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Lynn Kurland

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Isabelle de Piaget is determined to elude her overprotective family by means of a hasty escape to France. But instead of making a surprise visit to her brother there, she winds up shipwrecked on the French coast with no memory of who she is or how she came to awaken in the dark and forbidding castle of an equally brooding lord.

Gervase de Seger rescues—very reluctantly—the bedraggled urchin he finds on the road and puts her to work where he can ignore her. Unfortunately, he soon realizes that her brother is an intimidating lord who is going to be absolutely furious when he learns that his beloved sister has been laboring as a scullery maid. Yet Isabelle may be the one who holds the key to solving Gervase's most pressing problem: that someone has been trying to finish the task of separating him from his title and his lands.

Finding the truth propels Gervase and Isabelle from the buried secrets of half-ruined keeps to the glittering French court, and to the realization that love can blossom in the most perilous circumstances—and in the most unexpected places of the heart . . .

Dreams of Lilacs Details

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From Reader Review Dreams of Lilacs for online ebook

Susan says

Isabelle is the youngest daughter of powerful Rhys de Piaget. She is tired of being overshadowed by her siblings and especially tired of being courted as "the other one" when suitors come looking for her sister, only to find her already married. She is intelligent and independent. She receives a letter threatening her family if she doesn't go alone to her grandmother's convent in France. Isabelle manages to elude her overprotective family, dressed as a boy but ends up shipwrecked and without her memory on the coast of France. She is rescued by Gervase, who doesn't initially realize she's a girl and is put to work as a servant.

Gervase is the Lord of Monsaert, oldest son of the family with six younger half-brothers. He left home to travel the tournament circuit because he didn't get on with his stepmother where he made a name for himself with frequent successes. Gervase has a reputation as arrogant, beast-like, and a seducer of women. He returned home after his father's death to take over the estate. His stepmother abandoned her sons for court, leaving Gervase responsible. He is currently recovering, not very well, from an attack where his home was set afire, and he was shot in the leg. Gervase wonders if he will ever recover enough to defend his home and family properly which has made him extremely irritable and hard to get along with. He is not thrilled with having to rescue a ragamuffin servant boy, but can't leave him to die.

Isabelle keeps quiet about who she is once her memory begins to return. She doesn't remember why she was traveling alone and disguised but does finally remember her identity. She is cautious about revealing who she is because of stories she has heard about Gervase from her brothers. Isabelle fails utterly, and hilariously, at being a servant, but makes a place for herself helping with Gervase's brothers. She also pushes Gervase into accepting her help with his healing. I loved seeing Gervase finally figure out that she isn't a boy and also slowly realize that she is no servant either. He fights hard against the knowledge of exactly who she is, especially considering his growing feelings for her. I loved his feelings of doom when he considers what her father and brothers will do to him when they realize how he first treated her.

I enjoyed the development of the relationship between Isabelle and Gervase. She is nothing like any woman he has known and turns his world upside down. I really loved seeing her stand up to his grumpy self and coerce him into doing what she wanted. I loved the chess games and other attempts to part him from some money. I also loved that she saw past his reputation - believed the warrior one, not the womanizing one - to the honorable and caring man that he is. It was terrific that Gervase saw Isabelle for the amazing woman she was. Just the fact that he sees her knows her name, puts him far above any of the suitors that she has had. He is also protective without the smothering she felt at home.

As the danger looms and Gervase receives another threat, his honor demands that he take Isabelle to safety. The arrival at Beauvois was everything I expected it to be, with Nic's relief that she was safe and his attitude toward Gervase. Nic went a bit overboard with his reaction, and I loved Gervase's response. I ached for both Isabelle and Gervase as he left her there. I did like that neither gives up on being together, each pursuing their goals in their own way. The arrival of Miles enables Isabelle to find out what had sent her to France to start with and sets her back on her path. This time she asks for help and also manages a stop at Monsaert to avoid a "storm." I loved the dynamics among the various males at this point. The mystery picks up quickly as the group travels to the abbey and then to court. The final confrontation was intense with revelations of motivation and opportunity. There were some surprises and some confirmations of suspicions before the bad guy met his end. I loved Isabelle's part in protecting her man. All that is left now is for Gervase to win his lady. As always, the men's need to nearly kill each other to prove their worth is frustrating and amusing to

the women involved. I hope to see Miles get his own story soon.

