



# The Nicholas Feast

*Pat McIntosh*

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## **The Nicholas Feast** Pat McIntosh

Glasgow, 1492: Gil Cunningham remarked later that if he had known he would find a corpse in the university coal house, he would never have gone to the arts faculty feast. But then—as Alys his betrothed replied—he would never have met ... Socrates. In this mysterious adventure, Gil Cunningham and his colleagues are entertained by a play presented by some of the students at his old university for the Nicholas Feast. One of the actors, William Irvine, is later found murdered, and Gil, fresh from his success in solving the murder of the harper's quine, is the obvious person to investigate. Assisted by Alys and her father, Pierre, he begins to disentangle a complex web of espionage and blackmail involving William's tutors and fellow students. First one chamber and then another is ransacked before Gil himself is attacked. It appears someone is looking for missing papers. Oddly, the late William's wolfhound pup, Socrates, now becomes a focus for attention, and matters are complicated by the arrival of Gil's formidable mother, who is determined to inspect his betrothed. Little do Alys and Gil realize that it will be she who provides the vital key to unmask the murderer and his motives.

## **The Nicholas Feast Details**

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Author : Pat McIntosh

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## From Reader Review The Nicholas Feast for online ebook

### Roo Barb says

Am enjoying reading this while pottering around some of the places .mentioned in the books

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### Cheryl says

Set in Glasgow in the last 1400s Gil Cunningham is again called upon to solve a murder case. While attending a processing at the University of Glasgow celebrating the Feast of Nicholas Gil is reunited with friends and teachers from his early scholastic training. He notices a young man named William who superior attitude engendered irritation and anger. William was later found strangled. Gil was asked by the university's master. I must be getting better at reading Scottish dialect for this installment went faster.

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### Bryn (Plus Others) says

Oooh I'm surprised we haven't reviewed these already! Although I guess I did just make this account six months ago -- anyway, Pat McIntosh writes some of the best historical mysteries I've ever read, because they're satisfying both as historical fiction (well-researched, detailed, solidly grounded) and as mysteries -- and also just satisfying as books, she writes very well and does an excellent job giving her reader all the information necessary to understand the long-ago time & place. We have read most of her books two or three times, and I am sure we will read them all again, they are so lovely in character and setting and relationship that even if we remember the resolution to the mystery, they are pleasant to read just to spend time with Gil and amazing Alys.

This particular one features 15th century academic politics at a Scottish university -- what's not to like?

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### Ronda says

Once again, I found myself stumbling along with the dialect in the beginning, but as with the Harper's Quine, I reached the point where the context and my enjoyment of the storyline and characters let me find my way. (To this end, I still think the e-book version is one of the better choices for this story, simply for the online dictionary. Not all the words and phrases were available, but with wi-fi, you have the option of looking them up at whim.)

This story picks up not long after the fist book ended. To my delight, my favorite characters from the first book, including our mysterious Harper, Alys, and her father, are all a part of this story, blended nicely with some new characters I hope to see more of in later installments.

I will say that I got tangled up in the very large cast of characters, and there were some times I just plowed on with some names in a muddle, figuring, and rightly so, that it would all come out in the wash.

This series has rekindled my delight in historical mystery. Now, I find myself wondering if I missed more subtle historical references in the fist book. I had to chuckle at the reference to and opinion of what had to be

on Columbus's attempt to find a trade route to the West Indies-even though Columbus was not named per se. It was a nice touch.

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### **Penny says**

This is the second in the series following Gil Cunningham in Scotland in the Middle Ages. Once again we have an abundance of sights and sounds, trades and crimes all brilliantly described often with words that are unfamiliar.

This is developing into a series of substance. The characters come through and the back stories are interesting and continue to change and grow.

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### **Helynn says**

The most intriguing aspect of this novel is that it takes place in 1492 at a men's university in Glasgow, Scotland. Author Pat McIntosh has given us an interesting period piece and the fruits of his research about the early British Renaissance and its attitudes about higher education. For example, the young men at the college are always encouraged to speak in Latin, which is impressive, but seems totally impractical. And yes, there is a nod to Christopher Columbus by way of one character mentioning that some hair-brained Italian mariner recently left from Spain thinking he could get to India by sailing west. There is considerable emphasis on food that the students eat, which seems to consist mainly of rabbit stew that they deplore. During the school's annual Nicholas Feast, Gil Cunningham, a graduate of the institution, returns to help celebrate, then becomes caught up in investigating a murder of a 16-year-old student that occurs during the feast. Cunningham, a clever fellow who is about to marry a lovely young lady against his mother's wishes, is fresh from solving his first murder mystery, the harper's quine (book 1), and he uses his brains--as well as those of his fiancée--to solve this latest conundrum. As for the mystery itself, the book is much less interesting as a detective novel than it is as a historical piece. I thought the investigation was confusing and dull at the same time, and gave me the impression I was watching a particularly slow episode of the old Perry Mason show up to and including the courtroom confession by an obscure and unlikely suspect. And what is with the hiding of a key document in a dog's collar? And with the second murder, which, as far as I can tell, has little to do with the first? If you're interested in 15th-century period pieces, you may find this interesting. As for murder mysteries, I would suggest trying something a little more 21st century.

