```
DRUMS OF AUTUMN by Diana Glabaldon. PROLOGUE I've never been afraid of ghosts. Ili view with them and its, after all, yafter a
men chained to him to zig and zag abruptly in order to keep their feet. The general impression was of three inebriates rolling home from the local tavern; grossly at odds with the solemnity of the occasion. I could hear the rnd jeers from the crowds on the wrought-iron balconies of the houses on East Bay Street. "Your doing?" I spoke quietly, so as not to attract notice, but I could have shouted and waved my arms; no one had eyes for anyt us. I felt rather than saw Jamie's shrug, as he moved forward to stand beside me. "It was what he asked of me," he said. "And the best I could manage for him." "Brandy or whisky?" asked Fergus, evaluating Hayes' ap
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ustle of laught
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      the scene before
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    hing but
ith a practiced eye. "The man's a Scot, wee Fergus." Jamie's voice was as calm as his face, but I heard the small note of strain in it. "Whisky's what he wanted." "A wise choice. With luc
even notice when they hang him," Fergus muttered. The small man had slipped from the preacher's grasp and fallen flat on his face in the
ne of his companions to his knees; the last prisoner, a tall young man, stayed on his feet but swayed wildly from side to
g desperately to keep his balance. T glee. The captain of the
ard glowed crim
                                              n between the white of his wig and the me
                              tal of his gorget, flushed with fury as much as with sun. He ba
             d their somber roll, and a soldier scrambled hastily to remove the chain that bound t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       eremoniously to his feet, a soldier gr
                                                                                                                                                        he prisoners together. Hayes was jerked unc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       asping each arm, and the procession re
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      m the sun and the smells. The drums stopped abruptly, an
er order. There was no laughter by the time they reached thé gallows—a mule-drawn cart placed beneath the limbs of a huge live oak. I could feel the drums
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         beating through the soles of my feet. I felt slightly sick fro
lence. "Ye dinna need to watch it, Sassenach," Jamie whispered to me. "Go back to the wagon." His own eyes were fixed unblinkingly on Hayes, who swayed and mumbled in the soldiers' grasp, looking blearily around. The last thing I wanted wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  s to watch. But
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        neither could I leave Jamie to see it through alone. He had come for Gavin Hayes; I had come for him. I touche
w himself straighter, squaring his shoulders. He moved a pace forward, mak
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ing sure that he was visible in the crowd. If Hayes was still sober enough to see anything, the last thing he saw on earth would be the face of a friend. He could see; Hayes glared to and fro as they lifted him into the cart, twisting his neck, desperately looking. "Gabhainn! A ch
yes found him at once, and he ceased struggling. The little m
The hangman guided the noose over the balding
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    an stood swaying slightly as the charge was read: theft in the amount of six pounds, ten shillings. He was covered in reddish dust, and pearls of sweat clung trembling to the gray stubble of his beard. The preacher was leaning close, murmuring urgently in his ear. Then the drums began again, in a steady roll. tioned precisely, just under the ear. The captain of the guard stood poised, saber raised. Suddenly, the condemned man drew himself up straight. Eyes on Jamie, he opened his mouth, as though to speak. The saber flashed in the morning sun, and the drums stopped, with a final thunk! I looked at Jant, reflexive jerk of the dangling sack of clothes. A sharp stink of urine and feces struck through the thick air. On my other side, Fergus watched dispassionately. "I suppose he noticed, after all," he murmured, with regret. * * * The body swung slightly, a dead weight oscillating like a plumb-
                                                                                                                                               head and fixed it tight, knot posi
mie; he was white to the lips, eyes fixed
                                                                                                        wide. From the corner of my eye, I could see the twitching rope, and the fai
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         lat ... plit of the drops that fell from the toe of the corpse's dangling shoe. I hadn't known Gavin Hay be looking. The hangman had known his business; there had been no undignified struggl
                                                                                    sigh from the crowd, of awe and release. Terns squawked from the burning sky, and the harbor sounds
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          came faint and smothered through the heavy air, but the point was wrapped in silence. From where I stood, I could hear the small plit ... p
es, and felt no persona
                                                                      I grief for his death, but I was glad it had been quick. I stole a glance at him, with an odd feeling of intrusion. It was a mos
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            t public way of accomplishing a most private act, and I felt vaguely embarrassed to
e, no staring ey
                                                        es, no protruding tongue; Gavin's small round head tilted sharply to the side, neck grotesquel
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  y stretched but cleanly broken. It
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             was a clean break in more ways than one. The captain of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    guard, satisfied that Hayes was dead, motioned with his saber for the next man t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ed and people pushed each against his neighbor, striving to see whe
                                         brought to the gibbet. I saw his eyes travel down the red-clad file, and then widen in outrage. At t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              crowd, and a ripple of excitement
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            that quickly spread. Heads turn
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ne same moment, there was a cry from the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           avin's death to run for his life, sliding past the guard who should have be
                                re there was nothing to be seen. "He's gone!" "There he goes!" "Stop him!" It was the third prisoner,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      en watching him, but who had been unable to r
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    the tall young man, who had seized the moment of G
                      esist the gallows' fascination. I saw a flicker of movement behind a vendor's stall, a flash of dirty blond ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ir. Some of the soldiers saw it, too, and ran in that direction, but
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 many more were rushing in other directions, and among the collisions and confusion, nothing was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              accomplished. The captain of the
               guard was shouting, face purple, his voice barely audible over the uproar. The remaining prisoner, looking stu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      nned, was seized and hustled back in the direction of the Court of Guard as
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 the redcoats began hastily to sort themselves back into order under the lash of their captain's voice. Jam
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ie snaked an arm
        d my waist and dragged me out of the way of an oncoming wave of humanity. The crowd fell back before the advan
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ce of squads of soldiers, who formed up and marched briskly off to quarter the are
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  a, under the grim and furious direction of their sergeant. "We'd best find lan," Jamie said, fending off a group
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            of excited apprentices.
