anger, of course, is legitimate but misguided.

Roberts shows us a family of well-to-do, but down-to-earth, hardworking Scots who, with the exception of a cook, do not rely on servants or money for their daily needs. Serena, although beautiful, performs considerable manual labor, and no family member is exempt from chores. Fiona has made it clear to Brigham that they get by with what

they have. Fiona, although she dreams of dancing at court, seems resentful of Brigham's luxurious lifestyle and proud of her own.



# Chapter Five

## Chapter Five Summary

Coll is in no condition to ride with Ian and Brigham and resents the fact that a Campbell is at fault. The two plan to meet with neighboring clans. Parkins informs Brigham that he will accompany him on this journey, disguised as a hunting trip, even at the risk of being fired from his job. Brigham blames Serena for his aggressive behavior with her, since she had goaded him into such a rage that he lost control of his manners. He has never been rough with a woman and feels she taunted him.

When Brigham finds Serena leaving the barn covered in blood, he panics and holds her, demanding to know who has hurt her. She has been up all night with Jem helping Malcolm's mare give birth to twins and is touched by his protectiveness. She tells him she wishes she could go with him on the hunt, and he realizes he is in love with her.

Brigham and Ian have a long rough ride through Scotland, accepting the simple meager hospitality offered along the way. They head for Glenfinnan, with Brig thinking of how the rocky ground will lend itself to the Scots' successful fighting, and Ian realizing this will be the last battle for all of them.

Arriving to the music of bagpipes, the two are greeted by Donald MacDonald. Brigham says his grandmother MacDonald raised him from the age of ten. MacDonald's daughter, Maggie, has spent her childhood in love with Coll MacGregor, and has now grown into a woman. After a great feast, Brigham goes to bed and cannot sleep, thinking of Serena.

The Cameron clan arrive the next day, as well as the Drummonds and other MacDonalds and MacGregors. Feasting, drinking, toasting and talking politics, Brigham realizes there are disagreements among the clans regarding their levels of support for Prince Charles. Ian suggests they remain cool and shrewd, and they ask Brigham what Prince Charles' intentions are. Brigham tells them that the prince intends to fight and will rely on Jacobites in England and Scotland, but also hopes for help from France since, without it, it will be a very difficult struggle. The prince will come to Scotland and some of the clans are fully behind him, but some offer only weak support and Brigham is concerned.

## Chapter Five Analysis

There has been a long history of fighting in Scotland by this time, and fathers of the men who have gathered have fought together in the past. Prince Charles, although he is young and inexperienced, is a symbol of hope for the Scots who have suffered under the current monarchy and fondly remember Charles' father, King James. Brigham, who has experience and education, has looming doubts about their success and, although



he must keep up a spirited front about the war, is also not sure whether it is worth the risk they will take for Prince Charles, whose "glittering ambition" may be unrealistic.

Brigham's attitude about Serena has changed in the sense that he is now blaming her for his bad behavior, feeling that she goaded and taunted him, which reflects a certain degree of immaturity on his part, as well. However, they are both young, and Brigham's high level of testosterone is repeatedly illustrated by Roberts.



# Chapters Six and Seven

## Chapters Six and Seven Summary

Fiona is concerned for Serena's success in finding a husband who can put up with her temper and tender heart, and worries that Serena has never gotten over her mother's abuse at the hands of the English. Fiona tells Serena that she knew she was in love with Ian when her heart spoke louder than her head, and that love is frightening and rarely makes sense.

The men return from their journey. Her father teases Serena about her wildness, and she assures them all she does not need a man. Coll teases her about wearing breeches, and Ian tells them that Maggie MacDonald, a childhood friend of Serena's, will be paying them a visit.

Brigham and Serena have a lighter hearted chat as she washes laundry in the tub in the kitchen with her feet. He has come to the kitchen for soup. Serena almost falls into the water but he catches her. He holds her and she tells him he makes her weak, afraid and angry, but they are obviously too drawn to each other to continue to play this resistant game. He wants to talk with her, but her sister Gwen comes in and interrupts them. Serena begins to say he was there for soup, but Brigham tells Gwen he was kissing her sister.

Brigham has received a letter informing him that King Louis of France will not intervene or help with the Highlanders' invasion, with either money or troops. Louis had indicated earlier that he would help, but only because he had thought at that time that Prince Charles might be of use in his own invasion, which was abandoned. The Prince is impatient for the rebellion, and they need to assess how many men will actually turn out to fight for him. Ian wants another meeting of the Highland chiefs, and is concerned about raising the suspicions of the Black Watch, so he decides to host a ball. Coll does not want to talk about bonnets but wants to polish swords but, upon seeing the grown up Maggie, becomes besotted with her. Serena sees the polite compliments Brigham pays to other women and decides that he only wants one thing from her. Serena is jealous at how happy Coll and Maggie are about falling in love, and miserable she has been.

The bold Serena accepts Brigham's challenge to race their horses to the lake, leaving the others behind riding daintily down the path. They argue about who won the race, and Brigham picks her up, threatening to toss her into the lake if she won't concede. They fall on the ground together and have a friendly chat about the fact that the cook, Mrs. Drummond, has plans for the valet, Parkins. Serena admits that she wishes there was no need to fight a war, but knows things are changing. He promises her other springs in the future, and kisses her as she objects. Serena thinks that Brigham wants her to be his mistress, and asks for time to think about whether she can live with what he wants from her. He tells her he will not beg.



## Chapters Six and Seven Analysis

The demarcations of propriety are hazy for Serena and Brigham, since they are so overcome with their passion and their culture demands that they show some restraint. Serena is battling hard to maintain her hard edge, but it quickly melts away when he is gentle with her. Nora Roberts has an affinity for romantic cat and mouse games and each time, at least one of the characters weakens — either falling or otherwise becoming vulnerable, which allows the other to step in and be honest. It is a game of back and forth, each being assertive, then retreating, sarcastic then sweet.

The underlying tension in this chapter is two-fold. First, the family is bustling to prepare for a visit from Maggie MacDonald, but more importantly, there is a war on the horizon and the MacGregors' pleasant life is going to change.

Brigham Langston is apparently an ambassador and representative of the cause in which he is involved, since he is the one who receives letters from the Prince and the French King and distributes the information to the Highlanders.

That Coll and Maggie are in love is not a surprise, since Maggie made it clear earlier that she is still, and has always been, in love with him. Coll's expectation of her being a nuisance is an obvious irony, since his attitude completely changes once he sees her. Maggie's ways are feminine and delicate compared with Serena's and, although Serena is a big jealous, Brigham is in love with her partially because she is such a hothead.

The war is approaching and Brigham and Serena are coming closer to having an adult conversation about their feelings. Of course, Serena has totally misunderstood his intentions toward her although, as readers, we are not sure yet. They are certainly in love with each other, but the war may destroy their bond, as well as Serena's deep conflict over his being English.





# Chapter Eight

## Chapter Eight Summary

The family prepares for the ball, with Maggie excited to dance with Coll. She admits to Serena that her childhood fantasies of him were idealistic, but she loves him now as a man even more. Serena has never seen Coll stuttering and acting stupid as he does around Maggie. Maggie says that if Coll does not make a move to kiss her soon, she will take matters into her own hands. She deliberately feigns a slip from a ladder as he walks in, and he rushes to save her from falling. She then pretends she has hurt her foot and Coll carries her to a chair. Serena is disgusted with the trick played on her brother, but Maggie feels it was just a way of making Coll feel he was needed. As she feigns helplessness, Coll asks her to marry him.

Coll's engagement to Maggie reinforces Serena's decision to never marry since she would not be a good wife, and would always be comparing her parents' perfect relationship to her own. She is happy for them, but wonders about Maggie's tactics and tries falling down in front of Brigham while carrying full milk pails. He is agitated that she is doing something beyond her physical capabilities and mentions she is sturdy as a mule, which she answers by pouring milk over his head. Her father has seen the incident and is angry with her, but Brigham defends her and says he called her a mule. He asks Ian to overlook it, telling him that he and Serena seem unable to maintain a polite demeanor together. He admits to Ian he intends to marry her and hopes for his permission, but will do so whether or not he gets it. Ian needs to be sure this is what Serena wants. Little Gwen is getting ready for her first ball, and tells Maggie that he saw Brigham kissing Serena in the kitchen. Serena is still talking as though she hates him.

The Prince has summoned Brigham back to England to help muster English support for the rebellion, but dances at the ball with Serena and then with all of the other young women, as he fights back jealousy over her dancing with other men. When he sees Serena dancing with Rob MacGregor, a former suitor, he takes Serena off the dance floor. He tells her he is going to London, but will return. She returns to the dance floor in her usual ill-tempered mood. She wishes him Godspeed, but seems unsure of his return.