Lynsey (A Bookish Life) says

Sweet Romance

I made a bit of a boo boo with this one. I was drawn to it by the blurb, checked it out on Goodreads and it had no series information listed, so I assumed it was a standalone and snapped it up. Well, not only is it a series, but this is something like number 15 in this series, and then it's cross linked to another series and...yeah - confusing! But, what I can definitely say is that it can easily be read as a standalone romance, and that it will leave you wanting to read the other de Piaget siblings' stories!

This book follows youngest de Piaget, Isabelle, as she travels alone to France after receiving a threatening missive. She shows up on the other side of the Channel shipwrecked, concussed, and dressed as a boy, with no memory of who she is or where she came from. She's found by Gervase de Seger. Easily the most brilliant thing about this book! His initial assumption that Isabelle is nothing but an unusually pretty peasant boy, is worth a smile or two, for sure! He takes her back to his holdings and puts her in the kitchen and goes on about his day.

Now let me tell you a little bit about Gervase and why I loved him so much! He's very recently been badly injured in a mysterious house fire, whereupon a mantle stone fell and crushed his leg. After being heralded as one of the best warriors in France, this blow to his pride, of being so weakened during his recovery, is almost unbearable for him. The torment he's going through, both physically and emotionally, is extremely compelling to read. It was humbling for him, and made me love Gervase all the more for the fact he conceded he could probably have used a bit of humbling. His strength and tenacity, as well as the delightful way he treated Isabelle (once he realised she was most certainly not a boy!) was enough to secure his position as my new favourite Frenchman.

Now Isabelle is not to be discounted as merely a pretty face to turn Gervase's head. Her character also shone throughout with her wit and panache. Truly, the dialogue in general in this book was outstanding - so entertaining and endearing. I think I read the whole thing smiling. But Isabelle in particular had a special kind of sass that I just fell in love with.

As there are about seven de Piaget siblings and about the same de Segers, the cast in this book is rather extensive. We didn't concentrate on too many of them, of course, but those that we did were adorable. I'd love to go back and try a few of the others.

Now, if I have one complaint, and I do hate to sound like a sex-starved strumpet, but there were no happy fun times in this book! I believe this is the norm for this author. And the thing is, although the book was a beautiful romance without it, I am of the opinion a good sex scene really helps cement the couple in the reader's minds as being ""officially together now," as well as showcasing the passion they share. So I would have preferred that to be there, but, as you can see from my rating, it didn't really dull my enjoyment.

A very enthusiastic 4 Stars ★★★★

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Alice says

Review Posted on Harlequin Junkies.com

Dreams of Lilacs by Lynn Kurland: I will gleefully admit that this is my favorite type of romance: lushly romantic, full of character development, loving families and a touch of mystery. It is also, most interestingly, a medieval romance, set in 1232. This is the fifteenth novel of Lynn Kurland's de Piaget series, but Dreams of Lilacs can definitely be a standalone book if you are a newcomer to the series.

Isabelle de Piaget is the youngest, and only the second girl, in the large, protective and powerful de Piaget family. Her life has been pretty quiet, and she has yet to find a suitor that she favors. While at her family home in England, she receives a note that tells her if she does not present herself, alone, at an abbey in France then her grandmother will be killed. Her grandmother happens to be the abbess of the abbey. Through some careful manipulation, she manages to escape her brothers and get on a boat to France, but some very bad weather happens during the crossing.

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Sophia says

Haven't curled up with a medieval romance in a while so this was a delicious treat just for being something different from my usual. I've been wanting to try the author's books for some time after hearing wonderful things. Right mood and right time led to a few enjoyable afternoon reading sessions. Knights, chivalry, damsels in distress, betrayal, and family behind a spirited pair of lovers left me eager to get my hands on more of the series.

This book is part of longstanding de Piaget series as book #13 and also connected indirectly to the MacLeod series. I had no trouble jumping into the middle and treating this like a standalone. The characters from the earlier stories were present, but this book's plot was independent and took place in a slightly disconnected setting. The story features the youngest de Piaget daughter who I assume was part of the earlier stories as the wallflower sister. Siblings, parents, and grandparents are present, but this Isabelle's story.

