
The Dowager

Highlander

by Hugh Frazer, 2017



Wilson and Grace Frazer, c. 1955

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1. Prologue

This is a seed: May it fall on fertile ground.

[The story of Archibald the 1st, born 1703, and a disputed son of Simon, 11th Lord Lovat](#)

Introduction

This is a re-interpretation of some aspects of the life of Simon Fraser, 11th Lord Lovat, who was notoriously executed at the Tower of London in 1746, using four presumptions as below. It is not pure make-believe but a story weaving the facts, unexplained mysteries and family traditions together to produce a different cloth, perhaps maybe-believe.

The reason for this is to explore the possible parentage of my 7th generation grandfather, Archibald Frazer, who was born about 1703. Our family tradition is that we are descendants of Simon Fraser, and that the details were lost through successive generations because of a sense of shame, perhaps both from the notoriety of Simon and from the possibility of illegitimacy.

My grandfather, Wilson Frazer and his brother Joseph, spent a great deal of effort in research over many decades without coming to a definite conclusion. A summary of their work can be found at:

<http://blacknee.com/ffc/BKOIndex.html>

This link also describes my involvement, being born with a black birthmark behind my left knee. This is no longer black, but clearly visible, and it was part of my upbringing that I would restore the family fortune. Seeing as I was born in 1942, I have obviously not rushed into it, but perhaps better late than never.

I am an engineer, not a historian, so my approach is to first devise a theory that fits all the knowledge available to me, then use this as a target for seeking further information that may modify or even deny the first theory. So any information that adds to my knowledge, be it for or against, is most welcome.

The narrative contains much conjecture and dramatisation and it is to be expected that not all of this is true, but there is nothing within that is known to be false.

Please direct comments to archibald@blacknee.com, and, if you wish, ask to be put on the mailing list to be advised of updates and other news. This is very much a work in progress, and will take a year or so to complete.

This narrative is available online as a web page, pdf or ePub: [Blacknee Links](#)

1st Presumption: History is written by the winners.

The first presumption is that history is written by men of influence, or at least under their direction, with the 'unimportant' bits left out, not to mention the inconvenient bits as well. A classic case is the invasion of Britain by Julius Caesar - *veni vidi vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered). We have some inkling of the true picture of how a thriving culture of many tribal groups was brought to its knees, but little from the written history of the conquerors. From their perspective it was all glory, with no mention of rape and pillage, nor of playing off one group against another, nor other nefarious deeds. The Britons were barbarians and all bad things were done by them, or at least they deserved what they got. The Romans were the 'civilisers', bringing advancement.

1700 in Scotland was a time of turmoil, being still in the feudal thrall of the aristocracy. The purpose of government and law was primarily seen as being to protect the rich and influential from the poor. So the history was written from above, and manipulated as necessary to encourage stability and protect the nobility. Change was in the air, which made the manipulation all the more desperate.

2nd Presumption: Character assassination was a common strategy.

The second presumption is that the use of calumny, character assassination, was then equally a useful and effective political ploy as it is now, probably even more so. The laws of libel and slander were in their infancy, and, in any case, the law in Scotland was in the hands of the powerful and influential. So that a calumny target of a high ranking aristocrat had no recourse, other than perhaps to seek the support of another high ranking aristocrat. This would be problematic as such powerful men would be reluctant to rock the boat unless it were to be also distinctly to their own advantage, not just for friendship's sake.

3rd Presumption: The influence of the clan was under-reported.

A third presumption is that the influence of the clan is essentially ignored. The highland clan system was basically tribal and had its roots in neolithic prehistory. Many aristocrats, particularly from the lowlands, viewed the clans as a barbaric hang-over from a primitive age before Christianity and feudalism brought civilisation.

There were many variations of the theme, but basically clan territory was owned and protected by the clan. It was not owned by the chiefs, and the chiefs themselves were most commonly created not by inheritance but by a process of selection by the clan elders. One such system is reported as being that a potential chief had to be a son of a daughter of a previous chief, and then judged by the clan elders to be the best choice from the point of view of warrior capability. The primary job of the chief was to be a leader to protect the clan from invaders.

By 1700, the original clan system was long gone, with ownership of the clan lands firmly established as the inherited right of the chief, and the people of the clan officially relegated to being feudal subjects.

However, the social cohesion and customs of the clan system remained, and remain nostalgically to this day. We are still tribal creatures, as can be witnessed at any major football match. We should be proud of this heritage, and not deny our inherited nature.

It was then common in the highlands that the chief would respect and honour the old traditions, and allow himself to be advised by the clan elders, with a sense that he was born with a duty to the people of the clan. This was very different from the feudal system in the lowlands and England, where the Lords were sovereigns of their domains and had only duty to maintain their own inheritance and nobility.

4th Presumption: The influence of women was suppressed.

The fourth and most crucial presumption is that the influence of women was suppressed, to an even greater extent than it is still today. The history as recorded is very dominantly male, with women being relegated to having no power at all, being simply chattels of their husbands, fathers or other male relatives. In reality there were as many women of intelligence and character as men, but they had to exert their influence behind the historical scenes, and so their actions are not recorded.

Anthropological studies of the few tribal groups still existing show that women have much higher status, although there was a generally a defined role division; after all men cannot bear children and feed infants. From the clan tribe point of view it can be suggested that the defined status of women declined at the same time as Christianity and feudalism swept across Europe.

Nonetheless there have always been intelligent and strong-minded women who will have their influence come what may. Part of the male dominant culture is to down-grade such influence, and fail to add it to the record.

Conclusion: Take recorded history with scepticism

In conclusion, it is appropriate to view recorded history with scepticism, certainly not take it as gospel. Verifiable facts are scarce, with much being left out as unimportant or inconvenient to those in positions of power and influence. When a powerful man makes a claim it is sensible to always ask where does the profit lie - maybe in the truth, but not necessarily.

History is what is generally believed, not necessarily what actually happened.

It is interesting that it is often seen as necessary to provide proof that an alternative view of events is correct, while it is not seen as necessary to provide proof for the commonly accepted version. An alternative view has to thread its way through the known evidence, but there are always possibilities for different interpretations, particularly when the accepted story provides for maximum advantage and minimum scandal to the ensconced nobility.

2. Proponents

Introduction

The standard narrative only has two main proponents with Simon Fraser, the Old Fox, being a truly evil man, who lied, cheated, connived, raped and stole, whereas John Murray was a righteous man protecting his country and family from depredation. John Murray was 4th Earl of Tullibardine at the start of this story, while his father was 1st Marquess of Atholl, and one of the three most politically powerful men in Scotland, but getting on in years so that his son had taken up the reins of power. Simon Fraser, on the other hand, was an indirect descendant of an earlier Lovat, with essentially no political or legal clout. It is then no surprise that Murray won the calumny battle.

This narrative proposes that the Dowager Lady Lovat was also a major player in what came effectively to be a war between the Murrays and the Fraser clan, mostly fought in politics and law, but with some real skirmishing.

Amelia Murray

Lady Amelia Murray was the sixth child and second daughter of John Murray, later 1st Marquis of Atholl, and his wife, Lady Amelia Ann Sophia Stanley, daughter of the 7th Earl of Derby. They had twelve children in thirteen years, four of which died young. [WMO1]

Amelia was an intelligent and affectionate child and became her father's favourite, much to the jealous outrage of her brother John, who was the eldest, and heir to Atholl. After a family dinner she would climb onto her father's knee for a hug, and get a small joy from the resentment of her brother, who treated her as a very unimportant person the rest of the time. The Marquis was often away on political business, and then brother John became the lord and master, at least in his own eyes, and made Amelia's life a misery. She spent much time restricted to her room in Blair Castle, which had a small window with a window seat, where she would sit and read. She being a person of warmth and understanding, the servants would smuggle books to her from the castle library.

Other than from her extensive reading, she also listened attentively to her father regaling his political exploits at the dinner table, mostly to educate his eldest son into the practical arts of politics, such as ensuring that one's allies always profit from being so. Mainly this was only while Amelia was young, for, when son John was old enough, he would go with the men retiring after dinner to discuss manly things.

Amelia was very influenced by the stories of her maternal grandmother, Charlotte, Countess of Derby, who was born into French Huguenot aristocracy and a granddaughter of William of Orange. She was famous for defending her castle from

Parliamentary forces during the English Civil War, in the absence of her husband.
[WMO2]

Charlotte died two years before Amelia was born, but the legend of strong and courageous women was part of the family story, as was the connection with France and the Huguenots.

When Amelia was 19, her father arranged for her marriage to Hugh Fraser, 9th Lord Lovat, who was some months younger. Hugh was orphaned at an early age and raised by his maternal uncle, Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat. Hugh was neither physically or mentally strong and was easily controlled by Tarbat. As was the culture of nobility of the time, this marriage was not of her choosing, but was an opportunistic alliance, with possibilities for the acquisition of Fraser lands by Atholl and Tarbat.

As was expected of her, and honouring her father's wishes, she put on a brave face and moved into Castle Dounie, with a maidservant from Atholl. There were many challenges, with the first being the move from a luxurious baronial castle, Blair Castle, to Dounie, which was little more than a clan stronghold. Dounie was also in need of some attention. Hugh had spent little time there, being mostly lodged at Castle Leod with his uncle, while the Fraser estates were managed by the Earl of Seaforth, chief of Clan Mackenzie. Following her mother's example as a domestic manager, Amelia started the process of putting things back into order.

A more unexpected challenge was the difference between the baronial culture of Atholl and the clan culture of the Frasers. The Murrays of Atholl were not highlanders at that time, the Marquess' grandfather having acquired the Atholl title and estates through marriage. The original clans included the Stuarts and Robertsons, but the Murrays considered themselves to be baronial nobles and ran their estates to support their status. The servants of the castle and the inhabitants of the estates were treated as feudal subjects, whereas the Frasers were still a clan so that there were strong ties of kinship at all levels of their society.

In practical day-to-day terms, this meant that the baronial servants were dressed in uniform and required to behave as suited their lowly position in life, with orders from above being given with little consideration to their humanity, whilst, on the other hand, the clan servants were more casually and individually dressed and in general treated with the respect of kinship. This change was a revelation to Amelia, and she found the cohesion of the clan system appealing.

