



## For Castle and Crown

*Sian Ann Bessey*

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After years spent fighting alongside King Richard in the crusades, Lord Edmund of Hawksford is finally returning to his ancestral home. But far from a joyful reunion, what awaits him is devastation. His elder brother is dead, killed in a tragic fire at Hawksford Castle—and the title of duke now falls to Edmund.

When he strives to rebuild the fire-scarred castle, Edmund learns that his was not the only life the fire shattered: his childhood friend Lady Phillipa survived the flames that took Edmund's brother, but badly burned, she has hidden herself away from those she loves. Yet as the pair renew their acquaintance, they find that their affection runs deep—perhaps even deeper than they'd ever realized.

As Edmund and Pippa begin to question whether the fire was truly an accident, they must discover the truth of the past before they can plan for their future. While coming perilously close to the answers they seek, Edmund and Pippa find themselves at the mercy of a dangerous foe who will stop at nothing to lay claim on Hawksford—and he will destroy any who stand in his way.

## For Castle and Crown Details

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Author : Sian Ann Bessey

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## From Reader Review For Castle and Crown for online ebook

### Krista Baetiong Tungol says

[Llywelyn the Great makes a cameo, and Prince John is as unlikable as ever. (hi

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### Lucinda says

I was very pleased with this book. I've read other books from this author before but not in this genre.

The narrative was compelling, the history and time period were fascinating, and the main characters thoroughly engaging. I liked how both Pippa and Edmund stood on their own, and well they completed each other together, They helped each other and those around them, and brought the villains down as well. They went through many trials and totally deserved their happy ending. I loved how their relationship picked up and developed sweetly into something more.

Great ending.

Highly recommend.

I got this book from NetGalley and the publisher which did not influence my opinion.

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### Caitlyn Lynch says

A medieval romance set during the turbulent years of King Richard the Lionheart's captivity in Germany, For Castle And Crown follows Lord Edmund of Hawksford as he returns to claim his ancestral home in the Welsh Marches. A younger son, Edmund never wanted to claim the title, but the death of his brother in a fire a few months previously has left him no choice. It's a difficult time in England, though, especially for those loyal to Richard, as Prince John seeks to cement his claim to the crown.

Philippa was severely burned in the same fire that killed Edmund's brother. Sequestering herself in a nearby nunnery, she plans to take vows, certain no man will ever be able to overlook her scars to marry her. Edmund's return upturns her plans, though, because he doesn't see her scars. He only sees the friend he could always trust, the intelligent woman who can tell him the truth about what has been happening at Hawksford... and the one person who may be able to help him save his legacy from the enemy determined to claim Hawksford for himself.

I absolutely loved Edmund and Pippa's romance. They both have very clear trauma from the events in their past and neither of them are dismissive of the other's issues, instead they are patient and willing to help do whatever is necessary to get through it and move on. The appearance later in the story of one of my all-time favourite historical personages, Prince Llewelyn ab Iorwerth of Gwynedd, really made the story for me, though. (Read Sharon Kay Penman's magnificent opus *Here Be Dragons* to fall utterly in love with Llewelyn).

There were one or two minor niggles that bothered me in the book - a Marcher lord would have at least a few

words of Welsh in his vocabulary, and English nobility of the era spoke Norman-French, not English. The biggest error was geographical, however, when Edmund and Pippa ‘accidentally stumbled’ across into Wales while making their escape at one point. One does not accidentally stumble into Wales from Herefordshire. There’s a very large geographical barrier called the Severn River in the way.

However, these are pretty small niggles in the context of the story, and only a massive history nerd (and someone familiar with Southern Welsh geography) like myself would even notice. They didn’t stop me from awarding this book five stars.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book for review through NetGalley.

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### **Melissa says**

This was a sweet midevil read. I have always liked Bessey's writing. She has a really amazing way of helping the reader see and feel and hear everything. There is a lot of description in her books. I enjoyed this setting and the bit of history I learned and the end notes were great. The book was a slow moving one and that was my only complaint. It is very clean and has a bit of Christianity in it that was a big part of life back then.