## Chapter Eight Analysis

With the exception of the Prince's letter asking him to return to London, this chapter is all about young love and flirtation. Even young Gwen is wondering if someone will kiss her on the dance floor. These women, perhaps with the exception of Serena, seem to have no specific goals except for that of becoming a wife. Gwen, who has a gift for healing and has learned about herbal medicine, is single-minded about finding a man. Maggie, who has never really wanted anything besides Coll, is finally about to find her life fulfilled.



Serena cannot seem to come to terms with her feelings for Brigham, and the reader knows that only a proposal of marriage is going to change her attitude toward him. However, he is headed to England to help Prince Charles and again, she is nasty to him, not honoring his aggressive jealousy as a compliment, but seeing it as a threat to her freedom.



# Chapter Nine

## Chapter Nine Summary

Serena is deeply unhappy and fairly certain that Brigham will stay in England with his wealth and parties and ladies to call on. She believes France will move on England, as well, and the Prince at that time will sway the French toward his cause. The previous year France had planned to invade England and wanted Charles on the throne because he would be dependent upon France, but their fleet was wrecked and the mission abandoned. Now the French King bides his time while Brigham tries to rally Jacobites in England to support the Stuarts. Serena feels that Brigham will always be tied to England as she is to Scotland.

Brigham found her in tears, riding her horse, and threatened her when she defied him. He tells her he has had enough of her insults, that he is proud of his name and lineage and will not take the blame for earlier abuses of the English. Serena apologizes and says she is afraid not to blame him for fear of forgetting who and what he is. She admits she trusts him more than other men, but does not think he will return to her. She has decided he will be her only lover and now wants to consummate their relationship. In the sunshine, they undress each other and have a passionate, slow, perfect interlude. Brigham finally mentions that he intends for her to be his wife, and she is stunned. She had thought he wanted her as a mistress; he tells her he has already spoken with her father, which angers her because he did not discuss it with her first. She says she will not marry him and go to England. She feels she would be a poor wife as she is not a lady. When she continues to refuse, he threatens to tell her father that he has compromised her. He assures her that she will marry him, and she hopes he breaks his neck on his ride to London, but goes home broken-hearted.

## Chapter Nine Analysis

The games continue between these two immature characters and now, after finally having sexual intercourse, and the confusion about Brigham's expectations resolved Serena is even madder than before. For someone like Brigham, who carries a huge responsibility on his shoulders and fights in horrific battles, to pursue this girl is another indication of his love of fighting and dominating. Ordinarily a man would run the other way, fast, when dealing with someone as irrational as Serena, but her temper and anger seem to stimulate his determination to own her, and to want to punish her.

Nora Roberts wrote this book in 1988 when Serena's rebellious nature might have appealed to the women's movement. However, Serena is not as rebellious as she is simply a hot-tempered and illogical child. In addition, ultimately, this is a typical love story that presents obstacles to the lovers, who are able to overcome the most severe adversity. One gets the feeling that if Brigham had asked Serena first, without asking her father, she would have been angry about that, too.



# Chapter Ten

## Chapter Ten Summary

With all the comforts and pleasures of being back in London, Brigham's heart is still in Scotland with Serena. He has been delayed longer than planned, with the English Jacobites hesitating to risk their lives for the untried Prince Charles. Brigham has spoken to them of the Scottish clans' support and of the Prince's communications. However, the people of England reluctant to be charged with being Stuart sympathizers for fear of imprisonment and deportation and loss of their land, titles and wealth at a time when war with France seems inevitable. England is becoming dangerous for Brigham, as a rebel, and he decides he will return to England with Serena to toast the true king and his regent, Prince Charles. The Earl of Whitesmouth arrives with news that one of their colleagues, Miltway, drank too much and told his mistress about the plans for a rebellion. Miltway has been arrested, and Whitesmouth has led people to believe he is en route to his estate on urgent business. Brigham does not care how it looks. He has decided to leave for Scotland that night. Whitesmouth warns him to be careful of the elector's son, Cumberland.

Before leaving on his nighttime journey, Brigham visits a social club and shares a bottle of wine with Viscount Leighton. Leighton points out an officer who will soon fight the French, but who has a bad reputation for being violent to his mistress, Alice Beesley. The man's name is Standish, a colonel known for sacking, burning and looting. Brigham remembers this is the name of the man who raped Fiona MacGregor in 1735. Brigham joins a dice game and begins to win Standish's money, goading him into betting and insulting him. Standish, in his hate of aristocrats and having lost too much, accuses Brigham of cheating. Brigham forced Standish to break the dice with a hammer to prove they had not been tampered with, and then threw his wine in Standish's face. He asks Leighton to be his second and they proceed to an area outside of town for a duel. Brigham lets him know as they fight that this is about Fiona MacGregor's rape, and proceeds to kill Standish while Leighton and Parkins look on.

Coll and Maggie are married and Serena has now given up on Brigham returning to Scotland. She is not pregnant and refuses to pine away, so takes a ride on her horse to the lock and fell to sleep on a grassy knoll, awakening to Brigham's touch. They make passionate love, again out in the open. He thinks she looks like a witch, queen or goddess in her nakedness. He tells her once again that he will marry her, and once again, she refuses, asking for time to think. Brigham warns her that a storm is coming, in reference to the war.

## Chapter Ten Analysis

Things have heated up in London and we now sense that Brigham is not really safe there or in Scotland due to his political beliefs. Although he is a well-bred gentleman, he



is now willing to put his life on the line for justice for a Prince that no one is sure can really rise to the occasion of being the leader of these countries. The harsher side of Brigham's dedication to justice leads him to kill Standish without a second thought. Perhaps this dedication to justice, although honorable, will be his own undoing, as well. However, it would have been much easier and more pleasant to remain in London living a comfortable life than to go to war in Scotland, and he chooses the latter because he is committed to the Prince and he is a man of integrity.

How Serena can mourn his absence and grieve the loss of her relationship with Brigham, and then refuse, again, to marry him, is confusing. Her dedication to her family and Scotland do not seem to be as powerful as her feelings toward him but when he finally reappears and still wants to marry her, she still says no. Serena seems determined to remain a victim of her life.



# Chapter Eleven

## Chapter Eleven Summary

Within days after Brigham's return to Scotland, the French defeat the English at Fontenoy. Charles and the Jacobites are encouraged by this, but still not receiving any support from France, Prince Charles sells his mother's jewels and outfits a ship, heading for Scotland.

Malcolm is disappointed with being assigned to watch over the house and women rather than being allowed to go to war at eleven-years-old. Malcolm tells him Maggie is pregnant and that Parkins is courting Mrs. Drummond.

Serena is now troubled at the thought of becoming Lady Ashburn. She has none of the domestic or social skills that would qualify her to be a countess, and she tells her mother she is afraid that she will hate that kind of life. She is afraid she will have to change and that Brigham would no longer love her, and she would rather lose him than shame him.

Fiona tells Serena about Brigham's duel with Standish. With this news, Serena goes to Brigham and gently agrees to marry him. He gives her his emerald ring to wear until he returns. She spends the night with him until dawn. He tells her he looks forward to seeing her in his childhood bed; she tells him she wants his child. Serena brings up the incident with Standish. Promising that obligation and gratitude is not the reason she has agreed to marry him, she acknowledges that he honored her family as he would have honored his own.

## Chapter Eleven Analysis

With the defeat of the English at Fontenoy, there is some thin hope that France will back the Prince, but it is not solid or convincing, since France has its own agenda and no longer really needs someone like Prince Charles on the throne in England. Nevertheless, the Jacobites cannot seem to abandon their decision to go to war with the English.

In this period of history, one could be happy for and proud of sticking a sword through someone, and go without any kind of punishment, just as Standish went unpunished for Fiona MacGregor's rape. That Serena is now resolved to marry Brigham after learning about his killing of Standish is slightly peculiar by today's standards, but perfectly understandable by the standards of those times. As Serena has now spent quite a bit of intimate time with Brigham, we can expect her to be pregnant soon.