She quickly learned that her husband, while being a perfectly good man, was not highly intelligent nor physically robust, and was also strongly influenced by his uncle, George Mackenzie of Tarbat. Since the death of Hugh's father, the Mackenzie clan had extended its influence into the Fraser lands, resisted as much as possible by the lairds of the Clan protecting their own livelihoods. Amelia found that her sympathies were with the Clan, and developed considerable influence over her husband, helping to minimise the impact of Tarbat. She had to proceed with a great deal of circumspection, as a complaint from Tarbat to her father and brother about her interference could make things even more difficult.

It was a great joy to become an important member of a family and clan, even if less grand than Atholl, rather than a junior female constantly under the thumb of her brother. She blossomed in the clan culture.

Most importantly she developed close relationships and friendships with the women of the Clan. She saw that part of her job as the wife of the chief was to provide support on the occasions that women were under stress. Often this was to do with childbirth,

which was a hazardous process in those times, with many children dying young and some mothers dying in childbirth. The women's side of the clan was a largely unrecorded part of kinship, and a foundation stone of the ancient tribal culture.

She was repaid for her kindnesses when her fourth child, and first son, also Hugh, died before his third birthday. He was a bonny baby when born, but did not thrive and finally succumbed to illness. The loss of a child is almost unbearable at the best of times, but the loss of a potential heir to the chieftainship added to the poignancy. The women of the clan mourned with her.

Then double disaster struck. Her second son, John, again did not thrive and died a little more than a year old. Some months later, her husband fell ill on his way back from a trip to London, and died before making it home. She was now a widow with three daughters but no sons, and about to become central to a battle for the Lovat estates.

John Murray

Lord John Murray was the eldest son and child of John Murray, later 1st Marquess of Atholl, and his wife, Lady Amelia Ann Sophia Stanley. He was created 4th Earl of Tullibardine, then briefly 2nd Marquess of Atholl, and finally 1st Duke of Atholl.

Like his father before him, he had a strong sense of entitlement, considering himself to be superior as a member of the nobility and having scant regard for those of lesser standing, expecting instant acknowledgement of his status and immediate obedience to his wishes, and displaying a violent temper when disobeyed.

The 1700's were an interesting time with both England and Scotland in a state of political flux, further complicated by the process of union between the two nations, providing fertile ground for opportunists to increase their political power and wealth. There was also a pressing desire for Scottish nobles to establish themselves in the eyes of the nobility of England. Lord John, Tullibardine until he became Duke, was, if anything, more astute at intrigue than his father. One does not become elevated to a Duchy in one's early forties by barracking for the underdog.

The Marquis, Tullibardine's father, negotiated with Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, for the marriage between Hugh Fraser, 9th Lord Lovat, and his daughter, Amelia. Tarbat had been the guardian of Hugh since his parents' death when he was five years old. By negotiation, the marriage contract included provisions for negating the usual clan practice for the title and estates to go to the heir male of a cadet branch in the event of a chief dying without a male heir, and instead specifying that the eldest daughter would become the heiress. The intent was that a marriage of the heiress would lead to the full ownership transferring to her husband. Neither Hugh nor Amelia were part of this negotiation, it being between the Marquis and Tarbat. Hugh was present during some of the negotiations, but the implications were beyond his understanding. Amelia was excluded as this was obviously men's business. Tullibardine, then 24 years old, was present sufficiently to be fully aware of the plans afoot.

Being a great believer in the value of contacts, Tullibardine chose to take advantage of his father's French cousins as a reason to set up a small residence in Paris for occasional visits. This also provided the opportunity to discreetly keep on friendly terms with the Jacobite court at St Germain, just in case James VII & II was successful in regaining the throne of Scotland, and perhaps England as well. These were uncertain times, and he was far from being the only one with a foot in one camp, but at least a big toe in the other.

Simon Fraser

Simon of Beaufort was not as high born, being the second son of a cadet branch of the highland Frasers. The Beauforts were the first cadet branch, followed by Inverallochy, Brea and then Strichen. After many years of struggle and manoeuvring, he eventually achieved the chieftainship of his clan and the right to the titles and estates of Lovat, but finally to be executed when about 80 years old. He had the dubious honour of being the last person to be beheaded at the Tower of London.

He was a person of charm and good with words, both spoken and written, with a great need to be liked, particularly by the members of his clan, so that listening to other's viewpoints was part of his style of leadership.

As a young man he had no expectation of becoming of the heir male lineage, as he had an elder brother, Alexander, and his cousin Hugh, 9th Lord Lovat, was married and producing children. As a member of a cadet branch, he set out to make as much of his life as he could, including a time in the Atholl militia, with some Fraser clansmen as his contribution.

He displayed great audacity and was not readily held down by authority or by the superiority of nobility. The combination of charm, good communication skills and audacity led to him having audiences with the ruling monarchs of France and England, as well as the Scottish royalty in exile in France.

He also had a need to do things with flair and panache. Never the quiet achievement, but always with a much splash as possible.

3. The Internment and the Clan

The internment of the frail young body of Hugh Fraser, 9th Lord Lovat, in the family mausoleum at Wardlaw was a quiet affair. There was no great eulogy of his triumphs and achievements as Chief because he had always been sickly and poor of understanding, as well as being raised away from his clan by his uncle, Mackenzie of Tarbat. He had died just before his thirtieth birthday, and during his short time as Chief had done his poor best to limit the predations of his Mackenzie uncles, who were manoeuvring to take over the estates and titles of Lovat.

Nonetheless the funeral was well attended by the Clan, not least because a funeral was also a social occasion for the living; a time for reconnection with kinfolk and confirmation of the ties that constitute clan survival. It was a fine September day.

After the funeral service there was a traditional meeting of the Clan gentlemen at Castle Dounie to both pay respects to the new Chief, Thomas Fraser of Beaufort, now 10th Lord Lovat, and to discuss the problems facing the Clan.

Castle Dounie is an hours ride from Wardlaw, and Thomas and his sons Simon and John led the way on horseback, followed by the widow and her children in an open carriage, with those of the Clan going the same way trailing behind, mostly on foot, except for some elderly and senior members on horseback or in wagons.

At first Lord Thomas was silent in his thoughts, then turning to Simon,

'Being the Chief is an honour that I never sought, but I will carry the duty as best I can. We face difficult times, with poor harvests and legal threats, and, at sixty-five, I am

too old and frail to be a war chief. It will be you, Simon, as Master of Lovat, who will have to fight for what is right.'

To which Simon replied,

'I find that I am mostly mourning for my brother Alexander. If he had not died nearly seven years ago, he would be Master, and I would be helping him. He was a true warrior and a better leader than I in that regard. While he lived, I had thought to be a lawyer to help the Clan deal with political threats. Now that you are Lord Lovat, it seems that I have to be both warrior and politician.'

They rode further in silence, remembering Alexander's lingering death, from wounds inflicted at the Battle of Killiecrankie in support of the Jacobites. Simon then continued,

'So now it falls to John and I to keep the Clan secure, and we accept your instruction without question.'

John agrees,

'I will do all that I can to support you, My Lord and father. But it seems to me that Simon is much more suited to political intrigue, and I think that he understates his abilities as warrior. I pledge to be a loyal lieutenant.'

The widow, Lady Amelia, sat quietly in her carriage with her three daughters, wondering what was to happen with her life now that she was no longer the wife of a living chief. Looking behind at the Clan following her, she felt a great affection for them, even though she had only been with them for a little over ten years. Despite losing two sons in early childhood and having to adjust to a less noble lifestyle, these had been the best years of her life, with strong friendships, particularly with those women who had supported her in grief and those that she had supported in their times of hardship.

People tend to meld into like-thinking groups. There were those of negative frame of mind, bemoaning that the Clan had moved from a weak and hopeless chief to a dodderly old man, and expecting that things could only get worse. They were a minority, the general feeling being one of determination.

Another group of younger men discussed the part that they might play in the protection of the Clan, with one fiery would-be warrior proclaiming,

'We will have to fight to retain our country, as our ancestors did. We will show them the mettle of the highlander. The Master will be our war chief.'

While this stirred the blood of the young, an older and wiser head interjected,

'Times have changed. This is not like the feud that we had with the Grants, nor are we feuding with the Mackenzies. This is a matter of politics and intrigue, with lawyers manipulating the laws of Scotland to personal benefit. The law has replaced the ancient customs of the clans. If we start a war we will lose. We will have to fight the Mackenzies and perhaps others, then the regiment of Atholl, then the English garrison, then the English army. Unless we have the law on our side, we can only resist as best we can, but not with war.'

Many of the family heads travelled with their families and kin if this was on their way home. Others travelled as a group, their families making their own way, particularly if distant or to the north of the River Beaully. They discussed the political challenges facing the Clan, focussing on the legal threat to prevent Lord Thomas, as heir male, being the clan chief, and to install a future husband of the young Amelia, then ten years old, being designated as heiress, against the long standing tradition of heirs male.

The women of the household and neighbourhood also formed a group, not able to walk with the widow, but many wishing that they could. One young lass asked,

'Do you think that the Lady will stay with us, or return to her family down south? She would have a much grander and more comfortable life within her rich and powerful family.'

The reply from came from a women of similar age to the widow,

'She has that choice, but I would hope that she stays. She stood by me when my husband was killed by that rogue bull. To my mind, she is now one of us, even though she came from Atholl.'

Thus the clan gentlemen, some with their ladies, came to Castle Dounie, and met in the great hall, which quickly became crowded. The new Chief took the chair at one end, with his sons next to him. The widow had a seat at the back, accompanied by the ladies, expressing their condolences. Some of the more elderly found seats along the walls, but most remained standing.

Lord Thomas stood,

'Welcome to all. Before discussing our situation we will wait for the Reverend James, as he would have had to make sure that all was in order at Wardlaw before leaving.'

The heads of each family then individually swore loyalty to the new Chief according to tradition. Refreshments were served. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships were started.

About an hour later, Reverend James entered the hall, to be greeted with approbation and respect. He paid his respects to the new Chief, and then turned to address the assembly.