The story opens with Lady Isabelle pondering a rash course of action. She has received a letter threatening her family if she doesn't personally and privately comply with the sender's wishes. Isabelle is the youngest daughter and unmarried. She is uninterested in the suitors who come for Amanda who is recently wed and are forced to turn their tepid interest on her. Isabelle longs for adventure and a chance to step outside of the shadows. Well, here she has just such an adventure only, her family's lives are dependent on her quest's success. All must be done in secret. Isabelle makes arrangements to get to her grandmother's convent in France where the mysterious letter writer orders her to go.

Gervase de Seger once the terror of the tournament circuit and handsome well-sought man is now a shadow of his former self. He inherited his family titles and lands along with the care of his six younger half-brothers, but soon after he took his father's place, someone tries to kill him and nearly succeeds. He is crippled by injuries from the fire started in his hall and the crossbow bolt that pierced his thigh and shattered

muscle. Gervase nearly died and lives in weakness and constant pain. His sufferings distract him so that the needed work along with the investigation into his would-be murderer remain undone. Into this situation comes a bedraggled waif he rescues, but doesn't want to be responsible for so he sends her to the kitchens to work there.

In the shipwreck, Isabelle was injured and lost her memories. She recovers some of her memories only after she is taken for a peasant girl. Isabelle decides to keep up the appearance until she figures out why she is in France and not back home in her father's castle in England. How she got there and why nag at her because she vaguely remembers that it was for an important reason. In the meantime, Isabelle sees the situation in Gervase's household and starts taking things in hand which rubs her against Gervase and his dark moods, his younger brothers, and the running of the household. She can complain about many things when it comes to Gervase, but unlike most of the male population, he not only sees her- really sees her and remembers her name, but he calls her beautiful and talented.

Gervase eventually learns the extent of his danger when he is told who the lovely, irritating not-subservient enough to be a serving woman is. Now there is Isabelle's quest, his need to find his would-be killer, and the force of the de Piaget family ire hovering over him like a mighty storm. And he thinks on the possibilities with a spirited woman like Isabelle being just the person he needs in his life.

Alright, so this one was a lighter romp compared to most medieval romances I've read. It took me a bit to adjust to the tone because of that. I did have an issue and it was a big detractor from my overall enjoyment, but it wasn't the sort of thing to make me put aside a story.

I'm glad I continued on through because there was a lot about this story that was fun and engaging. I figured out who was behind all the trouble early on so that plot thread didn't provide me with any suspense, but the daily life in Gervase's home with his younger brothers was sheer delight. I loved the sizzling chemistry between Isabelle and Gervase along with their witty dialogue. The late inclusion of Isabelle's twin brother made each scene he was in just shine. And the romance was warm, well-developed and heart-warming beyond the passion.

As to the big issue I had, it was Isabelle or rather the likelihood of a woman of Isabelle's background engaging in what she did. We see it often enough in historical romances- the heroine who steps out the usual role and goes against convention, exhibits behaviors that are too modern, and is pretty much not so convincing as a woman of her time as a result. Most of the time, I shrug and go with it for the sake of some escape reading. Like I said, not an unusual thing, but there is only so far I'm willing to take it. I'm reading a historical so I really do want to see a woman who, for the most part, fits her setting.

The medieval period made it harder for me to adjust and accept. These noble women were sheltered and protected from anything outside their castle walls. They were not secret warrior ninjas who could outfight and outman the menfolk. The subsequent events of chapter one and onward when it came to Isabelle's quest were as unlikely as they come. So unbelievable that it undermined her character for me. I couldn't get past the ignorance and arrogance that launched her into action.

She gets a letter threatening her families lives if she doesn't show up at her grandmother's convent in France. So a young woman who has a family full of well-trained fighting men on both side of the channel decides- instead of calling upon them to help- that all depends on her alone. She will protect them all against someone who may have the means to kill a lot of well-armed and well-protected powerful people. She has no training or skills in defense, she has no knowledge of weapons. She is a beautiful woman alone in a harsh land of lawlessness outside the protection of the lords and their castles. She has a long journey and no idea what is the purpose of the threat or who it's from, but hey, she's a little bored and feeling under-appreciated so she's doing this. She doesn't have the excuse of a young girl's impetuousness. She's twenty-three and her father

made sure she is well educated and knows how to use her brain.