# Chapter Twelve

## Chapter Twelve Summary

Prince Charles is initially given a cool welcome in Scotland, where the Jacobites' support seems half-hearted, at best. However, on August 19, 1745, King James was proclaimed the king of both Scotland and England, and the young Prince Charles as his regent, before 900 men. With the prince now in Scotland as a bonding force, the force moved eastward gathering men and strength. The men are fresh and adventurous and determined to win justice. Brigham learns that a government army led by General Cope is moving north, but his troops detoured toward Inverness. The furiously fighting rebels under Charles continued south capturing Perth and routing English dragoons finally reaching Edinburgh. Brigham has some doubts about the quartermaster, O'Sullivan, an Irish soldier of fortune, but in Perth, they are joined by Lord George Murray. The people of Edinburgh are treated well and fairly, and shout support for their new prince, who has moved into the historic Holyrood house and will make it his palace. General Cope, however, has moved his troops south and the Highlanders face the dragoons again. Although the Jacobites and Scottish clans win this battle, many are killed by the time the dragoons turn back and retreat.

Coll and Brigham know that they should be marching toward London, but the prince is holding court in Edinburgh with balls and receptions. Disagreements are arising between the two field marshals, George Murray and O'Sullivan, which is worrisome to Brigham. He and Coll decide to find a game, when they see Serena who is in Edinburgh with Maggie, Fiona, Gwen and Malcolm, invited to court by the prince. Impatient to be married, Brigham takes Serena to the prince's chambers and asks if they can be married. The prince tells Serena that Brigham has been selfish with himself at court, and Serena explains that Brigham knows the MacGregor temper. The prince gives his assent, and Serena goes to her mother to prepare for the wedding. Gwen and Maggie begin sewing, converting their mother's ball gown to a wedding gown for Serena. The two are married late at night. Serena dances with the prince and drinks her first champagne. Brigham takes her over his shoulder, and they go to their room. She admits to him that she was afraid all night, until he picked her up.

## Chapter Twelve Analysis

After the victories and taking of Edinburgh, Brigham and Coll's tension about getting on to London foreshadows problems with the rebellion. The prince is enjoying his new role and holding court, but should probably be supporting the ongoing journey to London instead. The fact that the two field marshals are in disagreement does not portend an easy future for the rebellion, either.

Having missed Serena throughout his time away from her while in battle, Brigham uses his friendship with the Prince to quickly get married so they can sleep together

legitimately in Edinburgh. The prince has noted more than once that Brigham is no longer the ladies' man of old whose attention was competed for by the women at the French court.

It is not clear in this chapter why General Cope's British troops bypassed the rebellion and went north, but now that they are headed south toward Inverness implies that they are moving closer to Glenroe and the MacGregor land.





# Chapter Thirteen

## Chapter Thirteen Summary

Having already been at Holyrood three weeks, since Serena's arrival, Brigham is there another three weeks. Serena is learning how to live luxuriously in court, with servants and lavish surroundings. Brigham has given her the Langston emeralds, and has had new gowns made for her out of silks and satins and lace. Serena feels as though she is living a dream, the only reality being with Brigham at night. She misses taking wild rides and wearing breeches, but tries to adapt to the customs of court. Finally, Brigham tells her he will leave in a few days with the troops for London. He tells her that in case something goes wrong, to find a chest in his chamber that contains gold and jewels that will buy safety for her and her family. He promises to return since he has promised to show her Ashburn manor in London.

Although he had encouraged the prince to start earlier, they did not begin the march to London until November. Although the French King sent money and supplies, he had not sent troops. The victories had strengthened their numbers, but disappointingly, few English Jacobites volunteered, and the English government was sending more troops from Flanders to their field marshal Wade in Newcastle in preparation for battle. The rebellion's troops are much smaller in numbers and they lost their momentum by staying too long in Edinburgh. Brigham knows that their amazing victories were simply due to the energy and heart the troops had, which they have now lost. They hope to take London quickly but the wind is icy and Murray advises caution, recommending withdrawal. The leaders argue over strategy and Murray finally prevails. The decision is made to retreat and the troops go back behind the Scottish border and take Glasgow. Reinforcements begin to arrive from France and more Scottish troops joined. Battles were fought and won, but Ian MacGregor is killed.

As he is dying, Ian asks Coll to take care of his mother and sisters, asks Brigham not to tame Serena and leaves his sword to Malcolm.

The clan soldiers have begun deserting and the leaders bicker through the winter, as the rebels are at their base in Inverness. In small battles the Jacobites experienced victories, such as the taking of British held Fort Augustus, but the weather is harsh and the men long to go home. Cumberland's English forces are strengthening.

Serena sits by her father's grave, now pregnant and afraid of losing the other men in her life. The grieving Malcolm wants to join the rebellion in Inverness, but knows his father would want him to stay at Glenroe. Serena believes the fighting will get too close to Glenroe, and has found a cave in the hills for the family to escape to if that happens.

The hungry and discouraged rebels learn that another Cumberland had five-thousand well-fed German troops in Aberdeen blocking the road south, and the other Cumberland was beginning an advance on Inverness. The rebels attack and fight the redcoats so



furiously that they retreat into the hills after killing five rebels. Brigham insists they stay and bury the English bodies and return their own dead and wounded to Inverness. Brigham is concerned at how close the dragoons had come to Glenroe.

## Chapter Thirteen Analysis

Bloody, gruesome battles occupy the rebels, who are wild and furious fighters. Roberts' contrast between the lives of traveling soldiers and the life of a Lord at court is fascinating. Because of his title, Lord Ashburn's court accommodations are luxurious. It is difficult to imagine leaving one kind of life for the other in either direction. These bloody battles in the dead of winter on hard ground with very little sustenance, fighting with swords and shields and being outnumbered and exhausted is the polar opposite of what Lord Ashburn is accustomed to, even though he is a learned warrior.

Brigham does not know Serena is pregnant, and as she predicted, things at their home are changing very dramatically and quickly. Roberts has given Serena, as well as her readers, a light-hearted, glorious break from the tension by having the newlyweds spend three weeks at court, dancing, dressing up and being treated as royalty. Once the soldiers have left and the MacGregors have returned home, tension, grief and fear overtake the story.



# Chapter Fourteen

## Chapter Fourteen Summary

At Inverness George Murray tries to tell the Prince that the ground is not suited for the Highlanders to fight on, and it is much more suitable to the English. The Prince is still put out with him over being talked into retreating earlier. The Prince has taken the side of O'Sullivan and is determined to fight. Murray suggests that the English will be drunk on the duke's birthday and they should launch a surprise attack against them from two sides, reducing their numbers. The Prince agrees and the men, exhausted and starving, proceed almost aimlessly to the Drumossie moor near the Culloden property. Brigham knows it will end here. The five thousand troops prepare to fight and the Jacobites fire the first shot.

In the meantime at Glenroe, Maggie is in the middle of a difficult labor, trying to give birth to a breech baby. Serena reminds her that MacGregors do not give up.

The Jacobites are being cut down and slaughtered with Cumberland's long-range artillery, but they still do not have orders to charge. The Prince cannot see the front lines and is waiting for Cumberland to attack. Finally allowed to attack, the Scots were being shot down with rifle volley. The ground favored the English. The clansmen are taking a beating and Brigham, injured and bleeding, his eyes and lungs full of smoke, helps Coll fight off three English. They realize the rebellion is lost. Coll is worried about Maggie and how close they are to Glenroe. Brigham shoved Coll away and took a musket ball in his stomach.

Having come close to death, Maggie and her baby son, Ian, are alive and recovering. Rob MacGregor appears and tells Serena they have lost the battle and that his father and brothers are dead. He saw the British killing women and children and innocent farmers. Serena gathers the family and leads them away from the house to the hills, taking Maggie on a litter, as well as Brigham's fortune and supplies from the house. They settle in a cave, where Mrs. Drummond tells Serena she will marry Parkins.

Parkins insists Serena stay in the cave while he and Malcolm go down to lead Coll and Brigham to them. Serena decides to name her son Daniel, after Brigham's father. Finally, hearing them first and arming themselves for a fight, the women see Brigham, Coll and Parkins approaching the cave. Seriously wounded, Brigham loses consciousness.

## Chapter Fourteen Analysis

We are relieved that Coll and Brigham have returned, even though Brigham is injured. Roberts' fiery female characters are prepared to defend themselves this time, being fully armed and ready in the cave after hearing the approach of what turns out to be their men. We know that never again will Fiona be abused, nor will Serena ever allow it. The



rebellion has been extinguished by the violent artillery rained on them by the British, and the effort to put Prince Charles on the throne has ended. As Bringham predicted, the war ended at Culloden.

With so little help from France, and so much German assistance for the British, this small band of soldiers did not really stand a chance against England, but they fought bravely and zealously for their cause. Now they are on the run, fleeing the wrath of the British troops under the vicious Cumberland.



