



London Tides

Carla Laureano

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Irish photojournalist Grace Brennan travels the world's war zones documenting the helpless and forgotten. After the death of her friend and mentor in the field, Grace is shaken.

She returns to London hoping to rekindle the spark with the only man she ever loved—Scottish businessman Ian MacDonald. But he gave up his championship rowing career and dreams of Olympic gold years ago for Grace ... only for her to choose career over him. Will life's tides bring them back together ... or tear them apart for good this time?

London Tides Details

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From Reader Review London Tides for online ebook

Jill Buteyn says

deep sigh There is nothing like finishing a great romance. The need to flip back through the pages and find favorite scenes. The sigh-worthy hero. The gritty, tough heroine. This book has it all, including spice, spice, spice. What a great follow up to Five Days in Skye. Laureano had me flipping pages and now she has me waiting for the next in this series.

Megan says

3.75 stars

Iola says

London Tides is the much-awaited sequel to RITA Award-winner Five Days in Skye, which was about James MacDonald. It's been too long, partly because the author has released two fantasy novels (as C.E. Laureano) in the meantime. I thoroughly enjoyed Five Days in Skye, so was looking forward to reading this sequel. I found it hard to get in to, but in the end it didn't disappoint.

Grace Brennan is a photojournalist who's spent the last ten years working in war zones. She's produced some amazing photographs, but the personal cost has been too high, as illustrated by numerous tattoos commemorating colleagues she has lost ... as well as the nightmares and the flashbacks. Now she's back in London with no idea what to do, except reconnect with

Ian MacDonald is an ex-Olympic rower and Chief Operations Officer of his brother's growing hospitality business, which includes several restaurants, a BBC TV show, books, and a hotel. He's almost forty, and still single after since the love of his life left him ten years ago, six months before their wedding. He forgave her, he still loves her, and now she's back.

The author has done an excellent job in researching London life and locations, particularly around rowing. But there were a handful of language glitches which reminded me the novel is written by an American, not a Londoner. Or perhaps the language was edited to make it more accessible to American audiences. Either way, these glitches meant I did have some trouble getting in to the story.

My other possible area of concern was around the Christian elements of the plot. It was obvious neither Ian nor Grace were practicing Christians ten years ago, and their present faith was also ambiguous. There wasn't a distinct faith thread to appeal to the Christian reader, yet there were perhaps too many 'God' references to appeal to the general market reader. The low-key Christianity might appeal to British Christian readers (who prefer their Christian fiction not be too overt), but those readers will pick up on the language glitches.

These two issues aside, I enjoyed London Tides. Grace was a fascinating character, driven by forces she didn't entirely understand. Ian was an amalgamation of many of the men I worked with in London, and I'm pretty sure I met his mother at least once. There was plenty of attraction between the two right from the start (and it was good to see in kept in check), but there was also plenty of conflict, mainly arising from Grace's (understandable) personal lack of direction. This combination made for an excellent plot, with a variety of

characters and a welcome cameo from James and Andrea (from Five Days in Skye).

Now I'm waiting for the final book, to see if Serena meets her match ...

Thanks to David C Cook and NetGalley for providing a free ebook for review.

Cara Putman says

LONDON TIDES was a book that wooed me back over and over again because I had to know what happened between the characters. Grace is scarred by choices she made and things she has experienced as a war photographer, while Ian is stuck in life. The romance is a compelling wooing of fresh trust that reminded me in some ways of the Biblical story of Hosea and Gomer. A story that will be a great addition to the libraries of those who like a contemporary romance.

Janka H. says

Beautiful love story about hidden pain and second chances.

This is a second book in The MacDonald Family Trilogy, but can be read as a standalone novel.

Grace Brennan and Ian MacDonald were lovers once, even engaged. Until Grace left, leaving just her ring, but no explanation with it.

10 years ago, she is back in London. After a life as a war zones photographer, she has seen her share of cruel things and then some. Even her young protégé had died before her eyes. Experiencing the turmoil of emotions, she longs for safety and home. But will Ian, the only man she has ever loved, be willing and able to give her a chance to start over again?

Ian is also unsettled. He gave back everything for Grace and then she left. He is in no way broken, but he is playing it safe from then. A good work with nice salary, success, even some dreams fulfilled...but always working on someone else's happiness, but not his own.