So yeah, I didn't buy all this at all. Then she decided later in the game to be cautious right when the smart thing was to be honest and communicate to Gervase who she was. He'd proved that he was a good and honorable man. But no, let's let the poor guy who rescues her from robbery, violence, and rape get put in a tight spot when her family thinks that Gervase took her and kept her for his own nefarious means. Again, I shook my head. Is she altogether a flaky, stubborn-stupid heroine? Of course not. Isabelle has spirit, good intentions, compassion, understanding, and courage. She was never mean and she wanted the best for all involved.

Now Gervase! Gervase's situation was the highlight of the story for me. The unwanted son who makes good when he goes out into the world. The fighting man who believes in the knightly virtues and upholds them, untempted by the decadence his wealth and status can give him. He comes home to do his duty and make things better after his lazy father dies and his conniving step-mother deserts her young children for court. He now has the neglected younger brothers and the equally neglected duchy in his care. If the weight of his duties wasn't enough, he has to recover from a life-threatening wound that unmans him. Gervase is lost and must find his way back. And he does, one step at a time. I loved that Isabelle saw past the scars, the weakness, to the man with the heart of a warrior. It's what redeemed her for me. She could have been attracted to his handsome grown brothers, Jocelyn and Guy, who were easier to be with and like but she wanted the man with depth and strength and good heart. He also knew how to swallow pride and take help. I fell a bit in love with Gervase, if you can't tell, despite his cranky moments.

I can appreciate so much about this story and enjoyed it to a certain extent. The wry humor had me chucking more than a few times and the family togetherness was touching. That stuff with Isabelle pushed my credulity too far even for a lighter read was the only fly in the ointment. Would I read more of the series? Yes! Definitely want to go back for some of the other stories as well as my eagerness for her brother, Miles and his brother Jocelyn to get their books. Medieval romance fans who like the tone to be light and the romance only slightly spice should take a closer look.

My thanks to Penguin Group for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

Pam says

4.50 Stars!

I absolutely adored this book, a wonderful heroine, grumpy hero, engaging secondary characters and an interesting premise. I am late to Ms. Kurland's books as this is only the second one I have read, I need to read more!

Isabelle de Piaget is on a mission, she receives a missive that threatens her grandparents if she does not travel to France, she tells her brother Miles that she is going on an adventure, he wants her to wait for him but she leaves before he returns. She disguises herself and boards a ship, but soon a storm tosses them all overboard, with a worried family, Miles travels to France.

While gingerly riding his horse, Gervase de Seger spots a young boy being robbed; he chases the robbers away and brings the boy home with him, not an easy task considering he can barely walk because of a fire at his home. When she wakes, she does not remember who she is, which serves her well even when she begins regain her memories, as she still has a mission to complete, to save her family. Gervase promptly puts her to

work in the kitchen believing she is a servant, ah the games begin.

Dreams of Lilacs is amazing, a story full of humor, some mystery and danger, a strong willed heroine and witty dialog that pulls it all together. I am new to the de Piaget saga but I will definitely change this and read the series.

Complete review at: [Ramblings from a Chaotic Mind](#)

Copy from publisher for an honest review

Debbie Lester says

Lynn Kurland's 16th book in her de Piaget series is a medieval romance with a touch of mystery. Kurland's, Dreams of Lilacs story continues the adventures of the children of Rhys and Gwennelyn de Piaget. Readers who are familiar with the series, know that it is highly character driven and does not involve time travel as some of Kurland's other books do. It is a straight forward love story from a different time. Kurland, who is well known for her fantasy titles, has done an excellent job returning to her historical romance roots with this book. A great addition to a long running series.