# Chapter Fifteen

## Chapter Fifteen Summary

Coll, relieved to be with his wife and new son, explains that Brigham took the bullet intended for Coll, and tells how they became separated from their regiment. He had carried Brigham at nighttime, hiding from the English and wounded, himself. Gwen wants to remove the bullet from Brigham's body but does not know how. Parkins has done this once before, and offers to do it. They feed Brigham poppy medicine and hold him down. As he works, Serena remembers that she considers Parkins steady and loyal. Parkins finds the bullet, and Gwen takes over to stop the bleeding. Serena expresses her deep gratitude to Parkins.

She tries to sleep with her head in Fiona's lap but will not leave Brigham, who is delirious with fever and nightmares of battle. He is in and out of consciousness, but finally wakes up to see Serena and figures out where he is. He tells them they may be able to get help from his relatives on the Island of Skye.

Malcolm and Coll watch from a hillside as their home is burned, and know that they must move the family from the cave. A redcoat finds the cave, and Serena shoots him. As another approaches, Brigham helps her with the sword but Parkins, shielding Mrs. Drummond, shoots him. Outside the cave another two British are fighting with Malcolm and Coll, but Serena and Brigham dispatch them. They pack up and leave the cave with two of Malcolm's horses that had been stolen by the British, and begin moving across the country, staying with hospitable villagers.

The villagers are hiding Prince Charles at great risk, and Cumberland's men are pillaging and plundering looking for him. The extended MacGregor family arrives on the Isle of Skye and stays with Brigham's grandmother's people in June; there are rumors the Prince is somewhere nearby. Maggie reminds Brigham that only Cumberland is responsible for the waste laid to Scotland, and she does not blame all Englishmen, noting that her child is half-English, as well.

Knowing his manor and title are lost to him, Brigham asks Serena if she will go with him to the New World. He tells her she will only be Mrs. Langston, but she confesses the days in Holyrood court with him, although beautiful, were meaningless to her in her capacity as Lady Ashburn, because she cares only for him and does not need the luxuries or restrictions of court life. During this conversation, Serena goes into labor. Brigham carries her to Gwen and her mother.

## Chapter Fifteen Analysis

Gwen, although she is the family's angel and they rely on her medical knowledge, doubts her own ability to retrieve the bullet from Brigham's body. Parkins, in his usual



dry, serious and steady way, gets the job done methodically and efficiently. Parkins is one of Roberts' most likable characters in this story.

The end of the story is something of a relief. Brigham and Serena's baby is on the way and they have found safety, if only temporarily, with his relatives. Brigham's devotion to Serena increased dramatically when he saw her shooting a gun and wielding a sword, defending him and her family. It is ironic that Serena initially hated Brigham for being English, but he has almost lost his life fighting against the English. Another irony is Brigham's learning that Serena does not want or need wealth and prestige, but prefers to be able to ride in breeches if she feels like doing so. Since he has lost everything but his box of gold, this would certainly be a relief to him. She has been afraid he would ask her to live in the French court and, although leaving Scotland is not her first choice, she agrees to go with him to the New World. Serena's character has matured by leaps and bounds by this time. As readers, we might assume that many others in Scotland, as in other parts of Europe, departed for American soil during this time in history.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary

Fourteen months after raising his standard in Scotland, Prince Charles lands on the Isle of Skye disguised as a maid. He and Brigham meet, but he does not ask Brigham to go to France with him. Brigham repeats Ian MacGregor's declaration that the war would not be for naught, as he looks at his new little son. They feel Daniel will come back to Scotland or his children will.

Brigham reminds Parkins to address him as Mr. Langston now, and Parkins again calls him "my lord." Taking Malcolm, Parkins and Mrs. Drummond with them, and leaving Fiona, Coll and Maggie, the Langstons leave for "home."

## Epilogue Analysis

The event in this story that comes the most unexpectedly is the Langstons' decision to go to the New World and take young Malcolm with them. The characters are still young enough to have an adventurous spirit, and the change that they are making is not a minor one. Leaving her brother and best friend and her mother behind to face the unknown could only be done as Serena feels so loved and secure with Brigham and their baby. He has promised her they will come back, but the reader is left with a doubt as to this possibility, since they are moving so terribly far away at a time when travel was not particularly convenient. She contents herself with the thought that at least her son might return to Scotland, and perhaps his children.

The more expected ending would have been that Brigham return to his wealthy and luxurious lifestyle and that Serena would learn how to live as a countess. However, Roberts leaves us with more refreshing possibilities.



# Characters

## Serena MacGregor

Eldest daughter of landowner Ian MacGregor and his wife, Fiona, Serena MacGregor (Rena) is a beautiful red-haired, fiery and angry young woman. Not only does she have the inherited temperament of her father, but having witnessed the brutal rape of her mother and seeing her father unjustly imprisoned as a child have made her defensive and volatile, although she is also tender-hearted and easily hurt. Serena was not able to stay in school more than six months, since she detests the things that interest most girls of her day, including domestic chores and men. She is an avid horsewoman and enjoys dressing in men's breeches to go riding in the country. Fiercely loyal to her family, Serena initially carries a full-blown hatred for the English, based on her earlier experiences. When Lord Ashburn, Brigham Langston appears carrying her injured brother Coll to his home, Serena is immediately intrigued and repelled by him. Her anger and defiance makes her pour milk over his head, wrestle with him like a wild animal, kick him, bite him and generally snub him before she can finally admit that she is in love with him. Early in their relationship, she resigns herself to their physical lust with the thought that she will have to decide whether to be his mistress, assuming that was what he wanted of her. She could not imagine that someone of his caliber would want to marry her. She also does not think she can marry Brigham because it would mean leaving her family and Scotland. Ultimately, Serena is as fiercely loyal to Brigham as she has always been to her family, shooting British soldiers to protect them all and coordinating their flight from the pillaging British troops. As the story progresses, Serena grows more mature and begins to understand her own fears about love, marriage and Brigham. In the end, it is clear that she is determined to be a good wife to him and a good mother to their son, since determination is at the core of her nature.

## Brigham Langston, Earl of Ashburn

A handsome, well-dressed and debonair lord of his manor, Brigham Langston has had the luxuries of wealth and popularity within his elite social circle in London. He has inherited his grandmother's estate and has fond memories of her attitudes toward justice. His decision to fight in the rebellion for Prince Charles is a result of this early training. Brigham has had the attention and cloying of women at the English and French courts, and although he is a serious man, has been something of a playboy prior to his trip to Glenroe in Scotland. His close friend Coll MacGregor, whom Brigham was able to drink under the table, is brother to Serena MacGregor, who Brigham eventually marries. Brigham is a complex personality. Perfectly groomed, he wears "foamy" lace at his throat and cuffs and holds a handkerchief over his mouth to hide a smile, but is actually a man's man who gambles, fights, drinks and carouses. He has had mistresses and is skillful at lovemaking, but has never been in love until he meets Serena MacGregor, who rejects him and treats him with rudeness and disrespect. He is extremely attracted to her spirit and her wild nature, obviously disillusioned with the typical women of his





day. Brigham pushes and pulls, finally getting Serena to admit her feelings for him, but only after threatening to throttle her and fighting with her physically more than once.

Loyal to the last king who rightfully reigned over England and Scotland, Brigham dedicates himself to the king's son, his good friend Prince Charles, with an aim to help Charles take back the throne, which was usurped by a German puppet king and his wife. Politically astute, Brigham has an understanding of what lies ahead for the rebellion, and works to gather and knit the clansmen in Scotland behind the prince's cause to garner the strength to go to battle with England, with or without help from the French. He is the intermediary between the Prince and the troops and holds a high position in the Prince's short-lived court in Edinburgh. Having been bred a gentleman, Brigham finds himself ready to move to the New World and face life without the comforts and luxuries of his former position.

## Coll MacGregor

Coll is the brother of Serena and close friend to Brigham Langston, the earl who returns with him to Scotland to prepare for battle against the British. Coll is injured by the hated Campbell clan as they travel toward his home in Glenroe, and Brigham carries him into the house to have his wounds nursed. He has spent time in France with Brigham, partying and playing about in the French court. Coll is just a young man who has no patience for girls, but when he sees the grown up Maggie MacDonald, he becomes a nervous, stuttering admirer who cannot be near enough to her. He falls for Maggie's trick when she pretends to fall from a ladder, feigning an injury. Rescuing her inspires him to ask her to marry him. When she eagerly accepts, Coll seems to transition into a more confident man, and goes on to fight bravely next to Brigham Langston in a brutal, gruesome war. In the end, Coll, Maggie and their baby stay in Scotland with Fiona MacGregor, while the Langstons and young Malcolm leave for the New World. Coll is a family man who, as a MacGregor, is of simple, hardworking stock and puts on no airs.