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### **English says**

I saw the cover, read the synopsis and could barely resist this book (although I had some reservations knowing its from a Mormon Publisher). I have a weakness for Medieval Fiction. It is a weakness because in my insatiable desire to snap up anything remotely Medieval in the inspy genre, I've encountered some novels that were very poor; silly, inaccurate, formulaic or cliched and others that just seemed like rip-offs from movies.

'For Castle and Crown' did not fall into either camp. It was a solid story, with an adventure and romance element, which remained sweet and mostly clean, except for one non-detailed reference to an attempted sexual assault, and some touching.

I liked the characters and the slow-burning relationship between the hero and heroine, who were childhood friends and neighbors and had basically grown up together. There was a lot of emotional depth, with two scarred characters (Philippa physically and Edmund emotionally), who had to work through their difficulties and traumas to help others and themselves.

What's more, it was not set in London, or some vague, fictional English county or forest as many such novels are. The castle and surrounding areas as fictional, but its set firmly in the region of the Welsh borders, and incorporated some actual geographical features of the region: and a few actual Welsh terms and phrases. I also liked the way that some historical figures were worked into the story towards the end.

The reason for the lower rating was that whilst this was a sweet and enjoyable story, it just wasn't a favorite. There were some situations and scenarios that were on the predictable and implausible side, and the villain was at times a little too obvious in his actions.

Also, there were a few glaring historical inaccuracies. The protagonists practiced dancing by doing the Quadrille, which originated in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and I was very disappointed by the

references to growing and eating potatoes. Potatoes are from the Americas and weren't introduced to Europe until four centuries after this novel is set. It's not the kind of mistake I would expect from an author born and raised in Britain.

Overall, this was a nice, short, slow-paced read that was not too taxing. Some people won't like the slow pace, but at times, I think I crave stories written like that. Recommending for lovers of Historical Fiction.

I requested and received a PDF version of this book from NetGalley. I was not required to write a positive review and all opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Charissa says**

Lord Edmund's been away for years fighting for king and country. But when he returns and finds his brother has died, and he is the new Duke of Hawksford, he has mounting suspicions that someone is out to get him. With King Richard still in captivity, and Prince John seeking to replace him, loyalties can't be taken for granted. Another startling discovery he makes is that his childhood friend, Pippa, has taken refuge in the nearby convent after she suffered burns from the terrible fire that killed his brother and his wife. As he restores their friendship, he finds himself falling in love, and the story gets more and more interesting. This medieval romance was super intriguing. Lots of knights fighting, mysterious, dark happenings that lead to superstition and suspicion among the townspeople, plot twists, and great character development. I really liked this story, and inhaled it in two days. Medieval settings can be gruesome and cruel, but this has those elements without being graphic or crude. Can't say enough good abo

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### **Christina says**

This was such an amazing book! From the very beginning I couldn't put it down. There was such a great mix of action and adventure with a sweet clean romance- I loved it!

I really enjoyed the two main characters, Edmund and Pippa. Each had their own personal struggles and trials to overcome, but yet their first thought was always of others.

One can only imagine what Edmund must be feeling and going through as he finally arrives home but with such sad and heavy news. To add to that, he must bear the weight of being the new duke and living a life he never planned on.

Pippa was another favorite. She was smart, spunky and brave, despite everything that happened to her. While her particular trials didn't disappear overnight, she tossed her fears and worries out the window in order to protect and help those she cared about.

Their romance was sweet and I enjoyed it immensely. It was a great transition from friendship to love. There were a number of supporting characters that were also built up well. It was so fun to see them throughout and the roles they played.

In all, I can't say enough good things about this book! Definitely a great one that I will be re-reading soon!!

I received a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Kelly says**

Refreshing and more telling of how times really were and how couples should be! This book shows a story in a time without a lot of technology and battle scars are worn more often than not.

Edmund comes home to find nothing as he left it. His brother and his new bride are gone from a fire. His childhood best friend Lady Pippa was also burned in the fire and has hidden herself in a convent trying to hide her scars and just serve others. There are troubles with rebuilding the tower where the fire was. Superstition exists. There is someone trying to take over Edmund's rightful place as Duke.