So when he and Grace meets, it is like fireworks. Love, hidden in both of their hearts, is back. But Grace has a lot of issues and pain hidden. How can they live in safety - if there is no safety in the world?

Beautiful, emotional love story. I am not always a fan of second chances, but here it is more than justifiable - they just belong together. They complement each other, they challenge each other and they love each other. But...but. It is not just about love, love is not enough to make any relationship work. It is also about a hard work, recognizing your weaknesses and working on them for the happiness of "us", not "me". It is also about trust.

I like them both. Grace is more complex than Ian (he is the quintessential good guy, she is the bad girl with heart) and I get her completely, even with her running away from the risky safety, punishing herself. It is immature, of course, but oh-so-human. I also get Ian's safety net - he is doing a good work, he is valuable, he is giving something out. He is "just" not living fully.

Grace is fire to his wood and he is haven to her ship.

The fire between them is moving on the edges sometimes with their hot kissing, but never entering the fully physical zone (there is no sex, to speak bluntly). This is not the fully Christian fiction book, mind you, so a conservative reader might be offended sometimes. I was not, as I get that they were living not as Christians -

but they value love much more than just giving in to temptation and they want to commit to each other in marriage. But they are on their way to recognize the Living God.

So if I was a bit bothered with something, it was not the tension between them per se - it was that the hidden pain/conflicts/problems to solve got less space than the love story. I think some of their problems (individual or the pair problems) needed more space. Like Grace's issues from seeing too much suffering.

But these are minor issues compared to the beauty and hope which this book oozes. I was "forced" to read slowly, as I didn't want to miss even a word. Uplifting in its realism, this is the book to read when you suffer from hurt no one is seeing or recognizing. And when you need hope.

Denise Hershberger says

London Tides

by Carla Laureano

This is book two in a series but the cover, back cover description, and setting appealed to me more than the first book so I decided to take a chance and read this one first and I am so glad I did. And I'm looking forward to going back and reading book one now that I know I love Laureano's books!

London Tides has a unique story line in that the main characters are not getting to know each other for the first time. I love stories of second chances and I love romance so this contemporary romance was perfect for me. I don't know much about Ian's sport of rowing but I enjoyed the great descriptions that Laureano wrote about it and loved his dedication to the sport even though he was no longer competitive. As for Grace's career of photojournalism I don't really know much more but I did enjoy hearing familiar terms from my high school photography class. But what especially drew me into the story was how they are both involved in helping the voiceless have voices in their own ways. (If you want to know how you'll have to read the book!!!)

This book explores so many great themes. I loved how she explored whether career or happiness is most important or if they go hand in hand. I also loved the times when both characters stepped away to see what they really wanted. Sometimes I think we need more books where the happily ever after isn't so easily reached. Ian and Grace really worked to get to their moment of true happiness and it showed through all kinds of tension. I think that is what I liked the most about this book. They didn't have it easy but they worked it out and their relationship turmoil was so well written that I couldn't put the book down.

This book wasn't preachy at all. It does mention prayer and Christianity but honestly I think a non-Christian could really enjoy this book. However, I do want to warn super conservative readers that pre-marital sex and living together is mentioned briefly and there is also some drinking in the book. It was all handled very well in my opinion but I know some people would prefer to avoid those topics.

After reading this book I'm so attached to the characters and setting that I really feel like I was there with them. I cannot wait to read the first book and I hope the third comes out before too long too!

I received this book through NetGalley from the publisher, David C Cook, in exchange for my honest review.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

The tides of life – and love – ebb and flow, and author Carla Laureano masterfully captures the emotional intensity that can be left in the wake of both tragedy and triumph. Ian and Grace play off each other beautifully; the backdrop of London the perfect setting for their rekindled romance. I found myself consumed by *London Tides* from the first word until long after I finished reading the final page – the themes of value and forgiveness, trust and healing, are not easily shelved in one's spirit simply because the book is closed.