## Parkins

Parkins is the long-time valet of Brigham Langston and has been in the family for many years. His loyalty to Brigham goes far beyond that of a valet, as he insists on being with him even when Brigham does not want him there. He pays close attention to Brigham's clothing and well-being and, although he is a servant, insists on getting his own way, even when Brigham threatens to fire him. He has a very dry sense of humor and is described by Serena as steady and loyal. Parkins shows up in Scotland with Brigham's carriage, even though Brigham has told him he may not come along. Parkins is the only one with enough confidence to remove a bullet from Brigham's body. He is not emotional, but he loves Brigham and would do anything for him. Parkins proposes to Mrs. Drummond, the MacGregors' widowed cook, and takes Serena up on her offered favor when he and the new Mrs. Parkins accompany Serena and Brigham to England. Quiet, reserved and extremely proper, Parkins is one of the more likable characters in the story.



## Fiona MacGregor

Fiona is the wife of Ian MacGregor and mother to Serena, Gwen, Coll and Malcolm. She is an extremely strong, stable force in her family who does not over-react to a crisis, but remains calm, capable and loving. She was raped when her daughter Serena was young by Captain Standish, a British soldier who is eventually killed by Brigham Langston in a duel. She carries the scars of the incident with her and worries for her daughter, Serena, who found her naked and cared for her afterward. Fiona is a loving mother and wife, and understands the fiery nature of her daughter, Serena. She grieves deeply over the loss of her husband, but goes on with courage and strength, as much to set an example for her children as anything. She is a domestic wizard and has taught her daughters everything they need to know about running a household. Her children are devoted to her.

## Ian MacGregor

Ian MacGregor is the patriarch of the family, whose Scottish spirit fuels the home with pride and love. He is kind to his wife and children, but a fierce warrior when need be. Ian is elderly when the rebellion takes place but is determined to fight for the just king. Ian is well liked by the other clansmen, with the exception of the Campbells, his bitter enemies. When Ian dies from a wound, he asks his son to take care of his family, asks Brigham not to tame his "wildcat" Serena, and leaves his sword to his young son, Malcolm.

## Maggie MacDonald

A close childhood friend of Serena's, Maggie is first known to the MacGregors, particularly Coll, as a pesky young nuisance of a girl. However, she is in love with Coll even as a girl. When she pays a visit to the MacGregors, Ian MacGregor plans a ball as a ruse to gather clan members who are organizing for the rebellion. Maggie is now eighteen and has blossomed into a beautiful, graceful young woman. She has her sights set for Coll and he is helplessly drawn to her. Maggie climbs a ladder and feigns a fall in front of Coll, who quickly helps her treat her injuries and promptly asks her to marry him. She is unabashed about being dishonest, but feels it is an innocent way to get Coll to do what he wants to do. Maggie is tiny and has an extremely difficult two-day labor giving birth to a breech baby. They both come close to death, but with Gwen MacGregor's help, they survive and eventually thrive. Maggie and Coll decide to stay in Scotland when Serena and Brigham leave for the New World.

## Gwen MacGregor

Considered the MacGregor family's angel, Gwen has a gift for healing, having learned about herbal remedies and general medical care. Unlike her sister Serena, Gwen is demure and has her mother's mild temperament. She is attracted to Brigham initially,



and comes upon Brigham and Serena kissing in the kitchen. She bravely nurses several family members' wounds, but when Brigham arrives at their hiding place in the hills, she finds herself unable to remove a bullet from his body. Gwen helps with the difficult birth of Maggie's baby, and is generally called upon by the MacGregors for any emergency. In the end, Gwen leaves for the New World with her sister and brother, leaving her mother, her brother Coll and Maggie behind.

## Malcolm MacGregor

A ten-year-old boy when Brigham first arrives, Malcolm is fascinated with horses and is excited to have a new friend in Brigham. Upon meeting Brigham, Malcolm bluntly asks whether this is the English pig, embarrassing Serena who has obviously said as much. Malcolm would like to go with the men to fight, but his father asks him to stay home and protect the family, since he is too young. Malcolm keeps his ears open and manages to keep up with the gossip on the family manor. He is the first to overhear that Parkins and Mrs. Drummond are courting, and that Maggie is pregnant. When Ian MacGregor dies, he leaves his beloved sword to his son, Malcolm. Eventually, Malcolm is involved in fighting British soldiers trying to protect his family who have fled to the hills. In the end, he leaves with Serena and Brigham for the New World.

## Mrs. Drummond

Mrs. Drummond is the MacGregor family's cook. She is sturdily built with hands of a man, but can make a delicate pastry and is highly capable. Mrs. Drummond sets her sights for the reserved valet, Parkins, and eventually marries him. She is considered a loyal member of the MacGregor family, and flees with them to the hills for protection. When the story ends, she has become Mrs. Parkins, and leaves for the New World with Parkins and the Langstons.

## Captain Standish

Standish is the English soldier who raped Fiona MacGregor in 1735 at her home in Glenroe. He is killed by Brigham Langston in a duel as a reckoning for his abuse of Fiona MacGregor.

## Viscount Leighton

Leighton is a dainty, perfumed friend of Brigham's in London, who stands in as his second during the duel with Captain Standish.

## Fontenoy

Fontenoy is in Austrian/Belgian territory. The French dealt a crushing blow to the British here, and gave the rebellion hope that France would support the Jacobites in their attempt to put Prince Charles on the throne of England and Scotland.



# Objects/Places

## Glenroe Forest, Scotland

Glenroe is the name of the MacGregor family's land where they live in the family manor near Inverness, Scotland. During the rebellion, the fighting comes dangerously close to Glenroe, and the family is forced to flee to the hills. Glenroe, along with its house and stables, is burned by British soldiers. The Glenroe house is made of fine blue slate.

## Jacobites

The Jacobites were those who stayed loyal to King James and his regent, Prince Charles when the Hanoverian King and Queen unjustly usurped the British throne. Jacobites were still in England and also in Scotland, when the rebellion was organized. Brigham Langston, the MacGregor family, as well as many Scottish clans were Jacobites, and fought to regain control for Prince Charles.

## Holyrood, Edinburgh

Edinburgh, Scotland is the city taken by the rebels for Prince Charles, who reigned there for a very short time in his royal palace called Holyrood. This is also where Brigham Langston and Serena MacGregor were married in the middle of the rebellion, when the MacGregor family was summoned to Holyrood by the Prince.

## Isle of Skye

The Isle is off of Scotland's coast where Brigham's grandmother's family lived, and to where the MacGregors fled when the British were searching for rebels and for Prince Charles.

## Glenfinnan

Glenfinnan is the home of the MacDonald clan in Scotland, including Margaret (Maggie) MacDonald, who married Coll MacGregor. Prince Charles, upon his arrival in Scotland, placed his standard at Glenfinnan and proclaimed his father, King James, as the rightful king of England and Scotland.

## Sassenach

Sassenach is a Scottish slang word for a dirty Englishman, which is the name Serena calls Brigham throughout the story, eventually with fondness.



## **claymore**

A claymore is a Scottish sword used in battle. Ian MacGregor left his claymore to his son, Malcolm.

## **Dragoons**

Dragoon was the name given to the red-coated British soldiers.

## **Black Watch**

The Black Watch consisted of Scottish Highlanders who were hired by England to keep watch over Scotland.

## **bairn**

Bairn is a Scottish word for child, used often in place of baby or infant.

## **laird**

Laird is a Scottish word for landowner. Ian MacGregor was a laird.

## **plaid**

The woolen plaid blanket-like drapes were worn by Scots for warmth and to display their family's particular design.

## **Drumossie moor**

Drumossie moor is the area near the Culloden house, where the Jacobite rebellion was put down and many Jacobites killed. The land was not suitable ground for the Highlanders' military maneuvers, and they were outnumbered by the Redcoats. The incident became known as the battle of Culloden.



## Setting

Rebellion starts with a prologue set in 1735 at the family home in Glenroe Forest in Scotland, ten years before the main part of the novel. Serena MacGregor is a pre-adolescent bemoaning the fact that she did not get to go hunting with her father, Ian, and older brother, Coll. When she sees riders approaching, she starts to greet them, but a warning from her mother, Fiona, sends her and the other two children upstairs as English dragoons in red coats sweep into the yard. The dragoons, under the command of the sadistic Captain Standish, torch villagers' homes and plan to make an example of the MacGregor men, whom the captain accuses of conspiring against the British ruler, Queen Caroline. With the men out hunting, he vents his anger on Fiona by raping her then throwing her naked into the room with her children. Serena's hatred of the English grows in an instant from a child's mimicry of her parents' political views to an intense hatred rooted in her soul for all things English.

