

Love Painted in Red

Tavish MacCraig's days are bleak. His nights are nightmares. And his heart is an empty shell. One beautiful Irish painter could change all that—if her past doesn't shatter them both first.



After surviving life as a POW for 6 months in Afghanistan, the thirty-three-year-old Highlander forsook his medical and military career in favor of running his family's internationally renowned art gallery in London, The Blue Dot. When he meets Laetitia Galen, a powerful and sizzling attraction ignites between them.

Laetitia fled hell on earth when she was sixteen. Now she works as a well-paid housekeeper in a remote country manor in Warwickshire and sells her paintings in an obscure gallery. To preserve her new life and hard-earned peace, she resists Tavish and The Blue Dot's offer of an exclusive contract.

Laetitia becomes Tavish's obsession—Tavish is Laetitia's unattainable dream.

Meanwhile, a man with a burning grudge plots his long-awaited revenge. He could destroy them all over again.

Tavish and Laetitia will discover falling in love is life's greatest risk!

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EXCERPT

The sizzling undercurrent of lust between Laetitia and Tavish stayed muted during dinner.

As Sebastian and Laetitia alternated themselves in presenting a five-course meal, minus the dessert, perfectly paired with wine, the kitchen warmed with laughs. Aromatic smells and sweet-and-sour, spicy flavors heightened the senses, as the four of them discovered a mutual love for classic literature and alternative rock, wines, cheese, and vegetarian food.

Laetitia and Tavish were widely divergent in their film tastes. She couldn't stand horror movies and made Tavish promise to never see one with her, which he immediately agreed to, as it implied that they would be seeing a film together in the future.

"I'm super impressed, Buchanan!" Tavish rubbed his stomach as he stood and took his plate to the dishwasher.

"Laetitia is responsible for most of this dinner success," said Sebastian, his grin telling how much he was satisfied with the praise.

Tavish's lips curled for the umpteenth time that evening, as he realized the wine cooler was a marble fountain, ingeniously attached to the wall by the sink, so when the ice melted, the water dripped there, without Laetitia having to fuss over puddles on the floor.

"And make space, Doc," interjected Virginia, handing him the frozen strawberry pie and the bowl of whipped cream, then taking the plate off his hands. "Laetitia's desserts are better than my father's."

"You'll deal with the dishes, traitor," Sebastian growled.

Laetitia held back Tavish's wrist as he was going to eat his first piece. "Not like this."

"Nae?"

"You can't eat it without *this* sauce." Laetitia slid her chair over by his.

"Hot chocolate?"

"Spiced with whisky and cardamom." She spooned a piece of pie from his plate and poured a dollop of cream; then from a small porcelain jug she poured the hot sauce over them. "You have to make sure you get all the flavors."

"Indeed." The word left his mouth in a whisper, as he could easily see them naked on the bed while she fed him from her hand. Or he ate it from her breasts.

Tavish leaned in, and Laetitia fed him the dessert. In the process, a drop of the sauce fell onto his chin.

She instinctively reached out to stop it, just as he automatically nabbed the wayward drop with his tongue, licking it off her fingers. She leaned closer, a slow, almost minuscule movement. A blast of eroticism coursed through them, growing stronger as he sucked her finger into his mouth.

Sebastian smiled at Virginia, who had a grin on her face. In all the years Sebastian had known Laetitia, she had been extremely reserved with men, including him. He was happy Tavish had made such quick progress where no one else had.

Feel the powerful attraction between Laetitia and Tavish?

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Laetitia's Strawberry Scottish Pudding

There's nothing like marrying two of Scotland's best products: strawberries and whiskey. A shortbread base gives this dessert even more Scottish flair.

This impressive, easy-to-make recipe is Laetitia's secret to eternal happiness.

SHORTBREAD BASE

INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup butter
- 3/4 cup caster sugar (not the same as table sugar)
- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons of blended malt whiskey

DIRECTIONS

- 1** Preheat oven to 320 degrees.
- 2** Cream the butter and sugar together either by hand or with a mixer.
- 3** Gradually add flour until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs, then knead the bread-crumb mixture into a smooth, soft dough.
- 4** Roll the dough into a sausage shape, wrap it in cling film, and store it in the fridge until hard.
- 5** Slice the dough into half-inch slices, place on a baking sheet, and cook for 30 minutes until golden brown. Remove and allow to cool, then put the shortbread into a bag and crush it up into biscuit crumbs.
- 6** Mix the crumbs with 2 tablespoons of whiskey and mold into the bottom of a greased springform pan. Place in the fridge for 1 hour.

Tip: To save time—and cut calories—you can make a graham cracker base by substituting crushed graham crackers for the shortbread, and blend with a couple of tablespoons of melted butter.

FILLING

INGREDIENTS

- 2-1/4 cups strawberries
- 1 cup cream cheese
- 1-1/4 cups caster sugar
- 1-1/4 cups heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons of blended malt whiskey

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Keep 2 or 3 of the strawberries for decorating, but otherwise cut the rest of the strawberries into quarters.
- 2 Mix the cream cheese and sugar together using a mixer.
- 3 In a separate bowl, beat the cream with the whiskey until stiff peaks form.
- 4 Gradually fold the cream cheese and sugar mixture into the cream until well combined, and then fold in the quartered strawberries.
- 5 Spoon the mixture on top of the shortbread base and refrigerate overnight, or at least 4 hours if you can't wait that long.
- 6 Before serving, remove from the fridge and decorate with the remaining strawberries.

SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup good quality milk chocolate (or white chocolate)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

DIRECTIONS



- 1 Break up the chocolate into small pieces and leave at room temp.
- 2 Put the cream in a microwave-proof jug, add the cardamom, and heat on high for 1 minute (no longer than that or the sauce will be too thick).
- 3 Add the chocolate to the cream, and stir until the chocolate melts completely. It will take about 2 minutes to melt; don't reheat the cream to get the chocolate to melt faster.
- 4 Serve immediately, pouring it over the cheesecake for a delicious treat.

TIPS

- You can refrigerate the leftover sauce and use it as a chocolate spread.
- If you substitute 2 cups milk for the cream, it makes awesome drinking chocolate!
- This cheesecake freezes well.