London Tides is heavier (and a little edgier) than its prequel *Five Days in Skye*, but then again war-torn countries, broken engagements, and PTSD are not topics to be glossed over nonchalantly. After her years as a noted war photojournalist are forced to end in tragedy-induced retirement, Grace Brennan is returning to the place she considers home – London and perhaps Ian MacDonald, the man who got away. Or rather the man who let her get away. Ten years earlier, she had left his engagement ring on the counter and his heart in pieces when she set out to chase her dream. Now she's back, and to Ian's stunned disbelief she wants a second chance to rekindle any spark that might be left between them. He had given up his championship rowing career – maybe even the shot at Olympic gold – for her, but she had chosen her dream job instead of him. Can he trust her not to repeat the past when opportunities begin to come her way? What about Grace's apparent PTSD – how will that affect their attempts at starting anew? And what about what Ian wants for once? So. Many. Obstacles. Is there a happily-ever-after in this story?

I really appreciated the fact that, even though Ian and Grace had lived together when they dated ten years ago, they made different choices this time around. This line really stood out to me from one of their dates: "It would have been the perfect seduction scene, but now it was even more romantic because she knew he intended nothing of the sort." That doesn't mean they were without sparks though – oh no. As long as Ian is around, there will be sparks! "Heavens have mercy. If she had any doubt whether their chemistry had survived a decade apart, it was long gone." Do you see that goofy grin on my face? Grace had one too though by the end of that scene, so at least I'm not alone.

Finally, it was delightful to see familiar characters when the family gathers for a special event back in Skye, and we readers feel right at home and warmly included in all the festivities. We also got to meet Ian's mom – who I could live without – and Uncle Rodney – who I adore! I laughed out loud when Rodney told Ian, "Your life is between you and God. And don't give me that look. I know I'm a drunk. God loves me anyway." There it is. The main theme of the book. God loves us anyway. When we walk out on Him, when we make mistakes, when we feel purposeless. He loves us anyway.

(Note: I received this book as part of the *London Tides* blog tour from Radiant Lit. I received no compensation for this review and only received a copy of the book for review purposes. Review copy provided by the publisher via Netgalley.)

Catherine says

Another winner by Laureano! In this bravely written novel, every emotion is evoked. You feel deeply for the characters, and while you want to smack them once in a while, you keep reading to see if things will turn out all right in the end. An enjoyable read, realistic characters and real dialogue that has you nodding in agreement, laughing and sometimes wanting to shed a tear. Highly recommended.

Andrea Grigg says

Grace Brennan is back in London. A courageous and accomplished photojournalist, her experiences in the war-torn parts of the world have left her exhausted and troubled. Coming back to London requires courage of a different nature, more than she may have left in the tank, but it's a risk she is compelled to take. Ten years ago, she ran out on her fiancé six months before their wedding. Grace needs to make amends.

Ian MacDonald (brother of Jamie from *Five Days in Skye*) is beyond shocked when he discovers Grace has returned to London. A rising star in the world of rowing, he'd given up his entire sporting career for her, including a shot at Olympic gold, and then she abandoned him without a word of explanation. So why is she back?

What follows is a brilliantly crafted, beautifully characterised story of two people finding their way back to love even when it means giving up everything all over again.

I adored Grace. She is fierce and brave, but oh so broken. Ian makes a fabulous hero – a man's man, yet with that vulnerable side when it comes to love that makes him infinitely appealing.

I love Carla Laureano's writing style. She weaves her themes of trust, forgiveness, and reaching out to God, with an expert hand. Never preachy or religious, Carla is one of my favourite authors of contemporary Christian romance.

Lorraine says

The second book in the MacDonald Family Trilogy focuses on older brother Ian and his relationship with his ex-fiance, Grace, as she returns to London. As a conflict photojournalist, she has seen, heard, and experienced more than one person ever should. She longs to reconnect with Ian but doesn't know whether it is possible.

I absolutely loved the first book in this series, *Five Days in Skye*; but this one resonated with me in even a deeper way. I had never thought about the fact that people who cover war continuously can be just as damaged and experience PTSD exactly like military personnel. Discovering Grace's trauma as revealed through her relationship with Ian and Asha as well as her photography helped reveal the depth of scarring that she carried.

Laureano's characters are filled with realism mirroring all the emotions of everyday life. Her plot line was pervaded with unexpected twists and turns just when you thought everything was tied up perfectly. Grace's struggle to reconcile her faith and the evil she witnessed and the hurts that had happened in her life was well

depicted. Laureano's use of the tats to depict the important things in Laureano's journey was quite unique and very a propos for today's times. The love story held the passion and hurts that come with two people loving one another but facing their own individual difficulties. The somewhat surprising ending was the perfect conclusion for two people trying to find their own way and yet become partners. Great read and look forward to reading the conclusion to this trilogy.

