



One Sweet Moment

Maggie Craig

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Edinburgh, 1822: In the glittering New Town, the Scottish capital is fast transforming itself into the Athens of the North. Catriona Dunbar lives in the dank underground vaults of the Old Town, where she and her young brother Andrew are slaves in all but name to their grasping aunt and pitiless, lecherous uncle.

Proud and determined, Kate dreams of escape for Andrew and herself, a dream that may come true when handsome medical student Richard Hope walks into her life. Their love meets horrified opposition from Richard's wealth family, while Kate's aunt and uncle see an opportunity for easy money.

Set against the pageantry and colour of King George IV's pivotal visit to Edinburgh of 1822 and the heart-stopping drama of the Great Fire of Edinburgh of 1824, *One Sweet Moment* is a vibrant love letter to old Edinburgh. Maggie Craig brings to life another time while skilfully weaving an unforgettable tale of love, loss and the enduring power of love.

One Sweet Moment Details

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Author : Maggie Craig

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ROMANTIC HISTORICAL REVIEW BLOG says

4.5 stars

Reviewed by Raven at Romantic Historical Lovers:

[http://romantichistoricallovers.wordp...](http://romantichistoricallovers.wordpress.com)

Marguerite Kaye says

I read this after the fabulous *Gathering Storm*, which was probably a mistake, this book which was written much earlier could never have lived up to my expectations.

Maggie Craig's research is impeccable, and her descriptions of the underworld of Edinburgh inhabited by Kate and her family are absolutely fantastic. You could almost taste the oysters served in her aunt's tavern, you could certainly smell the clientele. I know Edinburgh really well, but this book made me want to finally do the tour of the underground closes I've never managed to get myself booked on, and it made me want to wander all of Kate's haunts with a fresh eye. As with *Gathering Storm*, this book is set at a time of huge political unrest - though much later. We get a sort of anti-Regency setting and story, and as with the ambiance, Ms Craig's evocation of the politics is brilliant.

But there, I'm afraid, my enjoyment of the book ended. I'll say here and now that it looks, from other reviews, like this is a very personal thing, and I'd encourage everyone to read this for themselves, because it's really, really well written, evocative, and it takes no prisoners with the language. So what's my problem? Well, it's the central romance between Kate, an illiterate, abused tavern maid from the Old Town, and Richard, a trainee physician with aristocratic connections, from the New Town. From the very start, for me, it felt wrong. Kate had been abused by her uncle on a regular basis. Richard, unwittingly, helps her to find the strength to put an end to this, but what made my toes curl was that he in turn had an abusive - as in power, not sex - relationship with her. It was never going to work, and he knew that, yet he didn't stop. And he should have. And so everything from the point where he kissed her, no matter how much else he did, simply made me squirm.

I didn't finish this, I read about two thirds, so I could be utterly wrong, and all could be redeemed, but though I went back to it a couple of times, I couldn't get past my own rooted prejudice against Richard. As I said, this is a very personal reaction to a character, and I'd hate it to stop you trying this for yourself - which is why I haven't graded it.

And regardless of this book, I still can't wait for the follow up of *Gathering Storm* next year.

Tabby Shiflett says

A beautiful and gritty historical romance! Edinburgh, Scotland is a character in itself in this book. I love how well the author illustrates all the sounds, smells, and sights from the time period. Lovely MCs. Heart-

wrenching and satisfying, I recommend this book to all romance readers and lovers of Scotland.

LT Member Giveaway
One Sweet Moment
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LJ says

I had read several of Maggie Craig's books and really liked them, but I was disappointed in this one. Too much time was spent on how the characters longed to be together and too little time was spent on actual events.

Frances says

This is a really excellent book for those who live in Edinburgh

Susan says

I should preface this by saying that while I am a huge fan of historical fiction I am not a fan of romances. This book gave me enough of a history fix to make me happy. The vivid descriptions brought the city and its people to life. I am not at all familiar with Edinburgh but I could see it, hear it, and smell it. It was pretty horrifying to learn how the poor lived in squalor underground while the wealthy shopped right over their heads! Our heroine Kate's situation is especially stomach churning and I really did hope that she would escape. From fairly early on I was concerned that this whole story was going to be about how she was "saved" by a rich young man, and swept off to a life of wealth. To be fair I at no point did I see that she had any option to save herself! This isn't what happened in this story and Kate had a bit more agency than I expected, although I kind of wished that she didn't because her choices were terrible!