'It is ever a sad day to put one of ours to rest, and we join in belief that he is now in a better place. But we must discuss the present and the future, as I expect that there are very troubled times ahead. You all know of the marriage contract of our past Chief to the Lady Amelia, as set up by her father, Marquis of Atholl, and Lord Hugh's guardian and uncle, Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, which says that the Lovat title and estates will go to whoever marries the eldest daughter, young Amelia, and changes his name to Fraser. This is a ploy by the Marquis to gain control of Lovat to further enhance his already powerful position in the governance of Scotland. His grandfather, Earl of Tullibardine, gained ownership of Atholl by marriage to the heiress, Dorothea Stewart. The Stewarts and Robertsons in Atholl are now merely servants of the Murrays, who were originally a family from south of the highlands.'

'As you know, it is the tradition of our Clan that a new Chief will be the heir male, being the nearest male relative of the old Chief. In this case our choice would be Lord Thomas, with his son, Simon, being Master of Lovat, then the next Chief in his turn. It has long been the case that the ownership and titles of Lovat are held by the Chief in trust for the Clan. This is Fraser country, and we must uphold our inheritance. What was once Stewart country in Atholl is now Murray's.'

Being now into his sixties, and while still hale, but expecting a long debate, he asked for a chair and drink. The Chief made a gesture and a chair was brought, with a goblet of claret. The Reverend sat down, took a good sip, and continued,

'Atholl and Tarbat are both lawyers and are politically powerful; Atholl being perhaps the third most powerful man in Scotland. It will not be easy to establish our tradition and retain certainty of our futures. We could legally argue that our Clan tradition overrides the marriage contract, but we have little chance of being successful. Justice is

nominally equal for all men, but in reality the law is a tool for those opportunists who would use it for their own advancement, and is mostly used to protect the rich and powerful from those they see as threatening their interests.'

He looked around the room and saw that he had their attention, put his goblet down next to the chair, and stood, turning to face the Chief,

'The best strategy that I see is to call upon our highland customs in dealing with an heiress, while maintaining the continuity of the Clan. They may not be in agreement with English law, but the government in Edinburgh and London know that the highlands is a tinderbox waiting for the match, and will not willingly challenge highland custom and self-governance.

'One such custom is that the heir male marries the widow, so that he becomes the Chief, and the heiress is no longer in the line of succession. He also becomes her guardian, and has a say into whom she might marry. We have an heir male and a widow, so this custom can be considered.'

Lord Thomas gave a reluctant nod. The Reverend turned to address Lady Amelia, the widow,

'Understanding the difficulties that we have, would you consider the possibility of marrying Lord Thomas, and protecting the Clan?'

She looked down at her hands in some confusion. She had not expected to put into such a position. The room was silent. She looked around and saw that both the men and women were simply waiting for her answer, not putting any pressure on her, one way or the other. She had their trust and she had to earn it. With a brief prayer to her staunch and heroic grandmother, she raised her head and looked at Lord Thomas,

'I would be honoured to be the wife of our Chief. But it is my understanding that I could not marry without approval from my father, the Marquis of Atholl. If you wish, I will ask him, but I do not expect that he would agree to such a match.'

Lord Thomas said to the Reverend,

'Whilst I would be honoured to be the husband of the Lady Amelia, she is still of child-bearing age and I am a frail old man - too old to consider siring more children. I cannot see that this is a viable option.'

The Reverend replied, again addressing the Chief,

'I understand your reluctance and the concerns of Lady Amelia, and respect your decision. There is another ancient custom where the son of the heir male marries the heiress, so combining the succession. In this case, the heiress would marry Simon, the son of Thomas.'

An interjection came from the assembly,

'But she is only a child, but ten years old. Marriage at such a young age would be unthinkable.'

With the Reverend replying,

'I agree totally. But a betrothal is possible. With the agreement of her mother, a marriage contract could be drawn up for a forthcoming union when she is of age. Such a contract could prevent a marriage with a Murray or Mackenzie scion, or at the very least give us some legal standing.'

Another expressed objection,

'But is the mother's agreement enough? Wouldn't it be necessary for the young lass' nearest male relative to give permission? Presumably this would be her grandfather, the Marquis.'

The Reverend nodded,

'It is our established highland tradition that a widow is the guardian of her children. In English feudal law, women had no legal rights, being mere chattels, so the nearest male relative would be the guardian. However, feudal law was overturned by the revolution in England, so now we have laws from Parliament. But we are in a state of change, with most legal situations yet to be clarified by parliamentary action. In this case we could make a good argument that our traditions should hold sway over our affairs, unless they are clearly denied by statute. A noble would argue that his tradition is male guardianship, but we are not peers, we are highlanders. If it were to be challenged, a court of law would have to weigh up the precedent of overturning clan tradition, and in the face of the tinderbox of rebellion.'

There was continuing discussion, including expressions of frustration about having to deal with all the legal nonsense. After an hour or so, the discussion quietened, and the Chief called a halt, making the decision that this was an approach to be considered. He then asked Lady Amelia,

'With respect, My lady, would you consider such a betrothal? It would appear to be in the best interests of the Clan.'

To which she replied,

'I would be prepared to consider such a proposal, but would wish to discuss the matter with my daughter before giving my decision.'

The Chief bowed his head in acknowledgement, and looked to Simon, who looked surprised and uncertain, as this was not something that he had anticipated. He was in his mid-twenties, and a betrothal to a child was not a good look for a future chief. He knew young Amelia, and liked her well enough as an intelligent and lively child, but his expectation was to first establish himself as Master, the Chief in waiting, and then negotiate a marriage suitable to the station of a highland lord. However, the interests of the Clan had to come first, so he nodded in agreement.

The Chief sat in deep thought for a long moment, and then stated his decision,

'So, from tomorrow we will do two things beyond our normal daily tasks. Once we have the agreement of our Lady, we will seek legal advice and move towards drawing up a contract of betrothal. At the same time we will set about putting our Clan affairs in order and removing the management of the Lovat estates from the hands of the agents of Lord Seaforth. We will avoid upsetting these Mackenzies as much as possible, but insist on the rights of our Clan.

In these circumstances, it is my decision that I and my sons will stay in our house, and the Lady Amelia, with her children will continue at Castle Dounie.'

This was not the end of the gathering, with more refreshments brought in. Lord Thomas walked with arthritic difficulty around the room, paying particular attention to his contemporaries, dwindling in number as each year went by, expressing condolences for departed wives and husbands, and giving his best wishes as Chief.

The next day Lady Amelia discussed the proposal for a betrothal with her daughter, explaining that this was a way of her at least marrying someone she knew and liked, rather than a political match chosen by her grandfather or uncle, and that it would serve the best interests of the Clan. Lady Amelia had some trepidation about the situation as,

after all, she had come to Clan Fraser as a pawn in a political marriage, and part of her accepted that this was the natural fate of a woman born to the nobility.

Young Amelia had no such qualms, seeing it as a great adventure, and an opportunity to be the wife of the Chief, in the steps of her mother. She had not been told about the intricacies of being an heiress, and her upbringing had been as a daughter of the Clan. Her mother would have been happier if she had been less enthusiastic.

Lady Amelia gave her consent to Lord Thomas, in the presence of Simon. They arranged to travel to Inverness to discuss the contract with their lawyer. His advice was that he considered that it was quite proper for such a betrothal to be made, and would be willing to draw up a suitable contract document, but warned that there was a possibility of a court challenge as to the right of the mother to agree to such an arrangement. He explained that there was no statute law concerning the issue, falling then to common law, with the precedents of the highlands being at odds with those of England, warning that the Murrays of Atholl were very powerful in political and legal circles, and, should they choose to challenge, would be difficult, time consuming and expensive to rebuff.

On their way home, Simon said,

'Father, it seems to me that Atholl and Tarbat have invested a lot of effort into acquiring the title and estates of Lovat, and are not likely to let us side-step their plans so easily. We should expect that they will challenge the betrothal, and we are not in a good place to defend our position.'

Lord Thomas replied,

'You may be right, but it is my decision that we take this one step at a time, and give reason and justice every opportunity to prevail.'

Simon pressed his viewpoint,

'If there is a challenge we will need friends at court to hold up against the political power of our persecutors. Would you give me leave to discuss this with our friends of other clans, and seek their support?'

The Chief was cautious,

'We need to do be careful. If we are accused of using our situation to inflame highland unrest, it will come down hard of us. This is our affair and we need to deal with it ourselves.'

He considered for a moment,

'There is only one person of influence that I can think of that we can trust to be staunchly on our side, and that is the Earl of Argyll. Perhaps, Simon, you could seek an audience with him, and get his advice. I will write a letter to that effect.'

So Simon had an audience with Archibald Campbell, the 10th Earl of Argyll, who understood the difficult situation for the Clan and agreed that the betrothal was a sensible first step. He promised his support if there was a legal challenge.

There are few secrets within a clan, and the news of the betrothal plan spread rapidly. There was also an Atholl spy in the household of Castle Dounie, who passed the information on to Tullibardine, who had taken over the running of the Atholl empire. His father, who had been the 3rd Earl of Tullibardine, as well as 1st Marquis of Atholl, had stepped down due to age, sixty-five, and infirmity. Although mostly confined to his house in Dunkeld, he considered that the reins of power still rested in his hands, so

retained the title of Marquis, but passed on the title of Tullibardine to his son, Sir John Murray. Sir John had the difficult task of managing the empire while achieving his own ambitions, but without upsetting his irascible and elderly father.

On hearing about the betrothal from his informant, and being aware that Argyl may well stand against him, he took another path and applied to the Privy Council for guardianship of the young heiress, so that her mother would no longer have the power to choose a husband for her, and the betrothal would then not be valid.

He did not have to try too hard, as most of the Privy Council were his allies and cronies, but he needed a reason to meet the procedural requirements. So he concocted a story that Simon had attempted to abduct the child for his nefarious and immoral purposes, but had been foiled when a clansman returned her to her mother. The opportunity for this story came when the young girl, becoming impatient for the adventure to begin, had set off from Castle Dounie towards the house of Lord Thomas, where Simon was in residence, so that she could spend some time with her future husband, to discuss plans for their future. One of the outside workers had seen her scampering gleefully up the lane, and had run after her and talked her out of her venture, persuading her that she was not well enough dressed for such a long journey in winter.