The plot skips forward to 1745 and the drawing room of Brigham Langston, the fourth earl of Ashburn, at his country estate. Brigham and his friend Coll MacGregor are quietly discussing the brewing rebellion in Scotland when he receives a note informing him Bonnie Prince Charlie is on his way to Scotland. The two men immediately make plans to leave for Coll's home in the Glenroe Forest.

As they travel through the wild Highlands of Scotland, bandits from the Campbell clan attack and seriously wound Coll.

Brigham receives a minor wound to his arm while routing the bandits and takes Coll the rest of the way home as quickly as possible so his wound can be treated. Serena is the first one to greet them, and she immediately accuses Brigham of causing Coll's wound by refusing to fight. He treats her with extreme politeness, which enrages her until her mother's sharp words make her mind her manners.

The majority of the rest of the relationship highs and lows take place in Glenroe Forest in the family home and surrounding woods against a backdrop of rising unrest and bitterness towards the English. Near the end of the novel, Brigham, Coll, and Ian leave to join the prince's army as it moves to Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, and Derby. By this time, the promised aid from France has failed to materialize, and the Highlanders realize their dream is dying.

The British troops under the command of the duke of Cumberland follow the remaining supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie to Inverness where they meet in battle for the last time in April 1746 on Drumossie Moor in the Battle of Culloden.

Brigham realizes the futility of fighting British troops that outnumber the Scots almost three to one, and decides to leave the battlefield taking a wounded Coll with him.

The men make for home where they find the surviving MacGregors camped in a cave in the hills above the family home where the dragoons will have a hard time finding them.

When a few dragoons do find them, the MacGregors fight back and realize they need to find another hiding place. Coll plans to stay in the Highlands with his wife and child, but Brigham and Serena, married in a hurried ceremony before Culloden, plan to travel to the Americas. Too many people know of Brigham's part in the rebellion for him to return to England.

Overall, the setting takes second place to the romance and lacks the detail to fully draw a reader into the time period. This same story could have taken place in almost any setting and any time period— only surface details such as clothing, housing, and a few historically significant names tie it specifically to Scotland and the Third Jacobite Rebellion.





## Social Sensitivity

The political background of the time is turbulent, with the majority of the fighting and political upheaval taking place on Scottish soil. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 is the third such uprising as the Stuarts attempt to regain the throne of Scotland. The last time a Stuart held the throne was during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England (1558 to 1603) when Mary, Queen of Scots, angered her cousin Elizabeth with her claims to the throne and was beheaded.

Unfortunately for Bonnie Prince Charlie, his ties to the French government are not strong enough for them to risk a war with the British Empire, at this time, still one of the strongest political and military forces in the world. Roberts captures the political issues swirling around Serena and Brigham in an evenhanded manner.

In the prologue, Roberts obliquely leads the reader to infer that Fiona MacGregor was raped by Captain Standish. She does not describe the physical act of the rape, mentioning instead Standish's anger at not finding the men at home to punish and his anger at Fiona for not fearing him. The scene then skips to dragoons throwing Fiona's naked and battered body into the room where her children are held. Later in the novel, Brigham is enraged to learn of the attack even though it took place ten years before, and he gets even with Standish by maneuvering him into a duel so he can kill him. Roberts makes the impact of the rape stronger by not discussing and dissecting it at length. Rape is a silent crime, and victims of rape tend to hide their physical and mental scars because they believe they somehow invited the attack. Roberts uses Standish to show rape is a crime against women.

The trend in adult romance novels since the 1970s is for the characters to indulge in premarital sex with the understanding that marriage will be the end result of the story.

This sexual freedom is a reflection of changing societal mores, making the discussion of premarital sex more open in society if not in the family home. However, premarital sex is not a new discovery, and Roberts's depiction of Serena and Brigham making love is not surprising. The main difference between 1745 and modern times is the man would be expected to marry the woman if she was a virgin. A woman's virginity was often her only dowry, and if the man refused to marry her, she would be considered shamed and wantonly.



## Literary Qualities

Rebellion is an apt title that catches the rebellious nature of the main characters and the state of Scotland during the course of the novel. The viewpoint shifts numerous times so the reader sees parts of the story through almost every major character's eyes at some time, even if only briefly.

Serena and Brigham are the primary focuses for the point of view, though, so the transitions are not confusing.

Roberts uses relatively few colloquialisms to add authenticity to the characters. After Serena calls Brigham an "English pig" during their first meeting, everyone tends to speak casually, more like modern Americans.



# Themes

## There is Something to Be Gained From Hardship

Ian MacGregor assures his son on his deathbed that the rebellion was not for naught. After his death, the rebellion fails and the Jacobites are slaughtered by the British. However, Brigham Langston repeats Ian's statement when he is finally with Serena, running from the British and leaving for the New World. When he realizes that all of the pain and suffering has brought him a wife he loves and a new baby, it becomes clear to him that there was a silver lining in the doomed Jacobite rebellion. Nora Roberts, although she takes us through some gruesome battles in this story, maintains that there is always some good that comes from sorrow. This is illustrated primarily by the relationship between Serena and Brigham, but also through the maturing of young Malcolm, who eventually does face battle to protect his family. It's also shown in the romance between Parkins and Mrs. Drummond, and the frightening and difficult birth of Maggie's baby. The most poignant illustration of this theme is that the horrible experience of being raped by Captain Standish in front of her young daughter gave Fiona MacGregor a strength and resolve about her life that she might not have had otherwise. Serena, although her strength was often masked as anger, was so affected by this gruesome incident that she became a strong-willed, independent character who was determined to live up to her own values and stand on her own two feet rather than depend on a man. The incident may have also increased her ability to love and nurture people, since she is the one who helped her mother heal from the attack.

## Prejudice is a Mask for Fear

When Serena first meets Brigham Langston, her prejudice against the English, although well founded in her particular case, keeps her from treating him as a friend. She is rude and disrespectful toward him and sees him through the same eyes as the child who saw her mother be brutally raped by an English soldier. In fact, she judged an entire nation of people based on that incident, and on the fact that the English had unjustly imprisoned her father for a year. These are powerful reasons for hatred and actually make sense to a certain degree. However, Serena learns that her hatred cannot apply to all English people, since she learns to love Brigham Langston deeply. It finally becomes clearest to her when she is carrying Brigham's child, whose blood is half-English. The English plundered and pillaged Scotland more than once throughout history, but Roberts' point is that these acts were done by a few people, and we cannot assume that all people of a certain race or belief system are bad. Even after the rebellion is crushed, the Jacobites remind each other that the dishonorable pillaging was the fault of Cumberland's decisions, not all of England's.



## The Value of Teamwork

From the beginning of this story, teamwork reflects the high integrity and strength of Roberts' characters. Early in the story, Brigham and Coll fight the treacherous Campbells in perfect synchronization. After carrying his injured friend into the house, Brigham later notes that the MacGregors' response to Coll's injury was not hysterical or emotional, but they each did their part to get the situation under control. After Gwen has taken care of the wound and gets Coll stabilized, Serena insists on staying with him. Later in the night, Serena and Brigham work in tandem to tend to Coll while his fever rages. Serena helps Malcolm's mare give birth to twins, and each family member has chores and duties, making this family strong, close and resourceful, since they are not as wealthy as some. Battles are fought with the clansmen protecting each other. When the redcoats' advance on Inverness is beaten back, Brigham insists that the Jacobites stay on and bury the English as well as removing their own dead and injured from the area. Working together, Malcolm and Serena manage to get the entire MacGregor household moved to a cave far up in the hills. There are numerous illustrations of the value of working together in this story and, when teamwork fails, as it did with the George Murray and O'Sullivan as they strategized, things go wrong. The rebellion was put down because people could not agree and were therefore, disorganized and weakened.

## Love Conquers All

The love among the MacGregor family is as obvious as anything in Roberts' story. Each family member demonstrates extreme fondness for the other: Ian and Fiona have special relationships with their children and with each other; Gwen is valued as the family's angel; Serena cares for and loves both her brothers fiercely, and they grieve together for their beloved father who is killed in battle. The strength that bonds this family is that of love. However, more importantly, the love between Serena and Brigham is what finally overtakes and dissolves her rage against men, against the English and against the customs of marriage. Brigham's duel with Standish demonstrates a certain kind of love for the family. The love between the friends, Coll and Brigham, is what helps them fight together fiercely and loyally. The Jacobites' love for their Bonney Prince Charles inspires them to fight for him. Parkins' love for Brigham is demonstrated repeatedly as he is there for him even when he is ordered not to be and threatened with being fired. Finally, what makes the book a story of triumph even in the face of great loss is the love that binds the characters' lives.