The story-line wasn't predictable to me because I could never have guessed that the two main characters could be so incredibly stupid and consistently make the worst decisions possible. It was pretty frustrating to watch them take an already bad situation and make it even worse. Kate especially would not know a good decision if it bit her in the butt!

There is definite "insta-love" involved which is one of the reasons I usually don't read romances. Why would our main character fall in love with Kate the first time he sees her across the room? Oh right, because she's pretty. (gag) I want him to fall for her over time when he discovers how smart, strong, witty she is not just because of her appearance. This was a bit of a disappointment.

Although I had some issues with the romance aspect of this book I think it is a strong piece of historical fiction and I even shed a few tears near the end.

I received this book for free through Goodreads Giveaways but my opinion is my own.

Wendy says

This story begins with a quote from Robert Louis Stevenson "To look over the South Bridge and to see the Cowgate below, full of crying hawkers is to view one rank of society from another in the twinkling of an eye"; this pretty much sums up the difference in the class structure of the time. But how do I to begin to review one of the loveliest and most compellingly written books it has been my pleasure to experience? I listened to the audio version, narrated by Lesley Mackie who has the most melodious voice, herself obviously a Scott, her narration is perfectly pitched and cleverly vocalised so that we the listener are never in any doubt about which character is talking at any given time. There is a lot of the Scottish vernacular used and this adds depth and great feeling, as well as showing the difference in class of the wonderful mix of characters.

The title 'One Sweet Moment' and also the brief synopsis suggests just another love story; I do not mean this in any derogatory manner but as a lover of history, as well as a finely written romance, I was delighted to find that this wonderful find was so much more than suggested.

This was the first Maggie Craig novel I had encountered and it was purely by chance that I discovered it on iTunes for audio download and thought it might be a nice book to listen to whilst out walking. Instead I found myself ignoring everyone and grabbing every moment I could to devour this beautifully moving and profoundly interesting story. Written by a lady who obviously knows her stuff, history of Scotland, Edinburgh and the people of that city to boot.

From start to finish (with a perfect epilogue which winds the book up in the most poignant way) the story spans approximately 50 years. It is the story of Kate Dunbar, a brave and defiant young woman of the lowest orders, living in abject poverty in the vaults of Edinburgh's South Bridge with her young physically handicapped brother Andrew, orphaned and at the mercy of their maternal Aunt and her vile husband. They accept and live in the most degrading manner, with little chance of escape from the daily, tyrannical and abusive behaviour doled out by this uncaring and unsympathetic pair.

One evening into the Pearl Fisher, the Oyster Bar kept by Kate's Aunt and Uncle and where she is obliged to work without payment, comes three young privileged medical students, one of whom is immediately attracted to Kate. Richard Hope, handsome and wealthy, is as far outside Kate's world as it is as possible to be. His family is rich and well connected but still he persists in gaining an acquaintance with her. His intentions he finds, are entirely honourable, he treats Kate and the other occupants of the vaults with respect and eventually she comes to like and love him, and he her.

This is a time of radical, political stirrings. It is only 70 years since the great Jacobean uprising, the people of Edinburgh are split in their views, some wishing for independence; Kate has some such friends. Richard becomes embroiled with Kate's champions, Book Shop owners, Nathaniel and Peggy Henderson, and finds himself looking at the poorer inhabitants of Edinburgh from a different more sympathetic perspective.

This is such a wonderful, meaty book, full of intrigue, romance, abuse of the worse kind, body snatching, it has everything. The Edinburgh of the time, beautiful but also poverty stricken is captured in this magical tale. Maggie Craig is a consummate story teller, her research and love of Scotland and it's people are obvious. Her prose flows, twists and turns, and captures the imagination. I hated the villains, desperately wanted Kate and Richard to find their happy ending, but this tale was so much more than as I said

previously, 'just a love story' it is a must read for all HR lovers, for anyone really, as it tells a very compelling story of the time.

This was one of those 'let's buy it, it's cheap and sounds intriguing' buys - Maggie Craig is one of my top five authors now! A definite keeper for me.

This to me was so much more than 5 stars - Magic and HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Footnote: The author has recently commented "Fair Chuffed to discover that Edinburgh City Libraries have added One Sweet Moment to their literary map of books set in the City"....I'm personally not surprised, well deserved!