FAVORITE QUOTES: "You can't see all the suffering and violence and hatred without wondering if there's still good in the world. Most of my colleagues see evil as proof that God couldn't exist. But despite all the bad, there are still people who help others when their safety, their very lives are at risk. When I see that, I know without a doubt he has to exist. I think without God, the good that remains couldn't survive."

"God saw the pain in the world, even when no one else did."

"But you can't live life just waiting for the other shoe to drop. If you spend all your time waiting for the bad, you'll miss everything good in the meantime."

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

Grace returns to London unsure and hesitant about her life's new direction... or lack thereof. Ian is also feeling unsettled in his career, and those feelings reflected on the vibe I felt while reading the story. Even as the story progressed, it seemed a bit aimless, and I was not sure what was driving it. I felt for both Grace and Ian as they tentatively rekindle their relationship and simultaneously seek for meaning and passion in daily life. The descriptions of London and Grace's photography excursions were especially interesting, it made me want to take my camera downtown and shoot away :) PTSD rises to the surface as a theme as Ian begins to recognize the symptoms in Grace and as she struggles against it. A trip to Scotland they shared for the wedding of Ian's brother Jaime is sure to be enjoyed by those who have read the author's previous novel, Five Days in Skye. Even though this book didn't quite strike a chord with me I'm looking forward to reading more of the author's work.

(Thank you to David C. Cook Publishing for a copy of the book in exchange for my honest review)

Andrea Cox says

by Andrea Renee Cox

After reading Five Days in Skye, I was really looking forward to its sequel, London Tides. However, once I dug into LT, I was disappointed on a few different points. There were four expletives, lots of sexual innuendos, many mentions of people living with each other prior to or instead of marriage, a scene involving nudity, and several immodest clothing items. Because of those things, I am not eager to read the third book in the trilogy.

Something I liked about LT was how Carla Laureano handled the theme of post-traumatic stress disorder. I found Grace's battle with PTSD very realistic and gripping. This theme was beautifully written with great depth of emotion.

I received a complimentary copy of London Tides from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

Lisa at Farm Fresh Adventures says

I love inspirational fiction. I love romance. So I REALLY love good inspirational romantic fiction. When I was offered a chance to review London Tides, a new to the market (as of June 2015) book, and sequel to Five Days in Skye, book I had already read...I jumped on the opportunity and hoped it would at least meet up with my expectations from the previous book.

London Tides is the second book in the MacDonald Family Trilogy by Carla Laureano. London Tides picks up where the previous book Five Days in Skye left off, yet remains fairly autonomous. This book follows Ian MacDonald, older brother of James MacDonald (the main character of book one) and Grace Brennan, his ex-fiance, who left him practically at the altar ten years prior.

Grace is a vagabond war photojournalist, making a name for herself with her photos of the world's war zones. But now after the death of her friend and colleague, and narrowly escaping a conflict with her own life, she is finally broken and suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, even though she doesn't want to admit it. Grace in her brokenness returns to the one place where she feels she can come home...London. She is hoping that maybe, just maybe she can repair the damage of her relationship with Ian and have a second chance at love—for she can admit to herself that she never stopped loving him.

Ian is the COO of his brother's company, but it's just a job to him. He gave up his first love of rowing, and a chance for an Olympic gold medal, when Grace left him. Now he's just going through the routine, but not loving what he does. He doesn't date because he's never forgotten his first love, Grace.

When Grace comes back to London and seeks Ian out, both have to decide what they are willing to give up to make their relationship work. Will she really give up her calling and life's work as a photojournalist to plant roots with Ian in London?

What Are My Thoughts?

London Tides was a very well thought out book that could actually stand on its own in the series. I felt that the story of Grace and Ian was really flushed out and exposed to show their weaknesses and their deep love for one another. Grace was such an interesting character, with her unconventional tattoos, tomboy behavior, and vagabond lifestyle. She was a strong woman with such sorrow kept locked up inside. It was interesting to follow her journey as she came to terms with her PTSD.