Edmund was also wounded while on the Crusades. Edmund is a righteous man. He is honorable. He only wants what is best for his home and those who need him! As Pippa and Edmund become reacquainted, they find themselves falling for each other. But they can not be together until they stop whatever force seems to be trying to stop Edmund and take everything he loves!

Perhaps what I like best about this book is that Pippa and Edmund are help meets to each other. Edmund and Pippa respect each other and they listen to the other! Edmund had taught Pippa as a young girl how to do many things that probably weren't appropriate for a Lady but it came in handy. She has a lot of faith! She is awesome with a knife! Pippa's scars make a lot of movement painful but she doesn't whine or dwell on it but moves forward and pushes through the pain! Edmund learns to let go of being the guy and allows Pippa, albeit hesitantly, to place herself into direct danger to help get rid of the evil that is messing with the lives of the people he is responsible for. They are equals!

If you like books from medieval times, good vs. evil, scars, the Crusades, fighting for what is right, family, honor, help meets, finding real love, impossible circumstances, then this might be for you!

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### **Julie Carpenter says**

A great medieval read about second chances and childhood friendship that blooms into love.

Lord Edmund has recently returned from fighting for King Richard during the Crusades, and having been caught up in protecting the King during a plot on his life. As he returns, nothing is the same. His father and brother have died, fire has damaged his castle and his people are mourning and trying to survive during the political battles of those vying for his lands, castle and title. He must guard himself and seek for those whom he can trust as he wages another war, only this time it will be at his own land.

Lady Phillipa has found peace in her life. It may not be the outcome she believed for her life as a child, but still peace is precious. She is going to hold onto that peace as closely as she can. Her physical and spiritual healing has taken time. After the fire that ravaged the castle and took the lives of the Duke and his bride, as well as burning and scarring her, she has found refuge with the nuns nearby. She can live her days out serving God and enjoying life, especially not forcing her scars upon others.

All is well until Lord Edmund returns and he and Lady Phillipa encounter each other. Her hard won peace is

shaken and slipping from her grasp. His desire to protect the castle and its people are outweighed by his desire to see and be near his childhood friend. Can they trust each other? Will peace reign? Or will the battle prove more perilous than either of them can imagine?

I enjoyed the relationship between Edmund and Pippa (nickname). I loved the little flashbacks into their past that revealed their friendship. Then to be able to watch them do a dance of skirting around the friendship that once was and rebuilding and strengthening the trust and bond between them. It has been five or so years. Will they be able to remain friends or has too much time passed and the moments in between will have caused too much turmoil in their lives?

Great amounts of suspense and sweet romance balanced throughout this book. It will keep you guessing and turning pages to discover who the bad guy is. Enjoyable read for a quiet evening or a rainy/snowy day!

Content: Clean. Some moments of peril but mild and not graphic. Some kissing.

My personal copy.

Happy Reading!!!

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### **Vonze says**

Initially a tad bit slow for my taste, but I'm happy I stuck with it. REALLY great escape scene, better than some non-rom books I've read. Overall, very sweet medieval romance.

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### **Aimee (Getting Your Read On) says**

I was all sorts of caught up in this book. Knights and castles, Lords and Ladies, danger and intrigue. This story captured my interest and held tight the whole way though.

I loved the emotional stirrings Pippa's story provided. Her insecurities and hurt are gradually overcome by friendship and love. Lord Edmund was all that a male hero should be. Strong, determined to try to do his best and gentle with Pippa. He was the one person who really saw her and heard what not only her mouth was saying but her heart as well.

The story starts out so gently and grows in intensity until the very dynamic ending. I loved every minute of it!

Content: some violence, peril, kissing

- I received a copy of this book from the publisher. All opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Donna Weaver says**

#### **WHAT IT'S ABOUT**

After years spent fighting alongside King Richard in the crusades, Lord Edmund of Hawksford is finally returning to his ancestral home. But far from a joyful reunion, what awaits him is devastation. His elder brother is dead, killed in a tragic fire at Hawksford Castle—and the title of duke now falls to Edmund.