The Council had five members sitting for this matter, with Tullibardine feeling sure of four of them, so had no fear that the fifth might sway the decision, particularly as none of them came from the highlands. The Chairman started the proceedings,

'We have a petition from Sir John Murray, Earl of Tullibardine, that the Council award him guardianship of his niece, Amelia Fraser, presently residing at Castle Dounie, in the highlands, near Inverness, and presently in the care of her mother, the widow of the Chief of Clan Fraser of Lovat, recently deceased. Sir John, please explain.'

Tullibardine rose to address the panel,

'My Lords, this is a matter of much urgency as my niece is in grave danger. An attempt has already been made to abduct her by Simon Fraser of Beaufort, who is the son of Thomas Fraser, presently styling himself as Chief. She is still a child, nine years old, and it is unthinkable that she be subjected to the machinations of Beaufort, who is known to be a person of poor repute.

She is the daughter of my sister, also Amelia, who is of noble birth, and her husband was a gentle and noble person who tragically died as a young man. The mother and daughter are now trapped in the highland wilderness of barbarians with their uncivilised tribal customs. I am not able to offer assistance to my sister as she is a grown woman, but I must attempt a rescue for my niece.'

The fifth member of the panel asked the Chairman for leave to ask a question of Sir John,

'Sir John, I take it that you have evidence of this attempted abduction?'

With Tullibardine replying,

'I have a witness to the attempted abduction, who can be called to testify if it is the wish of the Council.'

The Chairman interjected,

'I am sure that we have no need to examine the witness and can trust that Sir John has given us an honest accounting of the affair.'

The fifth member continued,

'And is this witness of Clan Fraser and a member of the household of Castle Dounie?'

'He was a member of the household at the time, but is a Mackenzie.'

'Is he no longer a member of the household?'

'Some Mackenzies, as agents of Lord Seaforth, have been assisting in the management of the Lovat estates since the death of the deceased Chief's father, thirty years ago. Recently the Mackenzies have been forced from office by the Beaufort claimants, which is another matter that will need to be attended to in due course.'

'So, this witness is perhaps disgruntled by his discharge from his position as factor for Lord Seaforth?'

Tullibardine addressed the Chairman,

'My Lord, I can assure you that this witness is a man of the upmost integrity and his evidence can be taken as gospel truth.'

The Chairman looked at his colleagues on the bench, and said,

'I am sure that we can accept the evidence. Now, if there are no more questions, I would suggest that we move to a decision.'

The fifth member insisted that he had further questions. The other members of the panel raised their eyes to the ceiling with impatience.

'I understand, Sir John, that there is a marriage contract that nominates your niece to be the heiress of the Lovat title and estates?'

'This was no doubt part of the motive for Beaufort to attempt the abduction, in addition to his base intent of having his way with the child.'

'And do you have an interest in this affair because of this contract?'

'The child is not of marriageable age, so this should not be an issue at this time. It would have been convenient if her father had lived until she was of age so that he could have chosen a suitable husband for her.'

One of the other panel members spoke up,

'The sooner that estates such as these come under the management of civilised nobility, the sooner we will have peace in the highlands. Sir John, I consider that Atholl has been much improved since your grandfather took over from the Stewarts by marriage to the heiress, and your family is to be commended.'

There was general agreement with this sentiment, except for the fifth member who persisted, now addressing the panel,

'Are we to suggest that Clan Fraser would support a child rapist? Agreed it is the case that they have an ancient tradition, but highlanders are, with very few exceptions, also of the highest morality.'

The Chairman ran out of patience,

'That is enough argument. We are now in a position to make a decision, and I believe that the panel finds in favour of the petitioner.'

Three members nodded their agreement, with the fifth saying,

'I wish to be recorded as a dissenting vote.'

The Chairman sighed and nodded to the recording clerk.

'I will instruct the clerk to draw up the deed awarding the guardianship in a trustee's name of Amelia Fraser, heiress of Lovat, to Sir John Murray, Earl of Tullibardine.'

Tullibardine thanked the panel, and added,

'Would it be possible for the Council to also provide a warrant empowering me to remove young Amelia from the Frasers?'

The panel discussed this possibility, with the Chairman apologising,

'We consider that the issue of such a document is outside of our jurisdiction, but I will see that a recommendation is drawn up that you can present to a Magistrate for such a warrant.'

Tullibardine relayed the result to his father, the Marquis, emphasising the story of the attempted abduction. The Marquis predictably became enraged and told his son to do whatever was necessary to protect his grand-daughter.

These proceedings were carried out without the knowledge of the mother, nor of any of the Frasers. There was consternation with the news of the award of guardianship, although the story of the alleged abduction did not become public until later, and then only with the help of the fifth member of the panel. As trustee, Tullibardine could legally take over the management of the Clan, and choose her husband, who would then take ownership of the Lovat title and estates.

Lady Amelia was at first downcast that her father should be so inconsiderate of her position, but, when she later heard the story of the abduction, she recognised her brother's devious handiwork, and became even more determined to resist.

Her brother, Tullibardine, for his part started to realise that his sister was standing in his way. He had never considered her as a person of any ability, being a girl after all, but still felt uneasy about her close relationship with their father. In his milieu of male power brokers women were considered to be domestically useful but not strong-minded. He presumed that Simon had charmed her into being his supporter, so his first step was an attempt to pressure Simon into abandoning his resistance to the takeover of the Clan, despite having just accused him of being a child abductor. He met up with Simon and, after some drinks and friendly talk, asked him to sign a retraction of his claims. Simon refused and the meeting became angry, with Tullibardine insulting Simon, and Simon resigning his commission with the Atholl Regiment.

Simon described the meeting to Lord Thomas and Lady Amelia, together with some of the senior gentlemen of the Clan. They were aghast that Tullibardine continued to press his ambitions in the face of the clear resistance from the Clan, supported by his sister. It was decided that the betrothal should proceed and that legal advice be sought concerning Tullibardine's guardianship of young Amelia, against her mother's wishes.

Tullibardine was now enraged that his sister and the Clan should stand in the way of the carefully laid plans of his father, now coming to culmination. He now was also in a personal feud with the impertinent and disrespectful Beaufort. It was unthinkable that a lowly member of a cadet branch of a highland clan should be allowed to stand against his noble entitlements. So he gave orders that young Amelia be removed from Castle Dounie and taken to Blair Castle, for safe keeping. His agents went to Dounie, warrant in hand, and, with a threat of legal force, took the young girl away from her mother, her sisters and her childhood home, to be protected, and educated into the proper customs of a lady of the nobility.

This was a major blow to the Clan, with more discussions between Lord Thomas, Simon, Lady Amelia and the senior gentlemen of the Clan. Lord Thomas said that he

was no longer able to act as Chief, due to failing health, and asked that Simon be accepted as acting chief in his stead. This was agreed by all, with statements of respect.

In continued discussion of their predicament, one gentleman proclaimed,

'We will not accept any chief who is not one of us. We will resist with all our will any attempt to make the Clan a servant of an outsider.'

Another added,

'I have a cousin who is married to a Stewart of Atholl. She tells us that the old families of Atholl no longer have a voice in the running of their traditional lands, but are merely serfs to Lord Murray. He extracts everything he can in order to maintain his standing as a great noble, leaving the clan people only the bare means for survival.'

And another,

'Lord Murray has a standing militia attached to Blair Atholl, available to deal with any disquiet in the highland parts of his legal estates. Our Chief has no need of such, as he only has to send the word along the glens, and he will have willing fighters enough for any eventuality.'

Lady Amelia listened to the discussion, and, looking at Simon as the acting chief, offered to send a written message to her father, the Marquis, explaining firstly that the alleged abduction was simply a misunderstanding blown out of proportion, secondly that the betrothal of her daughter to Simon on Beaufort had her approval as the best way to meet both the conditions of her marriage contract and the expectations of the Clan, and lastly that the people of the Clan would not accept a chief that was not of their own under any conditions, and would resist with all their might.

After asking for any further discussion, Simon gave his approval that this was the next step.

The Marquis did not get to see the letter, as Tullibardine intercepted its delivery. He saw this as yet another outrageous ploy by Beaufort to stymie his plans, and was further angered by his sister's willingness to play the part of the Frasers. He decided not to show it to his father as it would further aggravate his already fragile state of health, and who might misinterpret it as being a true statement of his daughter's opinions.

Tullibardine was momentarily in two minds about the Lovat matter, considering the possibility of allowing the Frasers to have their way. On one side it was a great time waster for him, as the Union of Thrones of England and Scotland opened up new opportunities for those who had the courage and ability, and the control of a northern highland estate was probably more trouble than it was worth. He was only doing it for his father, who had plotted this situation ten or more years previously and still expressed interest in the outcome. On the other hand, he could not think of a way of explaining to his father that it was acceptable to allow the man who tried to abduct a granddaughter to then marry her, and also the thought of Beaufort being the victor was untenable. Beaufort could be expected to crow his victory up and down the country.

From Lady Amelia's letter, Tullibardine understood the clan's point of view about their desire that a new chief be one of them. Perhaps he could find a suitable Fraser chief other than Beaufort. This might settle the matter so that he could get on with his career. With some help from Fraser lawyers in Inverness, he found a candidate in William Fraser, 12th Lord Saltoun of Abernethy, who had a son, Alexander, of the right age, and was in need of income.

Lord Saltoun sent word to Castle Dounie that he was happy to assist in the negotiations between Lovat and Atholl, while coming to an agreement with Tullibardine

that his son would marry young Amelia and thus inherit the estates and title. Tullibardine told Saltoun that he, Tullibardine, as the legal trustee for the heiress, could give him permission to enter Fraser country and negotiate with Amelia's mother for the hand of her daughter, and would provide an entourage suitable for a gentleman of standing. However, the Clan considered the country to be theirs, so there was a confrontation between the highlanders and the Lord Saltoun accompanied by Atholl militia, with Saltoun being captured and subsequently set free on a promise never to return with arms. This was a skirmish in the traditional clan style, with much posturing and threats, but no blood spilt.