 He glanced at Fergus, and jerked his head toward the gibbet and its melancholy burden. "Claim the body, aye? We'll m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      eet at the Willow Tree later." "Do you think they'll catch him?" I asked, as we pushed thro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ugh the ebbing crowd, threading our way down a cobbled lane toward the merchants' wharves. "I expect so. Whe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                re can he go?" He spoke abstr
actedly, a narrow line visible between his brows. Plainly the dead man was still on his mind, and he had little attention to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        spare for the living. "Did Hayes have any family?" I asked. He shook his head. "I asked him th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               at, when I brought him the whisky. He thought he might have a brother left alive, but no notion where. The brother w
Virginia, Hayes thought, but he'd heard nothing since." Not surprising if he hadn't; an indentured laborer would have ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         d no facilities for communicating with kin left behind in Scotland, unless the bondsman's employ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            er was kind enough to send a letter on his behalf. And kind or not, it was unlikely that a letter would have found Gavin Hayes, who had spent ten years in Ardsmuir p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             a wide arc that fended off the passersby. "Mac Dubh," he said, bobbing his head in greeting to Jamie. "Mrs. Claire." His long, narrow face was furrowed been pardoned and set free to starve—until Jamie had found him. "God rest poor Gavin," Duncan said, shaking his head dolorously. Jamie m
ison before being transported in his turn. "Duncan!" Jamie called out, and a tall, thin man turned and raised a hand in a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       cknowledgment. He made his way through the crowd in a corks
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            crew fashion, his single arm swi
with sadness. He too had once been a prisoner at Ardsmuir, with Hayes and with Jamie. Only the loss of his arm to a b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       lood infection had prevented his being transported with th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  e others. Unfit to be sold for lab
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        or, he had instead
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ge, and then we'll think of bur
uttered something in response in Gaelic, and crossed himself. Then he straightened, casting off the oppression of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       day with a visible effort. "Aye, well. I must go to the do
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    cks and arrange about lan's passa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ying Gavin. But I must have the lad settled first." We struggled through the crowd toward the docks, squeezing our way between k
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    egar dropped on mayonnaise. The sun glittered hot on the line of bayonet points and the rhythm of their tramping be hing two small children and a street preacher perched on a box. He was shouting s
nots of excited gossipers, eluding the drays and barrows that came and went through the press with the ponderous in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       difference of trade. A file of red-coated soldiers cam
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 nd of the quay, splitting the crowd like vin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    e at the quick-march from the other e
eat through the noise of the crowd like a muffled drum. Even the rumbling sledges and handcarts stopped abruptly t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      o let them pass by. "Mind your pocket, Sassenach," J
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       through a narrow space between a turban-clad slave clutc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     amie murmured in my ear, ushering me
in and repentance, but with only one word in three audible through the noise. "I sewed it shut," I assured him, no
orran would be, did I have one. So long as I dinna meet with a quick-fingered harlot, I'm safe." I glanced at
                                                                                                                                                                                                              netheless reaching to touch the small weight that swung
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       against my thigh. "What about yours?" H
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         e grinned and tilted his hat forward, dark blue eyes narrowing against the br
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   the slightly bulging front of his breeches, and then were substantially too tight, and did nothing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              bold, clean features and a Highlander's proud carriage, he drew the glance of every woman he p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        up at him. Broad-shouldered and tall, with
assed, even with his bright hair covered by a sober blue tricorne. The breeches, which were borrowed,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        whatever to detract from t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 I effect—an effect enhanced by the fact that he himself was totally ignorant of it. "You're a walking inducement to harlots," I s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    crowd. A moment later, a tall, stringy gawk of a boy popped out of the crowd, pushing a thatch of brown hair out of his eyes and grinning widely. "I thought I should never find ye, U n one cheek. Jamie eyed his nephew askance. "Ye're lookin' indecently cheerful, lan, for having just seen a man go to his death." Ian hastily altered his expression into an attemp g else I wanted to do." Jamie smiled slightly and patted his nephew on the back. "Don't trouble yourself, lan; I'd as soon not have seen it myself, only that Gavin was a friend."