When he strives to rebuild the fire-scarred castle, Edmund learns that his was not the only life the fire shattered: his childhood friend Lady Phillipa survived the flames that took Edmund's brother, but badly burned, she has hidden herself away from those she loves. Yet as the pair renews their acquaintance, they find that their affection runs deep—perhaps even deeper than they'd ever realized.

As Edmund and Pippa begin to question whether the fire was truly an accident, they must discover the truth of the past before they can plan for their future. While coming perilously close to the answers they seek, Edmund and Pippa find themselves at the mercy of a dangerous foe who will stop at nothing to lay claim on Hawksford—and he will destroy any who stand in his way.

#### MY TAKE

I've found a new author! I appreciate the recommendation of a coworker. I really enjoyed the audiobook. The characters are engaging, and I loved the childhood-friendship-turned-romance storyline. The villain was vile. 4 1/2 stars

\*\*\*spoiler\*\*\*

My only complaint is that I would have liked to have seen just a little more residual grief over the death of Pippa's father.

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#### **Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says**

Sian Ann Bessey has quickly become one of my favorites, and once again I was completely transported to medieval times and immersed in the story. I loved the characters from the beginning and really felt for them with the intense trials they endured with strength. It has a steady pace with action interspersed and a climax that had me biting my nails! Childhood friendship that blossoms into love is one of my favorite types of romance, and I thoroughly enjoyed the sweet relationship between Edmund and Pippa. There are powerful themes of loyalty, sacrifice, and inner beauty that made the story deeper and more meaningful. Highly recommend!!!

(I received a complimentary copy of the book; all opinions in this review are my own)

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## **Lisa (Bookworm Lisa) says**

Long before I discovered the Regency time period, I loved medieval. I still love it. I grew up relishing in the stories of King Arthur, Robin Hood, brave knights, and strong damsels (who are rarely in distress). ?

It is a treat to read a well written book. The book begins as Edmund is on crusade with King Richard, they are captured and Edmund injured. Skip two years and we meet Pippa. She has been badly burned in a fire that killed Edmund's brother and his wife.

Looking deeper... look for the mystery behind the burned walls of the castle. Look at the intrigue of the time period, the animosity between John and Richard and the political alliances and grudges formed. Look at the person beneath the scars.'

This book contained many of the elements that I look for in a book: action, romance, political intrigue, and a fascinating time period. It is a clean read, with a bit of violence and Christian themes.

Source: I received a copy of the book from the publisher. All thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

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## **Julie says**

4.5 stars

This book starts out with a bang, when the English king is trying to clandestinely cross his arch enemy's territory. They stop at an inn during a snowstorm, though the King's guard, Edmund, feels like something is off. We get such a great feel for Edmund's character during this scene and it only gets better from there. Pippa, a childhood friend of Edmund's, who was back home at the estate, but has been badly burned in a fire, is now recovering at a convent. When Edmund finally arrives home, he finds out that his brother has been killed and he is now the duke, his life forever changed. He'll need all the friends and allies he can get. Can Pippa let herself help Edmund unravel the mystery behind who wants him dead or will she hide herself away to guard her heart?

I loved how descriptive the book was, especially since this is set during the medieval time period. The author made it easy to imagine with just the right amount of details. The other thing she does well, is provide so much intrigue and danger, with some really great twists and turns, that I was reading as fast as I could to see what would happen next! The romantic thread throughout the book is tender, especially when Edmund is dealing with inner scars and wounds, and Pippa has outer scars and wounds. They both have to grow through a lot of trials and trust their feelings. I thought the two of them were so relatable and I wanted them to get a happily-ever-after. The secondary characters were also really well-drawn and add a depth to the story that make it easy to get lost in the book.

This one will definitely go on my rainy day shelf and I highly recommend it to historical romance fans.

Originally reviewed on <http://ldswritermom.blogspot.com>

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