Tullibardine was again outraged at being foiled by the impudent Beaufort, and went to court describing this as open and manifest rebellion against the King, and demanding that soldiers be sent to arrest the Beauforts and devastate their lands. This demand was not met, but he continued to harass the judiciary to give him the justice that he considered was his right.

4. The Forced Marriage

The Clan were becoming desperate, with there seeming to be no end to the harassment. Most of the lairds were resigned to having to fight for their livelihoods, and those of the families dependent on them. This would be a serious and costly path, for, although they could raise a thousand fierce fighting men, these same men were also required to grow food and raise stock, so this action would lead to a starvation winter. Memories of past starvation winters were part of their lives, with the very old and the very young dying first - a fearsome prospect.

Yet another war conference at Castle Dounie, with Simon saying,

'We have no choice but to fight. We cannot bow to Atholl. It would just be a slow death rather than a quick one. We must send the fiery cross along the glens.'

The Reverend James managed to be there, although he was ill, both in his role as laird of Phopachy and as spiritual leader of the Beaufort family,

'As you know I have made a study of our traditions, and those of other highland clans. There is another possibility, and that is that our acting chief should marry the widow of our previous chief. This would then make Simon the legal guardian of young Amelia with the power to select her husband. He may also be able to overturn the previous marriage contract.'

Neither Simon nor Lady Amelia had thought of this possibility. They liked each other as cousins well enough but there was no romance between them. Simon would have preferred a younger wife, preferably also a daughter of a chief of one of the neighbouring clans, to reinforce their interdependence. But Lady Amelia was still of child-bearing age, and only slightly his senior, so he looked to Amelia to see her reaction.

She saw a problem,

'I would consider such a marriage for the sake of the Clan, but I cannot legally marry without my father's consent. It is possible that he might agree out of consideration for me, but he might also deny the possibility, perhaps seeing it as a burden for me.'

The Reverend had already thought this through,

'There is another custom for overcoming problems of consent, which is the forced marriage. If the Lady Amelia were to be married nominally against her will, then the normal practice would be for consent to then be given, as the marriage has already been consecrated in the eyes of the Church. To do otherwise is to commit both parties to disgrace.'

After some moments of consideration, Lady Amelia said,

'That is worth further thought. I would expect that my father would put my interests first.'

Simon, as acting chief, looked around the room for comment from the Lairds. There was a general feeling that this would be better than the alternative of war, and that the Clan had little to lose by such a proposal, providing that the Lady Amelia, who was well respected, agreed.

Lady Amelia looked at Simon,

'The sooner done the better. I will take my daughters to stay with Margaret in Beaulieu in the morning and then retire to my chambers. I will accidentally not bolt the door. When you have made the arrangements, you will have to come and force me from my room.'

So the next afternoon all was ready, except that the Reverend James had not arrived. Simon sent a clansman to investigate, who returned over an hour later to say that the Reverend was very ill and feverish and not able to leave his bed. So a messenger was despatched to Kilmorack, being the neighbouring parish to Kirkhill, to ask the minister there to officiate. It was late in the afternoon when the messenger returned to say that the minister was away and would not be back until Sunday.

One of the gathering mentioned that the minister for the parish of Abertaff was usually in Inverness during the week, so two men were sent to try and find him and bring him to Castle Dounie. They did find him, well into his cups, it being now late in the evening. So it was very late when they returned to Castle Dounie, where the marriage ceremony was performed, with Lady Amelia and Simon acting it out to make it look authentic as a forced marriage. Two clansmen respectfully held Lady Amelia's arms to add to the show.

The celebration started with toasts and playing of the bagpipes. Then Lady Amelia was taken, again with gentleness and respect, to her chamber, with Simon following. He thanked the two men with a smile, and closed the door, drawing the bolts. He then turned to Lady Amelia with a quizzical look, one eyebrow slightly raised. She returned his gaze with a small mischievous smile,

'Do you think that I should scream?', she asked.

'You would have to scream very loud to be heard over the pipes.', he replied.

She took a very deep breath and started to scream. As soon as she started she pictured the little wasted bodies of her two dead sons and the scream turned in a wail of anguish and mourning, and tears rushed from her eyes. When she recovered herself, she found that Simon was supporting her, with a look of some understanding and compassion in his eyes.

'You know that I would rather that your husband or sons had lived. This is by necessity not by planning.'

There was a jug of claret on the chest at the foot of the bed and two cups. He poured wine for both of them and offered her the cup, with a toast,

'To the future of the Clan.'

She repeated the toast and drank. Then to the business of consummation. She found that he was unexpectedly gentle and considerate, looking for ways to make the act a pleasure for her. Her first husband had not been a robust man, and she sometimes thought it a major triumph when they managed to conceive. Simon, on the other hand, was strong and healthy, so she felt some sense of being blessed. Simon for his part was less content. He was no stranger to the pleasures of the flesh, but this was the first time that he had bedded an older woman, let alone one who had birthed five children. However, duty called and there is no better way to keep warm on a winter's night.

They both knew that the Clan would not feel secure until they had produced an heir, or preferably two or three just in case.

Tullibardine was enraged when he heard of the marriage, without the permission of her father, and immediately took steps to deny its status, claiming that it was rape and finding witnesses in support. He told his father, the Marquis, of the rape, who was understandably outraged that his favourite daughter had been so foully treated, and demanded that Beaufort be brought to justice and executed.

Tullibardine petitioned the Bishop, claiming that the marriage was false and should be annulled. The Bishop took the matter to the Church Council, who agreed to investigate the matter. Tullibardine then tried the law, but was not able to make a case without the testimony of the victim, Lady Amelia.

When it became obvious that the ploy to get her father's approval had failed, Lady Amelia understood that the rape allegation was the key issue, so she went to visit the Reverend James at Kirkhill, anxious to ensure that the marriage was proper in the eyes of the Church. He was still bedridden with a severe lung infection, and recovering, but slowly.

In consideration of her question, he asked,

'Did Reverend Munro have his parish record book with him?'

'Not that I saw and he had no baggage at all.'

'Was the marriage properly witnessed?'

'Yes, by two senior lairds of the Clan.'

'Do you think that the Reverend would remember all the details to add to his records?'

'He was hardly able to perform the ceremony, and perhaps does not remember doing so. I would not expect that he would remember the names of the witnesses. He might even have difficulty remembering the full names of Simon and myself.'

'We have then a marriage that was not solemnised in a church and we could expect that the marriage may not have been properly recorded at Abertarff, so it is then of doubtful validity. I would recommend that you seek a second marriage just in case. Unfortunately, I am not well enough to do this myself, but I will write a note for Reverend William at Kilmorack explaining my illness and asking him to officiate in my place.'

And so it was. A small group, with some armed clansmen, crossed the river and travelled the short distance to Kilmorack, where the marriage was duly solemnised and recorded in the parish register. Lady Amelia later returned to Kirkhill and asked Reverend James to draw up a deposition recording her willing status as wife of Simon of

Beaufort, so that she could send it to her father, to make sure that he fully understood her determination.

The deposition was intercepted by Tullibardine and never seen by the Marquis, nor was he told of the second marriage. Tullibardine was convinced that Amelia was totally under the sway of the perfidious Beaufort, and that the deposition was organised by him, probably without even his sister's knowledge. Tullibardine believed that Beaufort knew of the affection between the Marquis and his daughter, and was trying to use this in his own interests, so he felt fully justified in protecting his father from full knowledge of the situation.

The Church Council reported that while there were some irregularities with the first marriage, the second was properly conducted and there was no indication that the bride was unwilling, so there were no grounds for annulment. The Marquis saw that there was nothing to be done without the testimony of his daughter, so instructed two of his sons, Lords James and Mungo, to go to Castle Dounie and rescue her. When they got there the castle was empty as Simon and Lady Amelia had fled to Eileen Aigas, a small island in the River Beauty, west of Castle Dounie, and essentially impregnable without a fleet of boats.

Amelia was bereft at her father putting his interests in acquiring the estates of Lovat ahead of his affection for her. The plan with her marriage had been to win the Marquis over to her side. She now believed that this affection was all on her side and none on his, and was heartbroken. She was not aware of the extent that Tullibardine had manipulated events.

5. The Abduction and Miscarriage

The Marquis was determined to rescue his daughter from the clutches of Beaufort, so sent a message asking her to meet with her brother Lord James at Castle Dounie to discuss her situation. Lord James was under instructions to bring her back to Blair Atholl, by force if she would not come willingly. Lady Amelia thought that this was an opportunity to put her point of view, and she trusted her brother James, who was about four years older, and had always been a kind friend. Simon was suspicious and tried to talk her out of the meeting, but she was adamant. So he offered to send her with a party of armed highlanders, which she also refused, thinking that this would suggest that she did not trust her brother.

At Castle Dounie, Lord James greeted his sister warmly and asked if she was ready to return to her family. Lady Amelia replied that she was married to Simon and intended to stay with him. So Lord James, with some reluctance, obeyed his father's instructions and took her away by force.

Once Lady Amelia was safely away, Tullibardine went to the Court of Session asking that Simon be brought to justice, on the understanding that Lady Amelia would soon be available to provide witness as to the rape and abduction. The Court issued 'Letters of Communing', making Simon a wanted man, open to arrest by any citizen.

Despite pressure from all her family, Lady Amelia refused to testify against her husband. She considered that she had been betrayed by her whole family, including her father and brothers, and it was now clear to her that her first marriage to Lord Hugh had not been with her father having her interests in mind, but that he had simply used

her as a pawn to gain control of the Lovat estates. She hardened her heart and withdrew into dignified solitude.

She was a prisoner at Blair Atholl and told that she would remain so until she denied the marriage and was prepared to give testimony at court. The news of the pillage of Fraser country by the Atholl Militia and soldiers from the garrison at Inverness added to her alienation. She had bleak satisfaction from hearing that Simon was still at large.

She was not allowed to see her father, then living in Dunkeld because of his poor health. The Marquis asked to meet with her, but Tullibardine told him that she was still suffering from the ill-treatment that she had undergone from Beaufort, and that he would bring her as soon as she was well enough. The Marquis maintained his rage.