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### **Aoife says**

I could more or less copy my review for the first in the series here. The mystery plot was good (and actually less predictable than the first) and the author is really good at writing historical novels that make you feel that this book can only be set at this time in this place because plot and the 'background' are so intertwined with each other. The author is also really good at giving just enough information in dialogue and narration that also readers who are somewhat unfamiliar with 15th century Scotland know what's going on, without massive infodumps. However it's still only just enough, I can guess sort of what happened and how the Scottish legal system at this time worked but an afterword where the author explains a bit more would have

been awesome.

I still love the relationship between Gil and Alys. At first it was instant attraction but not love and now you can see it developing into something more. They still learn new things about each other and discover similarities (and I might have gone 'awwwwwwwwwww' at one point) and these parts are really beautifully written.

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### **Laura says**

I had some initial confusion because this was the second in the series, not the first -- sorting out the explication from the actual action took time. It was also confusing because there were (I think) three languages being used (French, Scots and Latin) yet often they were "translated" into English for the poor reader, and "olde" English at that.

The mystery itself was so-so. I guessed whodunit pretty early because the clues were pretty obvious. If you like Leonard D. Tournay's books, you'll like these. If you're more of a Caedfael fan, well, perhaps not.

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### **'chris d says**

This is the second in a series, but that is not why I didn't give it a great rating.

Set in 1400 or so Scotland, the story takes place at a university. This means there will be a lot of students / characters involved in and around the storyline.

For me personally, I found that there were too many characters. I became very confused in the first quarter of the book. Still, after keeping at the book for a couple of weeks and getting into the meat of the story, I liked it and finished it.

Some of the characterizations were terrific, particularly William, Jaikie and Lord Montgomery. And Gil was an interesting sleuth and the author portrays him with a lot of depth.

That all being said, I'm not a big mystery lover, so I don't know if I will go on to read others in this series.

I recommend Sister Fidelma (an Irish nun in the 9th century) and Brother Cadfael.

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### **Marlowe says**

Soon after the events in Harper's Quine, Gil Cunningham participates in his old university's Nicholas Feast. But during the day, a young student is found dead. Because of his success in catching the killer in Harper's Quine, Gil is asked to solve this murder as well. Joined by his love, Alys, and her father, he immerses himself in politics and espionage to find justice for a student no one seems to have liked.

I bought this book, along with the next two in the series, as soon as I had finished the first one, but I didn't read it for quite a while. In my silliness, I loved Harper's Quine so much that I was afraid of burning through

the series too fast!

This was an excellent addition to the series! Once again, the mystery was interesting, and I love the relationship between Gil and Alys (not to mention Alys's father). I'm not a fan of the supernatural element (the titular Quine from the last novel seems to be psychic – although like most psychics, his pronouncements are vague enough to be of absolutely no use), but it's low-key enough that it can be easily ignored. Besides, the rest of the story more than makes up for it.

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### **Kathy Moberg says**

I'm finding this a very enjoyable series. Glad I finally got started on it!

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### **Diana Sandberg says**

This was ok, but didn't engage me like the first book did. It seemed perhaps somewhat hastily put together; there were references that were not clear, characters not fully introduced - the harper and his sister from the last book were there but if I hadn't read the first book I wouldn't really know who they were or why they were there. There didn't seem any overwhelming reason for them to be there, they just sort of wandered through. I don't want to give the impression it was awful, I still enjoyed it, but I kind of felt like something was missing. Will definitely read the next one.

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### **Kate says**

Once again, a fabulous mystery with lots of history and psychology smashed in. It is impossible not to like Gil Cunningham and his betrothed, Alys, her father, and everyone else they come in contact with. This mystery takes place only days after the first in the series, and all the characters are well-drawn (better than in the first book), the mystery is excellent with a few twists, and the history is carefully inserted without being lecture-y. Awesome.

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### **Lynne Tull says**

I am reading this series in order and this is #2. I really like the setting and the characters. I think I said on the review of the first one, 'The Harper's Quine', that I really like that Gil is not a monk and will have a wife. He has picked up her father as his sidekick in solving his mysteries. The Harper with 'the second sight' is still appearing at crucial times. His mother has entered the picture in this book. It's a good mystery and again the clues were there and I got it so far, but didn't get until the finish. Recommend!

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### **Kathy says**

I am really enjoying this series as a change of pace. The Scots, the thoughtful approach by a young man who

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does not have inflated ego and is genuinely looking forward to marriage and being able to slip out of the proscribed plan by his mother for serving the church with no alternative - all good. I have the next book in series at my other home, so will have to fill the time with other reading until I get back there. Doggone it. My stupid back limits me to how many books I can carry in long walk to train. Oh well.

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