What I liked:

I am a fan of Lynn Kurland whether is her high fantasy series, or her romances featuring time travel. But this is the first of the de Piaget series that I have read. Coming into the series at book sixteen did provide a few challenges, but never the less, Kurland continues to impress me with her writing. Apparently, each of the de Piaget books can be read as stand alone titles. Dreams of Lilacs certainly fell into that category, but I became intrigued with Isabelle's family and now want to read more about them. Kurland's books always feature well developed characters and stories that readers will find enchanting. This one was a sweet love story with a bit of mystery that kept my attention throughout and made me appreciate a good well written love story.

Isabelle was a quite a young woman. When she finds out that her family is in danger, she goes to drastic lengths to help them. Even cutting her hair and pretending to be a boy to secure passage on a ship to France. I loved the shipwreck twist in the plot and Isabelle's amnesia. It provided a great way for her to meet her hero, Gervase. I thought Isabelle was cunning and clever. She may not have been the daring beauty her sister Amanda was, but she had her own strengths and I was glad that Kurland allowed her to see her worth and challenge her ideas about herself. To me that was one of the best parts of the novel.

Gervase was one of my favorite kinds of heroes. He was an honorable man, but a bit broody. Having once been an knight of France, he was injured in a fire that almost took his life. This had left him on edge, feeling somewhat unworthy and dealing with his disabilities in by being hard to get along with and grumpy. He wasn't an alpha male character, he didn't press his will upon Isabelle, but he garnered respect and gave off a sense of authority that felt right for the character. The mystery surrounding who was trying to kill him and how it tied in with what was happening with Isabelle's family was intriguing though somewhat easy to figure out.

I loved the secondary characters from Isabelle's brothers, Miles and Robin to Gervase's brothers who Isabelle ends up tutoring. I thought the mistaken identity angle of Isabelle, a lady, working as scullery maid was fun and added a great deal of humor to the story as well. When the brothers arrive to save their sister from her

plight, things get even more interesting as they get in on the mystery surrounding Gervase as well. Kurland proves once again that a story involving family is always appealing in this kind of genre. Now I have to go back and read all the others about this amazing bunch of people.

What I didn't like:

As I said, there was a bit of predictability to this one, in the fact that there are very few reasons why someone is out to kill a Lord. In historical romance it is generally to take his title and lands and has to be someone closely associated with him. I liked the mystery aspect of the story, but it was a bit light. Most of this book is centered securely on the romantic elements and left little time for the mystery.

Bottom Line:

I liked this one a lot and I want to read more of the de Piaget books now that I have had a taste of this interesting family. I thought that the hero and the heroine were well suited for each other and that their relationship developed in a slow and satisfying manner. There isn't much heat, but it isn't necessary with all of the other good things about it.

Make Kay says

I really liked this wonderful and gentle book!

Kurland is talented enough to keep this love tender and sweet, rather than treacly. DREAMS OF LILACS feels gentle and warm, like your favorite fuzzy, cozy blanket you want to wrap yourself in happily before the fire.

Check out my full review at Fresh Fiction:

<http://freshfiction.com/review.php?id...>

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

3.5

Originally posted at <http://smexybooks.com/2014/04/review-...>

Favorite Quote: "You de Piaget have strange and unwholesome ideas of independence."

Isabelle de Piaget, the last child of Rhys and Gwen de Piaget, is tired of being unnoticed and referred to as "that one" by all the suitors who invade her family's estate wanting to see if her sister Amanda is indeed married and unavailable. When she received a missive, commanding her to come to France or her grandparents' lives will be forfeit, Isabelle sees this as a chance to get out from underneath her family's suffocating protectiveness and become her own person. When her boat to France crashes off the coast, she is rescued by a broody man with no memory to who she is and why she is there.

Gevarse de Seger, Lord of Monsaert, has enough to worry about in his own life then trying to discover who a

lost servant boy belongs too. Gervase places the bedraggled urchin he rescues to scrubbing floors until he realises that this boy is none other than Isabelle de Piaget and her family, especially her over zealous brother Nicolas, may not appreciate the humor when learning their beloved sister was scrubbing Gervase's floors. Gervais knows he needs to get word to her family of her health but her beauty and wit ensnares him while her keen mind shows that she may hold the key to his problems.