aid. "Stick by me; l'll protect you." He laughed and took my arm as we emerged into a small clear spac
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           e. "lan!" he shouted, catching sight of h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       is nephew over the heads of the
ncle!" he exclaimed. "Christ, there are more folk here than at the Lawnmarket in Edinburgh!" He wipe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                            d a coat sleeve across his long, half-ho
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       mely face, leaving a streak of grime dow
t at decent solemnity. "Oh, no, Uncle Jamie," he said. "I didna see the hanging." Duncan raised one b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              row and lan blushed slightly. "I-I wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       sna afraid to see; it was only I had ... somethin
"I know, Uncle. I'm sorry for it." A flash of sympathy showed in the boy's large brown eyes, the only rrowfully. "Aye, poor Gavin. Still, it's a quicker death than starving, and there was little left for him
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                feature of his face with any claim to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     beauty. He glanced at me. "Was it awful, Auntie?" "Ye
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      "I said. "It's over, though." I pulled the damp handkerchief out of my bosom and stood on tiptoe to rub away the smudge on his cheek. Duncan Innes shook his head so
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ry should be near the far end of the quay." I saw lan glance at Jamie and draw himself up as though about to speak, but Jamie had already turned toward the harbor rs, customers and merchants of all sorts. Charleston was a major shipping port, and business was booming, with as many as a hundred ships a month com the Bonnie Mary's captain might be persuaded for Jared's sake to take lan with him back to Edinburgh, allowing the boy to work his passage
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      unwilling to spend time in useless lamenting. "The Bonnie Ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              but that." "Let's go," Jamie interrupted
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ouses that lined the docks, side-stepping sailors, loaders, slaves, passenge
and was shoving his way through the crowd. lan glanced at me, shrugged, and offered me an ar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              m. We followed Jamie behind the wareh
 ing and going from Europe in the season. The Bonnie Mary belonged to a friend of Jamie's co
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                usin Jared Fraser, who had gone to F
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             rance to make his fortune in the wine business and succeeded brilliantly. With luck
                                 as a cabin lad. Ian was not enthused at the prospect, but Jamie was de
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                termined to ship his errant nephew
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                back to Scotland at the earliest opportunity. It was among other concerns—news of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      Bonnie Mary's presence in Charleston that had brought us here from Georgia, where we had first set foot in America—by acciden
                                              t—two months before. As we passed a tavern, a slatternly b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 armaid came out with a bowl of sl
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ops. She caught sight of Jamie and stood, bowl braced against her hip, giving him a slanted
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              brow and a pouting smile. He passed without a glance, intent on his goal. She tossed her head, flung the slops to the pi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         g who
d me. He plud
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ts, and I came up beside him. He twitched unconsciously at the front of his breeches, easing the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         fit, and I took his arm. "Family jewels still safe, are they?" I murmured. "Uncomfortable, but safe," he assure
slept by the step, and flounced back inside. He paused, shading his eyes to look down the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  row of towering ships' mas
ked at the lacing of his flies, grimacing. "I would ha' done better to hide them up my bum, coast of Georgia by a hurricane, arriving soaked, ragged, and destitute—save for a hand ecause if not, we were going to have a spot of difficulty about the passage. In theory, J
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   I think." "Better you t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    han me, mate," I said, smiling. "I'd rather risk robbery, myself." The family jewels were just that. We h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ad been driv
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   en ashore on the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     luable gemstones. I hoped the captain of the Bonnie Mary thought highly enough of Jared Fraser to accep
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ful of large and va
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             t lan as a cabin boy, b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   amie's pouch and my po
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       cket contained a sizable fortune. In practice, the stones might have been beach pebbles so far as the good the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   y were to us. While gems we
re an easy, compact way of transporting wealth, the problem was changing them back
re thin on the ground in Georgia; those willing to tie up their available capital in gemst
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         n the southern colonies was conducted by means of barter—what wasn't, was handled by the exchange of scrip or b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   o money. Most trade
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            a wealthy merchant or banker. And wealthy bankers we
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           sperous rice farmer with whom we had stayed in Savannah had assured us that he himself could scarcely lay his hand on
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     cash—indeed, there was likely not ten pounds in gold and silver to be
                                                                                                                                                    ones
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     rarer still. The pro
had in the whole colony. Nor was there any chance of selling one of the stones in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             f salt marsh and pine forest through which we had passed on our journey north. Charleston was the first city we had reached o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       f sufficient size to harbor merchants and bankers who might help to liquidate a portion of ou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ess stretches o