I feel like Ian was the weaker of the characters. The image I created of him from reading the first book, Five Days of Skye, did not quite match the one revealed in London Tides. I didn't feel the conflict between he and his brother James any longer. It just sort of disappeared between the two books. I don't think we learned enough about the wars inside of him relating to his dissatisfaction in his job.

Another thing that I wasn't sure about—the fact that this was a book in the Inspirational Fiction genre, yet I didn't feel like it truly qualified. Both characters have jaded pasts and a history with each other romantically, which is fine. But when they come back together, it seems like they are just going to pick up right where they left off, until a short quick couple sentences from Grace about how she wants things differently this time. I feel like the author should have made more of a stand about them having a second chance and NEW relationship focused on God and His standards, rather than just sort of glossing it over. I kind of got mixed signals from the book relating to this whole issue. I would have liked to witness more of the two characters turning their futures over to God.

I gave this book a solid THREE stars out of five.

The book had a great plot and the characters were well built. But I just really didn't like the minimization of God and the Bible in a book that is supposed to be in the Inspirational Fiction market.

I look forward to sharing my review of book one in this series, Five Days in Skye, next month and I will (even though I didn't rank this one as high as I would have liked to) look forward to reading the final book in Carla Laureano's trilogy—which I am already predicting will be about the sister Serena and the mysterious boxer/manager/engineer Malcolm.

Velva Brown says

London Tides - Carla Laureano

Hmmmm...where do I begin? London Tides wasn't quite what I expected. I am still trying to decide if that is good or bad. I didn't realize it was in a series, and I found myself breaking MY rule of reading books out of order!

Grace made decisions when she was younger that led her down more than one rough road. These rough patches led to a horrible case of PTSD, and away from her soon-to-be husband, Ian.

Ian is almost 40. He has settled into a mundane life of rowing, work, and an occasional date. Born into money he doesn't have to work, but he still hasn't decided what he should do when he "grows up".

What I liked:

- Ian looked past what his "upper crust" expectations of what an "acceptable" mate would look like – and act like.
- Asha, Grace's friend, loved well.
- Ian's friends were willing to say the "hard stuff" to him.
- Humanitarian needs were discussed and talked about in this book.
- I did like the ending. (You are welcome for the lack of a spoiler!)

What I didn't like:

- David C. Cook is a Christian Publishing House. God wasn't mentioned much – or at all – until very close to the end of the book. Ian and Grace had lived together earlier in their life. Then at the end of the book, they talk about God, there wasn't anything that mentioned how they found their faith.

- Don't get me wrong, I am all for a good kiss! I did like it only contained kissing, and they would stop before things got out of hand. However, it wasn't mentioned why they stopped. I mean, they did previously live together! I would have like to have been informed about their new found convictions.

Soooo...you will have to read it for your self and form an opinion for yourself. I am NO help with this one.....

I was given London Tides as an ARC in exchange for my honest opinion.

Sarah says

I read Five Days in Skye and fell in love with Scotland as well as James and Andrea so when I heard there was another book by the same author available for review, I jumped at the chance to read it and share my thoughts. I didn't even realize London Tides was supposed to be connected to Five days in Skye. It was a

lovely surprise so get to revisit a few of the characters and even take a short trip back to Skye for the Wedding.

I really had high hopes for this book and wanted it to be like Five Days in Skye and make me want to travel to the location and get lost in the beauty of the setting. But London didn't really play a role in this book like Skye did in the first. This book was far more internal.

Grace was a world traveling conflict photographer. The images she captured with her camera of the war torn and poverty stricken places of the world and the resulting emotional damage Grace had to work through as a result of her work were really the center of this story.

I really enjoyed the relationship Ian and Grace developed, or I guess rekindled, but at the same time wasn't as drawn to them as characters. I guess as a stay at home Mom with kids I couldn't understand the deep inner need Grace had to chase after her carrier and give up love and family in order to feel like she had meaning or an identity. I couldn't relate and therefore wasn't as connected to her. I honestly couldn't really see what Ian saw in her. Other than being fun and adventurous she seemed very self-centered. She loved all that Ian did to make her feel valued but what did she do for him? She cooked or brought him take-out and was a companion but how did she help and strengthen him. Perhaps I missed this element as I quickly make my way through the book.

I did like the story. I just can't say I loved it as much as I enjoyed Five Days in Skye. I will look for the third book in this series and more from Carla Laureano.