Working towards the truth takes Isabelle and Gervase on a merry chase as lies and deception slowly unravel to reveal the viper(s) in their midst. Romance takes root and shows our couple that love can bloom at the most unexpected time and all it takes is a single look.

I have enjoyed Lynn Kurland's historical romances for years. Ms. Kurland has a wonderfully lyrical and engaging voice that gently guides her characters through the intricate rituals of courtship and love. What I truly enjoy about her stories is the air of innocence in them. The love affairs her characters embark upon are heartfelt and humorous as the romance unfolds. The physical love scenes are almost always non existence or off scene. One delightful aspect of her stories is you're never sure if this will be a straightforward historical romance, with both protagonists from the same time period, or if she will engage her time traveling storyline, tossing one of them in the future or dragging one back into the past. Or perhaps both.

Dreams of Lilacs is a sweet love story about two people who feel judged by their looks. In here, we stay firmly in the past. This story, rather like her last few, has a gentler feel to it. The passion and energy that was present in her earlier stories isn't present though I did see a glimmer of it at times. The focus is more on the couple and their journey to their happily ever after rather than the mystery(s) that surround them. Smooth writing and a steady pace makes for easy reading but the tension and drama wasn't a strong feature here. The main conflict develops admirably but I was a little dismayed by the easy copulation of the villain(s) and the matter of fact way it is resolved. I think this is why I prefer her time traveling romances over the era fixed ones. They are more rambunctious as past meets present and the protags have to ride the culture shock. In here, the flirting and dialogue is appropriate for the time period but is so subtle and polite, it's hard to get excited about what's happening at times.

Heavily character driven, it's the players in this story that brought it to life for me. The humorous dialogue is a prevalent force and I found myself smiling incisively throughout here. Isabelle is a delightful heroine; bold, strong, devious, loyal, beautiful, and charming-like all the de Piagets. She embraces her quest and uses her wits and ingenuity to figure out who's trying to hurt her family and why. As the baby of the family, she just wants to be noticed as a woman in her own right. She feels no one really sees her.

"I have spent my whole of my life, standing in the shadows, saying nothing at all."

Gervase is a broody man whose frowns and bad moods mask his physical pain. Once one of the most feared knights in France, he was badly injured in a fire and became the subject of speculation, rumors, and pity. He now stays at his estate, struggling to cope with his disabilities, his six inquisitive brothers, and running his large estate. His entertaining grumpiness, dry wit, and steadfast honor makes him the perfect match for Isabelle.

"I can't send her home yet."

"Why not?"

"Because, she's still missing her memories. The shock would be too great. She might return home and find her family nothing but strangers. Ask yourself what kind of man would leave a rare flower of that sort in a

spot exposed to too much wind and rain.”

“*You’re hopeless.*”

As Gervase and Isabelle spend more time together, their witty banter sparks powerful chemistry; drawing him and his family into Isabelle’s colorful abet crazy orbit.

“*Lying is a sin.*”

“*So in grumbling overmuch.*”

“*I don’t grumble. I express my opinions in stately, measured tones.*”

She not only enchants Gervase but his entire estate. From his blood thirsty five year old brother to the head groomsman, no one is safe from Isabelle’s charm or gentle manipulation.

The romance is very soft and dreamy in its reveal. As I stated earlier, there is no sex. Light kisses, stolen touches, and lots of scorching looks is about all you’re going to get but it works. Isabelle is a lady of breeding and Gervase is a knight of honor. He wants her as his wife and he’ll do nothing to sully her or his honor. Of course, that isn’t a problem once her brothers, Miles and Robin show up to offer advice, threats, and even more laughter. However, even they cannot not stop Gervase and Isabelle from engaging in some deliciously sweet flirting.

He shot Miles a warning look, then gathered her in his arms. “I will,” he whispered against her ear, “consent to be led about however you will if you’ll simply agree to look at me twice.”

“*You will not.*”

“*You might be surprised.*”

“*I might be convinced to look at you more then twice, then.*”

“*We must elude them at our earliest opportunity.*”

A Kurland story wouldn’t be a Kurland story if family didn’t get involved. And the de Piagets arrive in force to “rescue” Isabelle from the beast of Monsaert. Their infectious humor and demonstrative swaggering only adds to the overall appeal of the story. Miles and Robin arrive post haste, determined to protect Isabelle. Both decide to join her in her quest and make sure Gervase keeps his naughty hands and lips to himself. Jocelin, one of Gervase’s brother’s, provides much laughter as he protects Gervase’s back all while teasing him about his romantic intentions towards Isabelle.