r frozen assets. Not thát anything was likely to stay frozen long in Charleston in summ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            Rivulets of sweat were running down my neck and the linen shift under my bodice was soaked and crumpled against my skin. Even s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   o close to the harbor, there was no wind at this time of day, and the smells of hot ta
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     I reflected.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    rstep, as some token of thanks for their hospitality. In return, they had p
r, dead fish, and sweating laborers were nearly overwhelming. Despite their protestatio
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ns, Jamie had insisted on
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           giving one of our gemstones to Mr. and Mrs. Olivier, the kindly people who had taken us in when we were shipwrecked virtually on their doo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        giving one of our gemstones to Mr. and Mrs. Olivier, the kindly people who had taken us in when we were shipwrecked virtually on their doo
oney. Of this, six shillings and threepence remained in my pocket, constituting the entirety of our disposable fortune. "This way, Uncle Jamie," Ian s
aid, turning and beckoning his uncle eagerly. "I'
were loading dusty bricks of dried indigo into an anchored cargo ship. "And how did ye get whatever it is? Ye havena got any money, have you?" "No, I won it, d
d around a cartload of corn. "Dicing! Ian, for God's sake, ye canna be gambling when ye've not a penny to bless yourself with!" Holding my arm, Jamie shoved a way through the crowd
pointed out, pausing to wait for us. "Ye've been doing it in every tavern and inn where we've stayed." "My God, Ian, that's cards, not dice! And I know what I'm doing!" "So do I," said Ian, looking smug. "I won, no?" Jamie rolled his eyes towal
e ye willna be gambling wi' the sailors, aye? Ye canna get away from them on a ship." Ian was paying no attention; he had come to a half-crumbled piling, around which was tied a stout rope. Here he stopped and turned to face us, gesturing a
t is not a dog. It's a wolf. It's a bloody big wolf, and I think you ought to get away from it before it takes a bite out of your arse." The wolf twitched one ear negligently in my direction, dismissed me, and twitched it back. It continued to sit, pa
t met a wolf before. I had. "Those things are dangerous," I said. "They do bite you as soon as look at you." Disregarding this, Jamie stooped to inspect the page of the pa
rovided us with a wagon, two horses, fresh clothes for traveling, food for the journey nort
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        h, and a small amount
ve got something to show ye." "What is it?" Jamie asked, threading his way through a thron
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          g of sweating slaves
                                                                                     icing." lan's voice floated back, his
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           body invisible as h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       e skippe
                                                                          to catch up to his nephew. "You do it all the ti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       " the boy
d heaven, imploring patience. "Jesus, lan, but I'm glad you're going home before ye get your
t an object by his feet. "See? It's a dog," lan said proudly. I took a quick half-step behind Jamie, grabbin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               head beaten i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  n. Promise m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                g his arm.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 lan," I said, "th
nting with the heat, its big yellow eyes fixed on lan with an intensity that might have been taken for devotio
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               eone who hadn
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           I opened them again to find him squatting on the ground, peering up the animal's nostrils. "He's a handsome creature, lan," he said, scratching the thing familiarly under the chin. The yellow eyes narrowed slightly, either in pleasure at the at the head and chest, and a deal longer in the leg." "His mother was an Irish wolfhound," lan was hunkered down by Jamie, eagerly explaining as he stroked the enormous gray-brown back. "She got out in heat, into the woods, and when she confolled its hairy toes. The curved black claws were a good two inches long. The thing half closed its eyes, the faint breeze ruffling the thick fur at its neck. I glanced at Duncan, who arched his eyebrows at me, shrugged slightly, and sighed. "I asked, somewhat more loudly than necessary. Jamie stopped caressing the beast. "Oh," he said, "I love at the yellow-eyed thing with some regret. "W
o-called dog, inviting it to smell his knuckles. I closed my eyes, expecting the imminent amputation of his h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             aring no shrieks
ttention or—more likely, I thought—in anticipation of biting off Jamie's nose. "Bigger than a wolf, though; i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   t's b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             roader through
ame back in whelp—" "Oh, aye, I see." Now Jamie was crooning in Gaelic to the monster while he picked u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           s huge foot and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          onny laddie, the
Duncan didn't care for dogs. "Jamie—" I said. "Balach Boidheach," Jamie said to the wolf. "Are ye no the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             hat's no trouble, Uncle Jamie," lan assured him. "He hunts fo
ell." He rose to his feet, shaking his head reluctantly. "I'm afraid your auntie's right, lan. How are we to fe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       r himself." "Here?" I glanced around at the wareho
uses, and the stuccoed row of shops beyond. "What does he hunt, small children?" lan looked mildly hu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ot, Auntie. Fish." Seeing three skeptical faces s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      rt. "Of course n
o his knees and grabbed the beast's muzzle in both hands, prying his mouth open. "He does! I swear, U
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ncle Jamie! Her
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 and the massive jaws clashed shut, spraying droplets of saliva over the stone quay. "I'm all right, Uncle," lan said cheerfully, wiping his hand on his breeks. "He wouldn't bite me, I'm sure. His name is Rollo." Jamie rubbed his knuckles a ary will take kindly to his presence in the crew's quarters." lan didn't say anything, but the look of happiness on his face didn't diminish. In fact, it grew. Jamie glanced at him, caught sight of his glowing face, and stiffened. "No," he said, re too late." Jamie said something in Gaelic that I didn't understand. Duncan looked scandalized. "Damn!" Jamie said, reverting to English. "Bloody damn!" Jamie took off his hat and rubbed a hand over his face, hard. He looked hot, didn't be said, reverting to English."