Then she found that she was pregnant. She kept the knowledge to herself through the first trimester, as miscarriages were common enough, and she needed to be certain. She would give her father one more chance to treat her with love, not seeing how he could deny a daughter carrying his grandchild.

She asked her brother, Lord John, Tullibardine, for a meeting in her chamber, and demanded to see her father, explaining that she was pregnant and needed his approval for her marriage.

He totally lost his temper, instinctively feeling that his father might well be overwhelmed by the emotion of a favourite daughter with child, and seeing that all his efforts to maintain the old man in a state of rage to prevent Beaufort taking advantage might be subverted, and then tell against him.

In his rage he lashed out a backhand across Amelia's head, with her falling stunned to the ground. As he stood over her, she turned her head and looked him in the eye, with strength and no fear. Another wave of red rage and she kicked her hard in the belly, twice, before storming out of the room, leaving Amelia groaning on the floor.

Her maidservant rushed in and helped to the bed, bleeding from her womb. A few hours later she miscarried. The maidservant, with help from other maids, unobtrusively carried the foetus, still wrapped in a bloody towel, to be quietly buried under a tree near the castle. When she had recovered enough, Lady Amelia went to sit under the tree, with her maids, and wept and wailed until the pain became bearable.

Tullibardine, Lord John, for his part, was deeply remorseful about the consequences of his outburst, but blamed Beaufort for firstly manipulating his sister against her family and secondly having the impertinence to make her pregnant, never being legally married in the first place. It was well known that he was hot tempered, and it was not his fault that the combination of the circumstances and his sister's defiance caused his temper to flare out of control. He was never to have the same authority over his sister again, but was all the more determined to bring Beaufort to justice. Even though it was not his fault, he deeply regretted causing the death of his sister's child, and vowed never to allow his temper to overwhelm him again.

Simon remained at large in Fraser country, supported by the Clan, despite the Atholl militia harassing and devastating Clan settlements in a bid to force the Clan to hand him over.

Lady Amelia found that she could not bear to live with her family under the circumstances and moved to Inverness. She sent for her two youngest daughters from Beaulieu and set up house. Her eldest daughter, Amelia the heiress, was under the legal control of her uncle, and was not permitted to go with her mother. Lady Amelia had

some contact with the Clan, particularly with her clanswomen, but was very restless, and distressed by the stories about how her Clan were being treated by her family.

Tullibardine continued to pursue Simon through the courts, and finally achieved a verdict of guilt of rebellion, and the award of a Commission of 'Fire and Sword', allowing him the full use of force to bring Simon to his execution.

He sent his brothers, Lords James and Mungo, with an armed force to fully subdue and take control of the Lovat estates. This force was ambushed by Simon and his highlanders and force to yield. This was again an action in the traditional highland tradition, with much drama and threat, but no blood was spilt.

Following the death of his father in exile, Simon became even more determined to resist Tullibardine. He decided that there was nothing to be gained from continued resistance to the legal leverage of Tullibardine, and with the continued military harassment of the Clan, so, taking advice from Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll, he travelled to London to seek a pardon from King William III. With some difficulty, he was finally pardoned from his indicted crimes against the Crown, but the issue of the forced marriage remained unresolved.

So Simon assumed the mantle of Lord Lovat and returned to Castle Dounie and started to put the Clan back into order. He was no longer a fugitive and looked forward to a normal life.

6. The Second Child and the Deal

Having failed to have Simon indicted for crimes against the Crown, Tullibardine now instigated private proceedings with a charge of 'rapt' and 'hamesucken', which in combination could lead to the death penalty. Tullibardine left nothing the chance, having been outwitted by the vile Beaufort on too many occasions, but ensured that the Court was fully committed in his favour. He subpoenaed his sister, Lady Amelia, to appear, but sensibly not planning to present her for cross examination.

Argyll persuaded Simon that it was more than his life was worth to present himself to such a Court, and recommended that he travel again to London and seek a royal pardon.

The Court dutifully pronounced Simon guilty in absentia and without representation, and he was a fugitive once more.

Lady Amelia had sat stonily through the court case, watching the well rehearsed antics of the plaintiff's legal team, and had been singularly unimpressed. When she had returned to Blair Atholl the news came that a marriage had been agreed between her eldest daughter, Amelia, and Alexander Mackenzie, the son of Sir Roderick Mackenzie. Sir Roderick and his brother Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat, both lawyers, had been Tullibardine's staunch allies through the whole legal process to put Beaufort in his place. Lady Amelia, despite being the mother of the bride, had no say in the matter.

She was puzzled by this turn of events, as she had understood that the whole purpose of her original marriage contract with Hugh had been to allow the Murrays the possibility of acquiring ownership of Lovat. Her thought was that the original intent had degenerated into a personal feud between her brother and her second husband, Simon. The act of gifting Lovat to a Mackenzie meant that her brother was no longer overly interested in Murray ownership, having an important career in London and Edinburgh to pursue. She thought about ways that this new insight might be turned to help her in

her quest to protect her Clan. Mackenzie was now the threat, not Murray, which was easier for her as there were no divided loyalties.

She decided that the only course of action left to her was to somehow bring her brother on to her side. She would need a tool of persuasion and so set about to write an affidavit of the events of her second marriage, leading to the miscarriage and her estrangement from the family.

Her forced appearance in court, combined with the continuing criticism from her family, decided her that she had to leave Atholl and return to her Clan, despite being effectively a prisoner. She was insistent and persistent and finally managed to escape to Inverness, with only a maidservant, and found lodgings with a supportive member of the Fraser Clan. She was exhilarated to be free and to have a task ahead; to save her Clan from the Mackenzies.

As it happened, Simon had secretly come to the Highlands to explore Jacobite possibilities, and was hiding in Inverness at that time, borrowing money to raise an action in the House of Lords to challenge the legality of his newest indictment.

It is often the case that servants know more than their mistresses, so it was Amelia's maid that heard rumours of Simon's presence in Inverness. Amelia was able to find where Simon was staying and set out to meet him to discuss her plans to protect the Clan. Being aware that he was a fugitive from justice, she disguised herself with a cape, even though it was not raining at the time, and took a circuitous route, checking that she was not being followed. She found herself enjoying the sense of adventure, and arrived at Simon's meagre outhouse a little flushed and breathless.

Simon was amazed to see her, but could not but ask her inside, checking the street in case she had been followed, and apologising for the poor condition of his lodgings. She started by apologising for the court case, saying that she was an unwilling participant and that she still considered that they were legally married. He was lonely and depressed and found that he welcomed her company, offering a beaker of wine. They had not seen each other for more than five years.

Simon looked at her with a smile and said the obvious,

'Seeing as we are still man and wife, could we share a bed this night?'

Then, seeing that she was flushed and excited, added,

'Or perhaps we should go to it straight away?'

She answered with a coquettish look,

'Yes please.' and then, with the expression of a young girl up to mischief, 'yes please - to both.'

After the passion, she started to discuss her plans for rescuing the Clan from the Mackenzies. When she mentioned the miscarriage Simon became very upset. He had heard rumours about the beating and its aftermath, but now the confirmation was devastating.

'I will take Tullibardine down if it is the last thing that I do. He drove my father to die in exile; he deprived me of my heritage; he destroyed our marriage; and now he has killed my child.'

Amelia tried to explain that the miscarriage was an accident from a fit of temper, not an intentional act of murder, but Simon would not listen. When she tried to explain her plan to bring her brother on the her side against the Mackenzies, Simon would have none of it,

'I will never make truce with such a man. The thought of subjecting the memory of my father to such a dishonour is too horrible to contemplate.'

Simon was adamant that he could outmanoeuvre Tullibardine yet again, with Argyll and King William on his side. Amelia had reservations, but held her tongue. Their second love-making was much more subdued, with a sense that this was perhaps goodbye.

Before Simon left Inverness King William died from the result of a riding accident, with Queen Anne being the successor. Tullibardine had previously invested in gaining the favours of Queen Anne, so the chances of Simon's success in the House of Lords had all but vanished. Simon went to London anyway to see if he could salvage anything, and failed. He could then see no possibility other than to enlist with the Jacobites and assist in the return of King James III and VIII to the throne of England and Scotland, with his reward to be the return of his title and estate. So he set off for France.

Queen Anne was an elder sister by twenty-three years of the exiled Jacobite, James, both being the children of James II who had been removed from the English throne in the year of James's birth, and became an exile in France. He was replaced by William III and Mary II, with Mary being the eldest surviving child of James II. Both Mary and Anne had been raised as Anglicans, whilst James was raised in France as a Catholic. Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch, was past childbearing age with no surviving children, so her brother James could be her successor, as her father had just died. So it was important that her administration keep on cordial terms with the exile. Tullibardine had cousins in France and so had a ready excuse to travel to Paris, where he maintained a small residence, and could quietly pay cordial respects to James, and then relay news back to his Queen.

Lady Amelia found that she was pregnant again. She hid her condition from all but a few close women friends, dressing in a manner that provided disguise, and thought long and hard for a way to turn this to the advantage of the Clan. If it was a girl there would be no advantage, and, if a boy possibly an heir to Lovat, but only with the acceptance of Tullibardine, either by legal action or persuasion. She bided her time and continued to prepare her affidavit. She thought about finding a trustworthy lawyer to hold the document and present it to the Court if this course became necessary, but, not having a high opinion of lawyers in general, decided to leave copies with her close friends and rely on bluff if necessary.

She knew that Simon was in France, and decided that the appropriate course of action was to join him there. The journey from Scotland to France was hazardous as England and France were at war, so had to be through the neutral territory of the Netherlands. She was accompanied by two clansmen and a clanswoman and successfully made the journey.

She made her way to Tullibardine's Paris residence, where she managed to persuade the house staff that she was a sister who had come to France to find her husband, for reasons that were by then obvious. Enquiries were made and it was found that Simon was staying with Sir John Maclean and his wife in a rundown apartment in the Palace of St Germain's.