“*Lord Rhy’s is going to murder you.*” Jocelin said thoughtfully.

“*But if I murder Guys at the same time, then I inherit the title. If I’m exceptionally clever, I might convince our lovely guest to look at me instead of you.*”

He smiled happily.

“*Life has a way of rewarding lads with good hearts, don’t you think?*”

The main conflict is a light undercurrent that flows in and around the romance. Extremely low key, Kurland reveals clues sporadically until we arrive at the point of no return. Everything wraps up rather fast in that aspect. I felt that portion of the storyline failed a bit in it’s undramatic reveal. I had pretty much guessed who it was and the reasons why. There aren’t but a few reasons someone would try and kill a Lord. I did wish the conflict would have balanced better with the romance.

All in all, Kurland pens an enjoyable lightweight historical romance filled with humor, love, and a wee bit of

mystery. Perfect reading for a lazy day. Each of her romances in this and her coordinating series can be read as stand alones as each storyline consists of a single couple finding their happily ever after. I believe, but am not one hundred percent sure, this is the 16th book in the de Piaget series and the 20th book in the MacLeod/de Piaget series.

RATING: C+

Lisa says

Wish I had enjoyed this one more because I'd been waiting on Isabelle's story for years! I liked it, but I found myself becoming bored about halfway through and never got back to my initial level of enjoyment. It was fun to revisit the original de Piaget family, though, and I loved Joscelin de Seger. I hope for more of him in a future book.

The Window Seat says

A simple love story with familiar characters. A setting that is romantic and engaging. Lyrical writing. These are the things that Lynn Kurland is famous for and it is wonderful to read another Medieval romance that allows Kurland to highlight all her strengths.

Isabelle de Piaget is the youngest daughter of a very powerful Medieval lord. Though she is beautiful in her own right, she has the misfortune of being the younger sister of a well-known beauty. Despite the many "suitors" that have offered for her, most of them don't even know her name. They came looking to wed her sister (who is already married) and when Amanda wasn't available, they were willing to take "the other one". Needless to say, this wasn't endearing to Isabelle. She is the quiet daughter in a rambunctious family and is often seen only in the shadows. When an opportunity comes up that she can have an adventure without the censure of her family, Isabelle takes it and finds herself in much more danger than she ever could have predicted. She is off on a journey to France, only to choose a ship that ends up in a storm and finds herself injured and without her memory on the coast of France.

For the full review, please go to <http://www.thewindowseat13.com/2014/0...>

Stephanie says

Review is posted at: <http://fangswandsandfairydust.com/201...>

SCHEMES AND FAMILY DRAMA

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I really loved this book and it had no sex, and no four letter words. Nor was it religious, or no more so than would necessary in 13th century France. What it does have is a great love story, interesting family relationships, and great intrigue. You may think you know who the baddie is but you won't really be sure.

There are a lot of issues with an injury that is not healing well. Now, remember that back in the day, almost any kind of wound could kill you, and a serious wound took a lot to recover from. For some reason, perhaps the absence of a female influence on the household, Gervase's 'rehab' is not happening. He wonders if he'll ever be strong again so he can fight; these guys love fighting. This makes him "the damaged duke." It means that the girl has to save him from himself. Then of course we usually do save men from themselves. While different herbs are used to help Gervase, it is exercise and massage, along with an attitude adjustment that will bring him around.

There's a lot about protecting women in the book: chivalry. And, times were rough and women generally have enough upper body strength to wield a sword so that actually was the guys job. But, in this book, the concepts of protection, and strength resting with men, are turned on their heads. While Gervase saves Isabelle from physical harm a couple of times, it Isabelle who saves Gervase from himself. Perhaps it is like that throughout the series — this is the sixteenth book — maybe women are always doing the rescuing. This is the first book in the series I have read.

Speaking of that: I didn't even realize this was so deep into a series. There was obviously backstory, but this story stood on its own pretty well.