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    had loosened,
ah, I shall take your word for it, lan. But even so—for Christ's sake, be careful of your fingers, lad!" lan's
cross his upper lip. "Mmphm. Well, whatever his name is, and whatever he eats, I dinna think the capt
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  the Bonnie M
in horror. "Oh, no." "Yes," said lan. A wide smile of delight split his bony face. "She sailed three day
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      s ago
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    , Uncle. We
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     , closed it, and ran his fingers roughly through his hair, jerking loose the ribbon that tied it back. lan looked abashed. "I'm sorry, Uncle. I'll try not to be a worry to ye, truly I will. And I can work; I'll earn enough for my food." Jamie's fac
sheveled, and thoroughly disgruntled. He opened his mouth, thought better of whatever he had be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      en go
patte
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ing to say
softened as he looked at his n
                                                                                                ephew. He sighed deeply, and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      oulder. "İt's not that I dinna want ye, lan. You know I should like nothing better than to keep ye with me. But what in hell will your mother say?" The glow returned to lan's face. "I dinna ken, Uncle," he said, "but she'll be saying it in So
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 d lan's sh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ut his arms around Rollo and hugged him. The wolf seemed mildly taken aback by the gesture, but after a moment, put out a long pink tongue and daintily licked lan's ear. Testing him for flavor, I thought cynically. "Besides," the boy from Georgia to say I was with you." Jamie summoned a wry smile. "I canna say that that particular bit of knowledge will be ower-comforting to her, lan. She's known me a long time, aye?" He sighed and clapped the hat back on his ern." * * * The Willow Tree was dark, and might have been cool, had there been fewer people in it. As it was, the benches and tables were crowded with sightseers from the hanging and sailors from the docks, and the atmosphere w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      we're h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ere." He p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      gh that I'm safe; you wrote
                                        head, and turned to me. "I badly need a drink, Sassenach," h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     e said. "Let's find that tav
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            reathing through a wad of soiled laundry, soaked in beer. Rollo at once proved his worth, parting the crowd like the Red Sea as he stalked through the taproom, lips drawn back from his teeth in a constant, inaudible growl. He was
               as like a sweatbath. I inhaled as I stepped into the taproom, then let my bre
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ath out, fast. It was like b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            le and appeared to go to sleep. Out of the sun, with a large pewter mug of dark ale foaming gently in front of him, Jamie quickly regained his normal self-possession. "We've the two choices," he said, brushing back the sweat-soak nes, and perhaps book passage for lan to Scotland on another ship. Or we can make our way north to Cape Fear, and maybe find a ship for him out of Wilmington or New Bern." "I say north," Duncan said, without hesitation. "Ye've ould see we were not cheated nor robbed. Here—" He lifted one shoulder in eloquent indication of the un-Scottish—and thus patently dishonest—persons surrounding us. "Oh, do let's go north, Uncle!" lan said quickly, before Ja
evidently no stranger to taverns. Having satisfactorily cleared out a corner bench, h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    e curled up under the tab
ed hair from his temples. "We can stay in Charleston long enough to maybe find a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      buyer for one of the sto
e kin in Cape Fear, no? I mislike the thought of staying ower-long among strange
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     rs. Ánd your kinsman w
mie could reply to this. He wiped away a small mustache of ale foam with his sleeve. "The j
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ous; you'll need an extra man along for protection, aye?" Jamie buried his expression in his own cup, but I was seated close enough to feel a subterranean quiver go through him. Jamie was indeed very fond of his nephew. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ourney might be danger
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           they happened. The boy had been kidnapped by pirates the year before, and it was the necessity of rescuing him that had brought us by circuitous and often dangerous means to America. Nothing had happened recently, but I kn ... to be sure, lan," Jamie said, lowering his cup. He carefully avoided meeting my gaze, but I could see the corner of his mouth twitching. "Ye'd be a great help, I'm sure, but ..." "We might meet with Red Indians!" lan said, eyes s! Dr. Stern told me that the wilderness of Carolina is alive wi' fierce creatures—bears and wildcats and wicked panthers—and a great foul thing the Indians call a skunk!" I choked on my ale. "Are ye all ief. I blotted the drops of spille dale off my bosom, pulling the dark ico my Activited and the processing the dark indians and the processing the dark indians and often dangerous means to America. Nothing had happened recently, but I kn ... "We might meet with Red Indians!" lan said, eyes s! Dr. Stern told me that the wilderness of Carolina is alive wi' fierce creatures—bears and wildcats and wicked panthers—and a great foul thing the Indians call a skunk!" I choked on my ale. "Are ye all ief. I blotted the drops of spille dale off my bosom, pulling the fabric of my bodice discreetly away from my flesh in hopes of admitting a little air. Then I caught a glimpse of Jam