## Themes/Characters

The heroine, Serena MacGregor, is a redheaded, hot-tempered shrew who is at the same time a stereotypical redhead and a character based on the freedoms of more modern women. Stuck in a rut of hating the English for most of the book, she lacks the depth of Brigham's character. Only at the end does Serena start to blossom from child to woman.

Brigham Langston, fourth earl of Ashburn, is a strong character who steadily develops over the course of the book. His initial portrayal as an English dandy, supported by his immaculate clothing and lace cuffs, is offset by the quiet strength of his convictions and his sword arm. He looks past the labels that trip up Serena, sees the woman who will haunt his dreams for the rest of his life, and goes after her. He is constantly in forward motion waiting for Serena to get out her rut.

Serena's oldest brother Coll fills the role of stolid sidekick to Brigham's more flamboyant personality. He still teases Serena and calls her "pest," but he has a healthy respect for her temper. When Serena's friend Maggie MacDonald pays a visit, Coll prepares to tolerate her presence, but she has grown into a woman since he last saw her, and he falls in love at first sight. The exquisitely beautiful Maggie resembles a porcelain doll and is a real lady, as opposed to Serena's tomboy image. Serena and Brigham's Rebellion 373 romance pales in comparison to Coll and Maggie's, which is more entertaining.

Love is perhaps the strongest theme in Rebellion because it motivates the characters. Love of a country and an ideal sets events in motion leading to the final battle at Culloden. Serena and Brigham share the passionate side of love as they battle to establish their relationship. Coll and Maggie share a quieter, but no less intense, new love that is accepted without question. Ian and Fiona share a love tempered by time and trial, as they have raised a family together and dealt with the aftermath of her rape. The MacGregors also share the love of parent for child and sibling for sibling.

Loss is also present as Brigham and Coll physically lose the battle for Scotland and mentally say goodbye to their dreams. Ian dies in battle for his beliefs. Fiona loses a piece of herself after being raped by Captain Standish, and she loses her heart when Ian dies. Serena loses the certainty of childhood when she sees her mother broken after the rape. In the end, Brigham and Serena lose even Scotland itself as they head for a new world and a new beginning.



# Style

## Point of View

Nora Roberts uses an omniscient narrator's point of view throughout the story. The reader is able to look in on different characters' activities during the same period, and is allowed to know the thoughts and dreams of the characters without having to rely on dialogue. Roberts narrates from the point of view of each of the characters so we are allowed to see, through their eyes, what they are experiencing. She also narrates from an objective point of view with illustrations and descriptions of the Scottish terrain, Glenroe manor and the luxurious court at Edinburgh. The reader is able to imagine the scents of lavender, the feel of "foamy" lace and the rustle of gowns through Roberts' descriptions, as well as the fresh air, spongy earth and rocky soil of Scotland.

Roberts' omniscient point of view also allows us to look ten years back in the prologue when a British soldier raped Fiona MacGregor, which sets the stage for Serena's hostility, fear and loathing of the English.

## Setting

Set in the Scottish highlands, the story also provides minor glimpses of Paris and London through description and dialogue. Scotland is rocky and barren, but fresh and somewhat stark. The lochs are surrounded by spongy ground that stays wet throughout the summer, and the forests are dense and green. Serena's horse rides into the country are on flat, rough ground and end in beautiful green settings near the water. Roberts' characters traverse miles of rocky and rough terrain on horseback and on foot. The MacGregor's family trek to the hillside cave is long and arduous, carrying supplies and the ailing Maggie.

Inside, the MacGregor household is one of simple elegance and warmth. They are not extremely wealthy, but well-to-do as land barons. Glenroe manor is big enough to include stables and a ballroom, but the MacGregors are resourceful and not materialistic. It is interesting that even inside the cave which the MacGregors are using to hide from the British, the sounds and smells of a homey household are present, including food cooking, Fiona spinning, the baby crying and various family activities.

The court at Edinburgh is luxurious with elegant furnishings and lovely huge tapestries on the walls. We can get a feel for the genteel quality of the people at court, as Serena tries to learn the proper reserve and rituals. The festivities at the palace after Serena's marriage to Brigham are noisy with music, dancing and feasting, even though it takes place after midnight. Edinburgh, on the other hand, is described as congested and dirty and reminiscent of Paris. Roberts' soldiers endure camping during a cruel winter in Scotland, with biting cold and harsh winds.



## Language and Meaning

Roberts' prose is straightforward and provides fast, easy reading. Although it is necessary, occasionally, to look up a Scottish term, for the most part she reveals the meanings of any unfamiliar vocabulary. Using much description and romantic language, Roberts goes into greater detail in her love scenes than might be expected by some readers. She has an affinity for the confusion, intensity and other-worldliness of passionate lovemaking, and borders on graphic descriptions of the physical aspects of sex, coming close enough to actually describing it so that the reader easily understands her meanings.

There is no historical background provided in the book for the specific battles and their locations, forcing the reader interested in history to look up these details elsewhere. However, the historical detail that is present is accurate and fascinating, and Roberts' intention is to focus more on her characters rather than historical events. This book is accurately categorized as romantic fiction, and romance is the focal point of the story.

## Structure

This novel is 298 pages, broken into fifteen chapters, with a prologue and epilogue. The prologue is important as it sets the mental conditions under which Serena has grown up, which is the trauma from her mother's abuse at the hands of British soldiers, or dragoons. The epilogue neatly ties up the loose ends of the story by telling the reader which of the characters is going to the New World, and which are staying behind. The epilogue is designed to make the reader wonder what becomes of the Langstons and MacGregors in America and, perhaps, want to read the sequel.



## Quotes

"You have to lean to read between the lines, Coll." This time Brigham rose. "Charles is still holding out hope of support from the French, though he's beginning to realize King Louis would rather talk than act." Frowning, he twitched back the curtain and looked at his dormant gardens. They would explode with color and scent in the spring. But it was unlikely he would be there to see them in the spring. (19)

...Coll hadn't mentioned that his sister was a she-wolf with a face to rival Helen's, but Brigham was content to make his own judgments there. It might be true that she had no cause to love the English, but for himself, Brigham preferred to weigh a man as a man, not by his nationality.(39)

She would have enjoyed killing him, Serena thought. With a sword. No, a sword was much too clean, much too civilized for English vermin. Unless, of course, she used it to sever small pieces from him one at a time rather than end his worthless life with one thrust through the heart. She smiled to herself as she imagined it. A quick hack there, a slow torturous slice here.

To Serena's mind, if she needed to be polished, she would be polished in her own home, where the talk was of more than hooped skirts and the latest coiffures. Those giggling whey-faced girls were the kind of ladies Lord Ashburn preferred, she imagined. The kind who covered their faces with fans and fluttered their lashes over them. They drank fruit punch and carried vials of smelling salts and lace handkerchiefs in their reticules. Empty headed twits. Those were the kind of women whose hands Brigham would kiss at fancy London balls.

"Decided to return to England, Parkins?" "On the contrary, my lord, I mean to accompany you on your hunting trip." Brigham gave him one brief, incredulous look. "I'm damned if you do." Parkins's pointed chin came up, the only sign of his agitation. "I will accompany your lordship." "Don't be daft, man. If I wanted to take someone along, I'd take Jem. At least he'd be of some use with the horses." Though he gave an inward shudder at being compared to a lowly groom, Parkins remained resolute. "I'm convinced Lord Ashburn will have need of me." "I'm convinced I won't," Brigham responded, and started past. Nonetheless, I will accompany you , my lord." Slowly, almost certain he had misunderstood, Brigham turned to see Parkins standing, a figure of righteousness, at the top of the stairs. "You are ordered to remain," he said in a very quiet, very dangerous voice. Parkins's stomach lining turned to ice, but he remained unbroken. "I regret that your orders fail to persuade me that my duties are not best carried out in your company, my lord. I will accompany you." With his eyes narrowed, Brigham ascended a step. "I'm of a mind to dismiss you, Parkins." The pointed chin quivered. "That is your lordship's prerogative. That being the case, I will accompany you still." "Damn your eyes, Parkins." Exasperated, Brigham stormed down the steps. (92-93)