He was astounded at her state of pregnancy, and could see no advantage from it, as, even if it were a boy, the legal issues in Scotland would still need to be resolved, and he could not see how he could overcome Tullibardine on his own ground. He was making useful inroads in the Jacobite court and in persuading the French administration that

there was a real possibility of spear-heading an invasion of England from Scotland. A pregnant wife from a disputed marriage was a complication he did not need.

Simon had set up a small apartment in Paris so that he could be readily available for conferences with the French administration, and he had appointments to keep, so he left Lady Amelia with the Macleans. Sir John wrote to him first to tell him that Lady Amelia was upset and longing for his return, then a second letter saying that she had left to return to her former lodging with 'fire and sword'.

St Germain's was a hotbed of gossip, and Lady Amelia heard that her brother was in Paris, and so decided that an approach might produce a useful result, helped by being away from Scotland, on more neutral ground. She very much caught Tullibardine off balance. When her arrival was announced he was having a very enjoyable petit dejeuner with a sophisticated Parisian lady. With effusive apologies he escorted her out and asked the servant to send in his sister. As she walked in, she smiled and commented,

'What a delightful perfume. Very expensive. Heavy with musk.'

He did not have a ready answer to this, and gestured for her to sit down, asking,

'What on earth are you doing in Paris?'

'I have come to discuss the future of my child with my husband, who is at St Germain's.'

She let her cloak fall open to show her advanced pregnancy. Tullibardine was momentarily speechless, and then shouted at her,

'What is it that Beaufort does to you to turn you against your family? Why do you let him control you? What is the fascination? He is but a scheming impertinent wretch!'

She looked at him calmly,

'I am doing the best that I can to protect my Clan.'

'What do you mean - protect your clan? All you have done is to bring disgrace to Murray.'

'I was born a Murray, but now I am a Fraser. Once the wife of the Chief, then his widow, and now the wife of the next Chief.'

He felt his jaw drop open. He could not stop it. A memory surfaced of meeting his maternal grandmother, Charlotte Stanley, Countess of Derby, when he was introduced to her at four years of age. She was sixty-five and in poor health, near death, but sitting upright in her chair with her hands quietly and neatly in her lap, impressing her grandson as being totally indomitable. She smiled at him kindly and told him that it was a great pleasure to meet him, and that she was sure that he would do great things in his life. Now his sister was sitting opposite him, firmly upright, hands quietly folded in her lap, expressionless and looking equally indomitable.

She continued,

'I first agreed to my daughter being betrothed to Simon in the interests of the Clan. When you made that impossible, I agreed to marry Simon myself, with a forced marriage, in the hope that my father would put his affection for me ahead of his desire to acquire Lovat, and give his consent. When this did not work, and I found myself pregnant, I sought to see him again, hoping that the promise of a grandchild would persuade him.'

She paused, and her face changed from expressionless to bleak,

'And then you killed my child.'

He felt a wave of guilt and regret,

'I am sorry. I have never forgiven myself for losing control in that manner, and causing such a dreadful thing to happen. I had always prided myself in that I had never killed a human being, and now, in my heart, I know that it is an empty boast.'

'I have lost three sons, one that you killed, and two that wasted away as infants.'

'I had nothing to do with that.'

'What was it that you had nothing to do with?'

'I spoke wrongly, I meant to say that your first two sons dying was an act of God.'

There had always been those that were sceptical of the death of her first two sons, and she remembered the medicine that had been provided for them by the doctor from Inverness, and the label on the bottle, in Latin, 'Tonic for Boys. Not Suitable for Girls.' She had long accepted that there was no possibility of knowing the truth one way or the other, particularly with the potential profit from an heiress in absence of a male heir. She could not believe that her father would do such a thing to his grandsons, but was less sure of the Mackenzies. Sir George of Tarbat was an eminent man and known for his good works. His brother, Sir Roderick, was more of an opportunist, but a distinguished lawyer. It all seemed unlikely, but she was puzzled that pressure had been brought onto her father to allow the marriage of her daughter to the son of Sir Roderick, rather than into the Murray family, presumably as originally intended.

She looked at him and sensed that he had some uncertainty as well, and saw that although he was willing to bend the rules to his advantage and browbeat those under him, he would not have under any circumstances countenanced the idea of infanticide. Despite their childhood of conflict, she saw good in him, and smiled kindly. Being a high noble, he was not used to being smiled at kindly, and the memory of his grandmother momentarily resurfaced. She asked gently,

'I would ask you to give your consent for my marriage with Simon, so that this child may have a father in the eyes of all.'

He took a deep breath, and brought his thoughts back to the present,

'That would be very difficult and would require that you, in turn, acknowledge and accept the terms of your marriage contract, and that your daughter, Amelia, is the heiress and that Alexander, her husband, is now the holder of the Lovat title and estates.'

She still smiled kindly, but with some steel underneath,

'I did not expect that this would be easy, so I have prepared an affidavit describing the truth of the alleged abduction of young Amelia by Simon, and the truth of my marriage to Simon not being by any means a rape, and the death of my unborn child at your hands. I would rather not use this, but I will if I must.'

He felt the anger rising, and suppressed it as best he could,

'I would drive you out of Scotland before letting you present such evidence.'

She sat up a little straighter, refolded her hands in her lap, and removed all expression from her face,

'I had anticipated that you might threaten me, and have made arrangements that the document will be made public should anything happen to me preventing me from achieving my intention.'

He felt that he was losing control, and needed to get away and compose himself, and well as think through what had been said. He looked at his fob watch and made a regretful face,

'I am sorry, but we will need to continue this another time. I have a meeting with the Secretary of the French Minister of Finance, and I must leave you now. If you wish I will arrange a room for you here?'

She nodded her agreement, and Lord John said that he would send for her belongings from St Germain's.

They met again the next day, and Lord John was very composed and businesslike,

'I have two questions before we discuss what can be done. The first is, do you and Simon have a passionate marriage with a sense of life-long commitment?'

Lady Amelia was puzzled and could not see where this was going, but decided that candour and honesty was for the best,

'I like Simon well enough and think that he would be an excellent chief, and acceptable to the clan. He likes me well enough to have made me pregnant twice, possibly more from a sense of duty than from a great attraction. But we married for the purpose of saving the Clan, not from a grand passion.'

'And for my second question, if you had a choice between saving your marriage or saving your Clan, which would you choose?'

She was again puzzled, as the only way that she could see to save her Clan from the Mackenzies was to establish her marriage to Simon.

'I am not sure that there is that choice. But, hypothetically, I would have to say that we married to save the Clan so the Clan is more important. But now that I am with child from the marriage, I would find that choice more difficult.'

He saw her puzzlement and found that he was starting to warm to his sister, with a glimmering of understanding that their childhood enmity was in good part because she was strong-minded and intelligent. He leant forward, elbows on knees, and explained,

'If we were to consent to your marriage, this would create many problems. I could live with the embarrassment of backing down and being again outwitted by Beaufort, but not without some pain and loss of face and influence. But from the point of view of your Clan, little would change, as Alexander, the husband of your daughter, is now in legal possession, and it would take a legal challenge to change that, regardless of the wishes of the lairds of the Clan. The chance of such a challenge succeeding is not great, because Alexander's father, Sir Roderick Mackenzie, is very high up in legal circles. It may be that a bid to overturn your marriage contract could succeed, but the chances are slim even with my help, and almost none without. It would also probably take some years to resolve.'

'To add to this uncertainty, your child may be a girl and then not a potential heir to Lovat. And you are of an age where having further children may not be possible. Further, if a boy, your husband is a wanted man in Scotland, and it would not be possible for him to challenge the marriage contract without first clearing himself of the outstanding offences. This would be difficult, even with my help. For his part, he has decided that his only chance is to ride on a Jacobite rebellion, which may be years away, if ever, and not of guaranteed success.'

She could see the logic of his argument, but,

'I know that it will be difficult and uncertain, but it is the best that I can do. I cannot just do nothing because it will not be easy. Sometimes determination and perseverance can give luck a chance.'

He sat back and looked at her, appreciative of her determination and commitment, then leant forward again,

'I have made a decision to be your ally. This is partly in recognition of your support for your Clan, and partly so that I may make some amends for having been a part in your difficulties. Causing your miscarriage was unforgivable. My opposition to Beaufort I know see was a mistake and become more a personal feud than sensible politics. This personal animosity blinded me so that I thought that I was protecting you from him. I owe you a deep apology.'

Things were going too fast for her. She had started the dialogue with the determination to force her brother to meet her demands, and now he was offering his support. She looked at him hard, initially with some misgiving that this might be trickery, but became convinced of his sincerity, seeing that although he was a pragmatist little influenced by the niceties of honesty and morality, his depravity had limits, and warmth and loyalty for family and children was also in his nature. She bowed her head slightly in acknowledgement and acceptance of his apology,

'Thank you. At this moment the Clan is most threatened by Mackenzies taking over. I would do whatever is necessary to stop them getting away with it.'

This was not directly referring to the death of her first two boys, but the nuance was there, mirrored by his own uncertainty. He took a deep breath,

'Well then, lets look at practicalities. Sir Roderick's ambition is to start a dynasty and he is working every trick he can to make Lovat over to Mackenzie. He will gradually succeed unless stopped. Beaufort's idea of being a Jacobite leader will not happen in the short term, if at all, so we need to stall Sir Roderick as much as possible, and then see what can be worked out. Regardless of any legal ploys, nothing will work for him unless he either can persuade the lairds to his side, or bring in enforcers.

'If you were to be ensconced as dowager, you could help the lairds maintain a quiet but insistent resistance, while I could act in the background to prevent the use of force, this being a civil matter not a criminal one. I could put an argument to Sir Roderick that you are entitled to a dower house and income, being the widow of the previous chief. He will not like the idea, but I can make it more attractive than the alternative.

'This will give us time, and then we wait and see what happens. It may be that Alexander will become acceptable to the lairds as a chief, particularly when encouraged to be a Fraser by two strong women, your daughter and yourself. It is more probable that there is a son who is raised as a Fraser, and that he is of sufficient character to become accepted. Or it may be that they do not have a surviving male heir, and then the rights return to Beaufort as heir male. Or it may even be that Beaufort is successful in his Jacobite enterprise, and is granted Lovat as a reward. Our job is to help in holding the Clan together in the meantime.'