act remained that lan was the sort of person to whom things happened. Usually through no f
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ault of his own, but still
ew Jamie was anxious to get his fifteen-year-old nephew back to Scotland and his mother b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    efore something did. "A
wide. His face, already a rosy brown from the sun, glowed with a flush of pleasurable anti-
right, Auntie?" lan leaned anxiously across the table. "Fine," I wheezed, wiping my strea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     cipation. "Or wild beast
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ning face with my kerch
ie's face, on which the expression of suppressed amusement had given way to a small
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           nks aren't dangerous." I murmured, laving
to regard the unfamiliar fauna of the New World with caution. "Mmphm." The frown e
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ased, but a narrow line
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            remained between his brows. "Maybe so, but what of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                other things
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              neathed knife that hung from his belt. Our lack of weapons had worried Ja
? I canna say I wish to be meeting a bear or a pack o' savages, wi' only this to hand.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     He touched the large s
derably on the trip from Georgia, and lan's remarks about indians and wild animals ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             to the forefront of his mind once more. Besides Jamie's knife, Fergus bore a smaller blade
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   d brought the concern
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      suitable for cutt
ng rope and trimming twigs for kindling. That was the full extent of our armory—the Olivi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ers had had neither gu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ns nor swords to spare. On the journey from Georgia to Charleston, we had had the company of a group of rice
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        and indigo farmers—all b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              tols, and muskets—bringing their produce to the port to be shipped north to Pennsylvania and New York. If we left for Cape Fear
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ristling with knives, pis
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              now, we would be alone, unarme
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              seless against anything that might emerge from the thick forests. At the same time, there were pressing reasons to travel north, our lack of availa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ble capital being one. Cape Fear was t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                d. and essentially defer
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ottish Highlanders in the American Colonies, boasting several towns whose inhabitants had emigrated from Scotland during the last twenty years, following the up
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           heaval after Culloden. And among these emig
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           he largest settlement of Sc
rants were Jamie's kin, who I knew would willingly offer us refuge: a roof, a bed, and time
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              in this new world. Jamie took another drink and nodded at Duncan. "I must say I'm of your mind, Duncan." He leaned back against the wall of the tavern, glancing c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 asually around the crowded room. "D'ye no feel the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  to establish ourselves
eyes on your back?" A chill ran down my own back, despite the trickle of sweat doing like
                                                                                                                                                           wise. Duncan's eyes
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  widened t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ractionally, then narrowed, but he didn't turn around. "Ah," he said. "Whose eyes?" I asked, looking rather nervously around. I didn't see anyone taking particu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          lar notice of us, though anyone might be watching surre
ptitiously; the tavern was seething with alcohol-soaked humanity, and the babble of voic
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       it, aye? We're in no danger. Not here." "Not yet," Innes said
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             wn out all but the closest conversation. "Anyone's, Sassenach," Jamie answered. He glanced sideways at me, and smiled. "Dinna look so scairt about
                                                                                                                                                           es was loud enough to dro
                                                                                                                                                           lows, d'ye see? There will
. He leaned forward to pour another cup of ale. "Mac Dubh called out to Gavin on the gal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ho took notice—Mac Dubh bein' the bittie wee fellow he is," he added dryly. "And the farmers who came with us from Georgia will have sold t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           heir stores by now, and be takin' their ease in places like this," Jam
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         be those w
ie said, evidently absorbed in studying the pattern of his cup. "All of them are honest m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              tory, no? The folk cast away by the hurricane? And what are the chances that at least one of them kens a bit about what we carry?