The waters of Loch nan Uamh were a dark, violent blue. As they arrived at the great stone fortress, the snow was just beginning. Overhead the sky had turned to a thick





steel gray, and the wind whipped the waters of the lake into fury. Their coming had been heralded by the playing of pipes, and the high, eerie music lifted into the thin air. Such music was used to celebrate, to mourn and to lead soldiers to battle. As he stood with the snow swirling about his feet, Brigham understood how a man could weep, or fight, to the sound of such notes. (99)

She smelled of soap and made his stomach quiver. "Madam, I assure you, I will never sleep quite the same again knowing how my bed linen was washed." She swallowed a chuckle and began to stamp in the water again. "It does the job, Sassenach, and does it well. Now, if you'll be about your business, I'll be about mine before the water goes cold." Inspired perhaps by the devil, she brought her foot down hard and sent water splashing over his breeches. "Oh, I beg your pardon, my lord." Unable to prevent it, she snickered. Brigham looked down at his breeches and gave a wry shake of the head. "Perhaps you think these need washing as well." "Toss them in," she invited recklessly. "I've had a mind to plant my foot on your breeches before." "Have you?" He reached down toward the fastening and had the satisfaction of watching her eyes widen. Flushing to the roots of her hair she stepped back and nearly tumbled down into the water. (119)

The weather was brisk, but the bite of winter was easing. In another month, Serena thought, the trees would be greening and the first hardy wildflowers would brave their way out to the sun. For now, there was the slap of a March wind on her face as she rode. The spring thaws had not yet come, and the ground still range hard under the horses' hooves, but there were birdcalls and occasional bright flashes of wings as the horses disturbed the midmorning quiet. Ice and frost had melted from the trees, leaving them wet and glistening. (131)

"Sit," he repeated, in a tone dangerous enough to have her chin jerking up. "Or, before God, you will wish you had." "Very well." Because his eyes warned her it was no idle threat, she chose a rock, deliberately taking her time, smoothing her skirts, folding her hands primly in her lap. Perversely, now that he was growling she was determined to be proper. "You wished to converse with me, my lord?" "I wish to throttle you, my lady, but I trust I have enough control left to resist." She gave a mock shudder. "How terrifying. May I say, Lord Ashburn, that your visit to my home has broadened my perception of English manners." (169)

"The man is a pig, of course." Leighton frowned again, this time down at the moisture the dew had transferred to his gleaming boot. "Still, it hardly seems reason enough to stand about in a damp field at this hour. But if you must, you must. Do you intend to kill him?" Brigham flexed his fingers. "I do." "Be quick about it, Ashburn. This business has postponed my breakfast." (195)

Dog violets grew, pale blue and delicate, beside her. She plucked a few, threading them idly through her hair while she studied the glassy calm of the lake. On the rocks above, heather grew like purple stars. Its fragile scent drifted to her. Farther up, the crags had been worn sheer by rain and time. There was little that could grow there and to Serena, their very starkness made them beautiful. They were like fortresses, guarding the



eastern verge of the loch. She wished Brigham could see this spot, this very special spot, now, when the wind was kind and water so blue it made your eyes sting. (198)

There was something fierce and chilling about a Highland charge. They rode as if they rode into hell, screaming in Gaelic and brandishing blades. Wall met wall, and the lonely hills echoed with the fury Around Brigham men fought like demons and fell dying from the slice and hack of steel. Snow ran red. (257)



## Topics for Discussion

Nora Roberts' character, Serena, is a complicated person. Discuss her temperament and its origins. Does Serena change?

Why does France's support of the Jacobite rebellion come too little and too late? Discuss King Louis' participation in the rebellion.

What is the purpose of the rebellion? Discuss the possible reasons the rebellion was lost.

Viscount Leighton plays a small but important part in this story. Discuss his personality and its complexities.

Fiona MacGregor is respected by her family and clan. Discuss her overall personality, her attributes and her character.

Parkins is a loveable character in this novel. He is rigid and reserved. Discuss what it is about him that makes the reader like him.

Fiona MacGregor's Scottish accent is described as a burr. Discuss some of the Scottish dialect used in the novel and the meanings of the various Scottish words Roberts introduces.



## Essay Topics

1. How does Serena MacGregor act differently from the average upper-class lady of her time, as portrayed by her friend Maggie MacDonald? Does she fit in with her time or is she a more modern woman?
2. How do Brigham Langston's background and appearance help him act as a spy for the growing rebellion in Scotland?
3. Was Brigham a coward for leaving the battle at Culloden when he knew it was hopeless? Or was he following the adage, "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day"?
4. Serena MacGregor was not allowed to fight at Culloden. Do you believe women should be allowed to fight in combat?

Why or why not?

5. How does the rape of Fiona MacGregor affect Serena? Brigham? The rest of her family?
6. Even though Fiona MacGregor's rape is only hinted at in the prologue, rape is a consequence of war. Did Captain Standish receive a just punishment for the acts he committed? How else could Brigham have handled the matter?
7. Did Ian MacGregor's death make the battle at Culloden seem more real and personal after having read about his character throughout the novel? Why or why not? Would it have been realistic for everyone in the MacGregor family to survive?
8. Malcolm MacGregor is too young to fight at Culloden, yet he is left as the "man in charge" of his family when the others leave for war. Should a teenager, male or female, be responsible for an entire family's welfare? Why or why not?



# Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. How realistic is the description of life in Scotland in 1745? For the upper classes?

For the lower classes?

2. What is the role of the clans in Scottish history? What drove some clans to fight for England in 1745 while others followed Prince Charles?

3. Who was Prince Charles? Why would the clans follow him into battle? When did the other Jacobite rebellions take place, and what were their outcomes?

4. Serena MacGregor was not allowed to fight at Culloden. Do you believe women should be allowed to fight in combat?

Why or why not?

5. Rape is often a consequence of war.

How has rape been treated in the SerbianBosnian conflict in recent years? Has anyone been punished for their actions?

6. Describe how warfare has changed since the 1700s. When did gunpowder, pistols, rifles, and cannons replace swords, shields, and knives?

7. Was Culloden and the fight to restore Prince Charles to the throne the only time Scotland rebelled against British rule? Who were some other famous Scottish leaders?

8. Queen Caroline sat on the throne in England. What was her policy towards Scotland and its people? Was she a strong ruler or a weak one?

9. Standards of beauty change with time.

Is Serena MacGregor an example of the "standard of beauty" in 1745, or does she fit a more modern standard? How has beauty and fashion changed for women through the centuries?

10. The British Empire was so vast at one time that the sun supposedly never set on it. What other countries did Britain control in the 1700s and 1800s? Did any rebel like the Scots did?

## Further Study

Dyer, Lucinda, and Charles Hix, "LOVE: It Ain't What It Used to Be." *Publishers Weekly* 246 (June 21,1999): 26-33. Overview of efforts of romance authors and publishers to maintain sales, with details on Roberts's career.

Gray, Paul, and Andrea Sachs. "Passion on the Pages." *Time* 155 (March 20, 2000): 76-79. Discusses Roberts's background, primarily in relation to her transition from paperback to hardback markets, and her book *Carolina Moon*, in addition to the appeal of romance novels.

McMurrin, Kristin. "Page Churner." *People* 46 July 1,1996): 31. Brief look at Roberts and how her career started.

Quinn, Judy. "Nora Roberts: A Celebration of Emotions." *Publishers Weekly* 245 (February 23,1998): 46-47. Profiles Roberts.

"Roberts, Nora (Nora Roberts)." In *Contemporary Authors New Revision*, vol. 45.

Detroit: Gale Research, 1995. Brief biographical information, now somewhat dated, with an incomplete listing of titles published through 1994. Updates information from *Contemporary Authors*, vol. 123.

"Roving Editor." *Writer* 113 (Sept. 2000): 4. Provides update on status of romance novel industry in the United States during preceding year with a brief focus on Roberts's career.

## Related Titles

Rebellion offers readers a glimpse into the history of the modern family depicted in Roberts's MacGregor saga. The original five stories from the mid-1980s have been repackaged: *The MacGregors: Serena and Caine* contains *Playing the Odds* and *Tempting Fate*; *The MacGregors: Alan and Grant* contains *All the Possibilities* and *One Man's Art*; *The MacGregors: Daniel and Ian* contains *For Now, Forever* and *In from the Cold*, a historical novella. Other titles in the series are *The MacGregor Brides*, *The Winning Hand*, *The MacGregor Grooms*, and *The Perfect Neighbor*.

The books are listed here in reading order.

Older readers interested in the Scottish setting may want to tackle Diana Gabaldon's "Outlander" series, the story of a woman who time travels back to an earlier Scotland to find the man of her dreams. Younger readers may want to investigate the titles of Ann Rinaldi, whose historical fiction covers a wide variety of time periods and settings.



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