And, that there is no sex wasn't really a problem. Imagine a couple getting to know each other without sex?! It's a good example of how something can be sexy without "knocking boots."

Although I had a hard time seeing these characters who are larger than life: beautiful, strong, brave, etc., as the characters we see in medieval paintings, which are almost always slight, I did see them; just more as a Pre-Raphaelite painter, or NC Wyeth, would depict them. I did enjoy the way they lived and loved. And I liked the author's style. I can't figure out the title's meaning — lilacs are not mentioned in the book. The cover is weird too — I have never seen that kind of scrolled-iron work in a medieval picture. It looks more Victorian.

Great read!

Sarah Grass says

Ah, Isabelle's story. This was a return to Kurland's traditional, medieval, non time traveling stories. Squeaky clean romance with her signature charm.

I thought Isabelle was not the brightest heroine and the plot rather unoriginal but I still enjoyed it. The DePiaget cameos were great!

I admit Lynn Kurland's books do start to sound the same after a while but I'm a true fan.

One thing odd was that there was not one mention of lilacs in the book- though the title is Dreams of lilacs....

Serena says

So I haven't read a book in quite sometime. Although parts of the ending were predictable I thoroughly enjoyed this book. her writing was amazing as always and I absolutely loved Gervase de Seger. He was just enough of a jerk and a romantic to love him. Isabelle's fiesty attitude and obviously the other family member appearances are always fun. I think the best part is that even if you read as a stand alone book it would still be an awesome read.

Ricki Treleaven says

I've read every romance that Lynn Kurland has ever written. I think she's the best romance writer, and it's been fun to read about the de Piaget and MacLeod families over the years. This one is not a time travel novel like several of her books: Instead it's a straight medieval story about Isabelle de Piaget. Kurland's fans have been waiting for her story for years....she's the youngest daughter of Rhys and Gwen (and Miles' twin sister). I enjoyed the story arc as Amanda steps "out of the shadows" and becomes a confident and graceful lady who can easily manage a fierce French duke. Isabelle always felt less than her beautiful and gregarious older sister Amanda, and she also felt like she was second to her in every way, but from everyone else's point of view, she certainly seems to be equal to Amanda in beauty and certainly in fierceness!

Isabelle receives a mysterious missive: if she doesn't appear at her grandmother's abbey in France, her family will be systematically killed. It also says she can't tell anyone about her mission to save her family. Amanda tricks her brothers and manages to almost make it to France disguised as a boy before her ship is wrecked and she barely makes it to shore. Gervase de Seger finds her roadside during a storm and rescues her. He's recovering from a brutal beating that almost killed him and left him in immense pain, so he fails to notice that Isabelle is indeed a beautiful woman. Once her gender is discovered, he puts her to work in his kitchen as a scullery maid. At this point Isabelle has lost her memory, and her family is frantically trying to find her.

I love the de Piagets. The fiercest knights in all of England, they aren't thrilled to discover that their precious Isabelle has been working as a scullery maid. {Poor Gervase.} I enjoyed seeing a different side of Miles in this story: He's a bit more serious as the situation warrants. I also loved being introduced to Gervase and (most) of his younger brothers. I was not surprised by who wrote the missive bringing Isabelle to France in the first place, but the backstory and motivations are interesting. This is a great beach read, and now I want to go back and read Rhys and Gwen's story.

Terree says

I loved the book, but here's the thing. I have a challenge with titles that really have nothing to do with a books content. I kept looking for the "lilacs" that were mentioned in the title. I am thinking I must have skipped it somehow... I don't know where though. The only flowers that were talked about were the herbs for healing, though not really named much. Lavender and Forget-me-nots. Lavender, though very prominent in France and my favorite flower would have had a very negative connotation if the book was titled "Dreams of Lavender" or "Lavender Dreams". The more appropriate title would have been "Forget-me-not in your Dreams" if they had to have some flower in a title, and it truly MEANT something. gahhhh do they even READ the book when they pick titles? Maybe they just have a machine that has "flower titles" and they just close their eyes and pick... I don't know. They really missed the mark on this title, I did like the book though. Maybe she needs a new editor????