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                "I see," I murmured, and did. We had attracted public interest by our assoc
                                                                                                                                                         en-but they'll talk, Sasse
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        nach. It makes a good s
ation with a criminal, and could no longer pass as inconspicuous travelers. If finding a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ng robbery from unscrupulous persons, or scrutiny from the English authorities. Neither prospect was appealing. Jamie lift
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ed his cup and drank deeply, then set it down with a sigh. "No. I think it's perhaps r
                                                                                                                                                         buyer took some time, as w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       as likely, we risked inviti
ot wise to linger in the city. We'll see Gavin buried decently, and then we'll find a safe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ow we can decide whether to stay or go." The thought of spending several more nights in the woods—with or with
                                                                                                                                                      spot in the woods outside t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       he town to sleep. Tomorr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       out skunks-was not appealing. I hadn't taken my dress off in eight days, merely rinsing th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       real bed, even if flea-inf
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           eyeing the hem of my sleeve, gray and grubby with wear. The tavern door flung suddenly open at th
e outlying portions of my anatomy whenever we paused in the vicinity of a stream. I h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ested, and a chance to scrub off the grime of the last week's travel. Still, he had a point. I sighed, ruefully
                                                                                                                                                      ad been looking forward to a
is point, distracting me from my contemplation, and four red-coated soldiers shoved t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         f the soldiers made a rapid circuit of the room, glancing under tables, while another disappeared into the kitche
                                                                                                                                                    heir way into the crowded roo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      m. They wore full unifor
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              m, held muskets with bayonets fixed, and were obviously not in pursuit of ale or dice. Two o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       . and rested on us for a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            moment, full of speculation, but then passed on, restlessly seeking. Jam
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ie was outwardly tranquil, sipping his ale in apparent obliviousness, but I saw the hand in his lap clench slowly into a fist
n beyond. The fourth remained on watch by the door, pale eyes flicking over the crow
                                                                                                                                                   d. His gaze lighted on our table
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ared much perturbed by the soldiers' presence. The little knot of singers in the chimney corner went on with an interminable versi
. Duncan, less able to control his feelings, bent his head to hide his expression. Neith
                                                                                                                                                  er man would ever feel at ease i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      n the presence of a red
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              coat, and for good reason. No one else appe
on of "Fill Every Glass," and a loud argument broke out between the barmaid and a p
                                                                                                                                                  air of apprentices. The soldier re
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      turned from the kitche
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ving evidently found nothing. Stepping rudely through a dice game on the hearth, he rejoined his fellows by the door. As the soldiers show
                                                                                                                                                doorjamb to avoid swinging elbo through the crowd and plopped d
ed their way out of the tavern, Fergus's slight figure squeezed in, pressing against the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           oldier's eyes catch the glint of metal and fasten with interest on the hook Fergus wore in replacement of his missing left hand. He glanced sharply at Ferg
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ws and musket butts.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                I saw one s
us, but then shouldered his musket and hurried after his companions. Fergus shoved
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      rritated. "Blood-sucking salaud," he said, without preamble. Jamie's brows went up. "The priest," Fergus elaborated. He took the mug lan pushed in his direction and di
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                side lan. He looked hot and i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     own on the bench be
ained it, lean throat glugging until the cup was empty. He lowered it, exhaled heavily,
ve no choice about it. The body will scarcely keep till sunset, as it is." He ran a finger
                                                                                                                                             and sat blinking, looking noticeably
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              gs to bury the man in the churchyard," he said. "An Anglican church, of course; there are no Catholic churches here. Wretched usurer! He knows we ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       happier. He sighed
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               and wiped his mouth, "He wants ten shilling
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ted cotton away fro
                                                                                                                                             nside his stock, pulling the sweat-wil
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               o attract the attention of the serving maid, who was being run off her feet by the press of patrons. "I told the super-fatted son of a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               m his neck, then banged his fist several times on the table t
pig that you would decide whether to pay or not. We could just bury him in the wood
t meal here and to buy food for the journey north; perhaps enough to pay for a couple
                                                                                                                                             after all. Though we should have to p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     urchase a shovel,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                he added, frowning. "These grasping townsfolk know we are strangers;
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         they'll take our last coin if they can." Last coin was perilously close to the truth. I had enough to pay for a decer
                                                                                                                                             of nights' lodging. That was all. I saw J
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ound the room, assessing the possibilities of picking up a little money at hazard or lo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            o. Soldiers and sailors were the best prospects for gambling, but there were few of either in the ta
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     amie's eyes flick r
proom—likely most of the garrison was still searching the town for the fugitive. In one
                                                                                                                                            corner, a small group of men was bein
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               over several pitchers of brandywine; two of them were singing, or trying to, their attempts causing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   great hilarity among their comrades. Jamie gave an almost imperceptible nod at si
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     g loudly convivial
ght of them, and turned back to Fergus. "What have ye done with Gavin for the time b
                                                                                                                                           eing?" Jamie asked. Fergus hunched on
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     e shoulder. "Put
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               him in the wagon. I traded the clothes he was wearing to a ragwoman for a shroud, and she agreed to wash the bo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            dy as part of the bargain." He gave Jamie a faint smile. "Don't wor
ry, milord; he's seemly. For now," he added, lifting the fresh mug of ale to his lips. "P
                                                                                                                                            oor Gavin." Duncan Innes lifted his own
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            te to his fallen comrade. "Slàinte," Jamie replied, and lifted his own mug in reply. He set it down and sighed. "He wouldna like be
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     ing buried in the wood," he said. "Why not?" I as
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      mug in a half salu
ked, curious. "I shouldn't think it would matter to him one way or the other." "Oh, no,
                                                                                                                                                  we couldna do that, Mrs. Claire." D
                                                                                                                                                                                                                      uncan was shaking his
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               head emphatically. Duncan was normally a most reserved man, and I was surprised at so much apparent feeling. "He was afraid of the dark," Jamie sa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              id softly. I turned to s
tare at him, and he gave me a lopsided smile. "I lived wi' Gavin Hayes nearly as long
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ser quarters. I kent him well." "Aye, he was afraid of being alone in the dark," Duncan chimed in. "He was most mortally scairt of tannagach—of spirits, aye?" His
                                                                                                                                                         as I've lived with you, Sassen
                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ach—and in much clo
                                                                                                                                                             ison cell that he and Jamie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   avin Hayes—and with forty other men—for three long years. "D'ye recall, Mac Dubh, how he told us one night of the tannasq he met?" "I do, Duncan, and could wish I did not." J
long, mournful face bore an inward look, and I knew he was seeing in memory the pr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                had shared with
amie shuddered despite the heat. "I kept awake myself half the night after he told us
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             as leaning over his cup of ale, round-eyed. His cheeks were flushed and streaming, and his stock crumpled with sweat. Jamie rubbed a hand across his mouth, thinking. "Ah. Well, it was a time in the late, co
                                                                                                                                                             that one." "What was it. Ui
                                                                                                                                         e the ground will be shivered wi' frost c
ld autumn in the Higȟlands, just when ṫhe season turns, and the feel of the air tells y
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         n," he said. He settled himself in his seat and sat back, alecup in hand. He smiled wryly, plucking at his own throat. "Not like now, aye? "Well, Gavin's son brought back the kine that night, but there was one beast missing—the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ome daw
lad had hunted up the hills and down the corries, but couldna find it anywhere. So Gavin set the lad to milk the two others, and set ou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          t himself t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                o look for the lost cow." He rolled the pewter cup slowly between his hands, staring down into the dark ale as though seeing in it the bulk of the night-black Scottish peaks and the mist that floats in the autumn glens. "He went some distance, and the cot behind the cot behin
d him disappeared. When he looked back, he couldna see the light from the window anymore, and there was no sound but the keening of the wind. It was cold, but he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                went on, tramping through the mud and the heather, hearing the crackle of ice under his boots. "He saw a small grove through the most, and thinking the cow might have taken shelter beneath the trees, he went toward it. He said the trees were birches, standing there all I
eafless, but with their branches grown together so he must bend his head to squeeze beneath the boughs. "He came into the grove and saw it was not a grove at all, but a circle of trees. There were great tall trees, spaced verra evenly, all around him, and smaller ones, saplings, grown up between to make a wall of branches. And in the center of the circle stood a cairn." Hot as it was in the tavern, I felt as though a sliver of ice had slid melting down my spine. I had seen and wiped away a trickle of sweat that ran down his temple. "He felt quite queer, did Gavin. For he kent the place—everyone did, and kept well away from it. It was a strange place. And it seemed even worse in the dark and the cold, from what it did in the light of day. It was an auld cairn, the kind laid wi' slabs of rock, all heaped round with stone
s, and he could see before him the black opening of the tomb. "He knew it was a place no man should come, and he without a powerful charm. Gavin had naught but a wooden cross about his neck. So he crossed himself with it and turned to go." Jamie paused to sip his ale. "But as Gavin went from the grove," he said softly, "he heard footsteps behind him." I saw the Adam's apple bob in lan's throat as he swallowed. He reached mechanically for his own cup, eye
s fixed on his uncle. "He didna turn to see," Jamie went on, "but kept walking. And the steps kept pace wi' him, step by step, always following. And he came through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and behind him the crack! of breaking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and behind him the crack! of breaking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and behind him the crack! of breaking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and behind him the crack! of breaking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and behind him the crack! of breaking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and the steps under his feet, and the steps walking ice. "He walked and he walked, through the could hear the peat crackle under his feet, and the steps under his feet, and the came through through the came through through the came through through through the came through throu
thing came no nearer, but stayed there, watching him. "And so he began to walk backward, not daring to face round again. He walked backward, stumbling and slipping, fearing every moment as he might tumble into a burn or down a cliff and break his neck, but fearing worse to turn his back on the couldna tell how long he'd walked, only that his legs were trembling wi' weariness, when at last he caught a glimpse of light through the mist, and there was the could thing was quick, and slippit past him, to stand betwixt him and the door. "His wife had been watching out for him, and when she heard him cry out, she came at once to the door. "His wife had been watching out for him, and there was thought, she snatched the pot from beneath her bed, and a twig of myrtless."
e bound wi' red thread and black, that she'd made to bless the cows. She dashed the water against the doorposts, and the cold thing leapt upward, astride the lintel. Gavin rushed in beneath and barred the door, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and Gavin Hayes never again left his house past sunset—until he went to fight for Prince Tearlach. Even Duncan, who knew the tale, sighed as Jamie finished speaking. It is not the dawn, astride the lintel. Gavin rushed in beneath and barred the door, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and stayed inside in his wife's arms until the dawn. They let the candle burn all the night, and the cold thing leapt upward, astrick the condition of the c
```