She came to realise that her brother's success in the political world came not just from force of personality and a strong sense of entitlement, but also from a well-developed ability to think strategically. She saw the sense in his argument, then asked,

'And what of my child?'

He saw that she was grappling with the terrible choice between her child or her Clan. She could maintain her claim to her marriage and stay with Simon in France, essentially

penniless, and with only an uncertain chance of achieving the goal of again being the wife of the Chief, or deny the marriage so that she could return to her Clan, and assist in its survival. Either way her child would be deprived of a proper upbringing. Suddenly she was overwhelmed by the weight of being a noblewoman, with a duty to put dynasty before personal feelings, and found herself weeping. Her brother came and crouched at her side putting an arm around her to give some comfort. When she had recovered some composure, he continued,

'If you choose to be dowager, we will look after your child as a 'love child'. You will give birth here, discretely, and I will arrange a mid-wife and a wet-nurse. Then we will find a family to raise the child and give financial support so that he or she will be provided for, and hopefully given the chance of a reasonable life.'

And so it was. Lord John then had to return to England, as he was in France on a very discrete mission for Queen Anne, communicating with her half-brother James. Queen Anne had been estranged from her father, once King James II, all of her life, but was now the last of the Stuart Monarchs, and had no surviving children. James was then the heir to the Stuart dynasty, even though exiled in France and a Catholic. She commissioned Lord John, Earl of Tullibardine to travel discretely to France and carry news and report back on the character and situation of her brother, then fourteen. Lord John had spent some enjoyable time with the young prince, finding that he still considered himself as the rightful heir to the throne, supported by his advisors at the court of St Germain. A portrait was commissioned and Lord John took this back to his Queen, and gave her his personal description of the young brother.

Queen Anne then requested that Lord John return to France with some tokens of affection and regard, so he was back within a few weeks. A few months later he was rewarded for his able handling of this delicate mission by being elevated as the 1st Duke of Atholl.

In that time Lady Amelia had given birth to a healthy son. This was a difficult time for her, putting her heritage of nobility and fierceness of purpose ahead of caring for her child. With sadness, she left her son with the wet-nurse and travelled back to England with her brother. During that time they became friends. As they stood at the rail of the ketch carrying them across the North Sea from Holland, on an unusually fine day for late February, she asked,

'Had I managed to see Father when I was pregnant the last time, do you think that he might have acknowledged my marriage with Simon?'

Lord John considered for a long moment, forever remorseful over the miscarriage,

'It is hard to know, he has not been well for a long time and has much pain in his belly. This makes him irascible and unpredictable, but it is very possible that his affection for you would have prevailed. On the way to Inverness, you will have to visit him in Dunkeld. He has often asked for you.'

When they reached Dunkeld, Lord John went directly on to Inverness to organise for the dower house, with Lady Amelia to wait until the arrangements were made. She went to visit her father, finding him very ill and weak, heavily dosed with laudanum. He recognised her immediately and was delighted to see her,

'Amelia, it is so good to see you. It has been so long. I have missed you. Is everything sorted out now?'

She took a deep breath,

'Yes Father, everything is now under control, and it is wonderful to see you. I am sorry that I have been away so long, but things were very difficult.'

'Isn't wonderful that your daughter is married to young James. It is so good to have a Murray at the head of Lovat.'

She realised that he was confused, and did not realise that young Amelia had married Alexander Mackenzie, but thought that she had married the son of her cousin. So she smiled and talked of other things, such as the good management of the Atholl estates, and what lovely times she had with him as a child, with memories of favourite walks, Christmases and other things. He tired after a short while, so she squeezed his thin cold hand, kissed him on the forehead and left quietly.

The next day she visited again, and again he was delighted to see her,

'Amelia, it is so good to see you. It has been so long. I have missed you. Is everything sorted out now?'

She smiled warmly at him and talked again about the good times that they had together when she was a child, and how she appreciated being the wife of Lord Lovat, as he had arranged. Again he tired quickly, and she quietly left. The next day he was alternating between delirium and coma, and died a few days later.

Lord John, now 2nd Marquis of Atholl, returned for the funeral and to formally take over the Atholl estates. In truth, he had been in charge for several years due to his father's long illness, so it was very much just a formality.

Lady Amelia moved to her dower house, now officially the Dowager Lady Lovat, and discretely exercised her determination and intelligence to minimise the incursions of the Mackenzies. She enjoyed having a purpose, and being among those that she considered to be her friends and kindred, with some sadness over her infant son in France. With some help from Lord John, and continued determined support from the Lairds, the Fraser Lovat clan managed to stay more or less intact for the next twelve years.

Alexander Mackenzie, now Fraser, was a nice enough young man and tried very hard to be accepted as Chief, but with only limited success, as the Clan generally did not consider him to be one of theirs. They were more ambivalent about his son, Hugh, who was, after all, the grandson of Hugh, 9th Lord Lovat, even though not the heir male.

While there were many highlanders who were staunch Jacobites, and determined that James should return as their King, most were of the philosophy of family first, kin second, clan third, everything else as background. Background being things beyond an individual's power to change, simply requiring adjustment as best one could.

The death of Queen Anne triggered the end of the Stuart dynasty, with Parliament determining George I of Hanover as her successor. This created anger and determination for action amongst the Jacobite supporters in Scotland, leading to the 1715 rebellion. Alexander thought to enhance his standing as Chief and, with some Frasers, assisted in the capture of Inverness for the Jacobites. Unfortunately this rebellion was unsuccessful, and Alexander's title and estates were forfeit in the aftermath.

7. The Imprisoned Father

Simon was feeling his way through the French administration in Paris, and considered that he was making progress in establishing himself as a prime mover in the plans for a return of King James, aided by the French, and in a way that would be to their advantage. He succeeded in achieving a private audience with King Louis IV, the Sun King, who was somewhat taken by this self-proclaimed spokesman for the chiefs of the Highland clans.

He heard about the birth of his son and so visited Amelia and the infant at the Atholl residence. He was uncertain as to how he could handle the situation, and made sure that Tullibardine was absent. He felt immediately that there was a distance between them. Amelia was polite but distant, without a husbandly welcome.

'Good morning. Your son is with his nurse. Would you like to see him?'

When he nodded, she rang a bell from the table next to her to summon her maid, asking her to escort Simon to the nurse. He found the infant busy suckling at the breast of the wet-nurse, looking bonny and healthy, but not interested in his visitor. It was normal practice for noblewomen to use a wet-nurse for their children, it being considered unbecoming for a high-born to indulge in such a practice. It also had an advantage in shortening the period between pregnancies so that there could be more children. He touched a soft cheek and gently stroked the sparse birth hair on the head. This was his son.

The nurse smiled at him, saying, in French,

'He is always hungry. I will help him to grow strong.'

He thanked her for her care and returned to Amelia,

'Now that we are a family, I will arrange for somewhere where we may live. Perhaps at St Germain, although the palace there is in a state of squalor.'

Amelia gestured for him to sit opposite her, and sitting firmly upright herself, hands folded quietly in her lap, her face without expression,

'That will not be necessary. I am returning to Scotland in a few weeks, to become the Lady Dowager and help protect the Clan from Sir Roderick's plans to make his Mackenzie dynasty on Fraser lands.'

'But how can that work? I cannot go to Scotland as I am still a wanted man. As my wife you should not go without me, particularly now that we have a child.'

'I cannot be the Lady Dowager and also your wife, so, in the interests of the Clan, I have decided to no longer be your wife. I am sorry, but if we do nothing and both stay in France Sir Roderick will succeed and Lovat will be Mackenzie. I cannot let that happen.'

Simon was having difficulty controlling his rage, but held himself back,

'But how can we not be married, we have a son to raise? Will you take the child with you back to Scotland? How could you explain him if you deny our marriage?'

'I will go alone and leave my child behind. He has become a love-child and will be looked after in France. He is not the first love-child that a woman has had to leave behind. We will provide for his upkeep and education.'

Simon had a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, and he asked very very calmly,

'Who is 'we'?'

Amelia drew herself up even more upright, and kept her voice level,

'My brother John and I. He has agreed to help me save the Clan, and to provide support for my child.'

Simon could hold himself in no longer, jumping to his feet, shouting as he strode around the room, waving his arms to add more emphasis,

'He has talked you into this abomination! He has persecuted me since the death of my Uncle Hugh, killed my first child and now persuaded you to turn my son into a bastard! And you are willing to sacrifice your child to satisfy his greed to take ownership of Lovat, with the reward of living in comfort at Lovat expense! While I live in poverty as an exile in France!

'It is my decision to put the survival of the Clan first. John has agreed to abandon his claims on Lovat and help me fend off Sir Roderick.'

'This is all Tullibardine trickery! He is a devil and cannot be trusted. I demand that you, as my wife, put all this away from you and come and help raise my son!'

She looked at him, steadily and impassively, until he started towards the door, shouting,

'I will bring Tullibardine down in disgrace and you with him, just watch! And then you will realise his treachery, and we will make do the best that we can!'

He threw open the door, scattering the menservants who were hovering outside just in case they were needed, slammed it so hard that the building shook, then through the front door, leaving it swinging open. In his anger he walked and walked until some of the fire turned to cold resolve.

Amelia sat back and felt her face relax, exhausted by the confrontation, but also with some sadness that she would not be a wife to Simon, and mother to their child. Their brief honeymoon on Eileen Aigas had been marred by her anxiety concerning her father's acceptance of the marriage, but, looking back, Simon had been good company and a caring and considerate husband, and she would likely not get another chance at marital happiness. She took a deep breath and turned her mind away from the might-have-been, focussing on the ways that she could help hold the clan together on her return as the Dowager.

Simon made a plan. He knew that Tullibardine had secretly visited the court at St Germain, although he was not aware of the purpose of the visit, assuming that Tullibardine was playing politics to both sides, just in case the Jacobite cause was successful. He would seek to acquire witness statements and then present them to the government in London to show that Tullibardine was a traitor to the Crown.

He found that the image of his infant son, and memory of the touch, would not leave him, and decided that he could not abandon the child. He wrote to Amelia, saying that he appreciated her position and accepted her decision, at least for now, but would like to care for his son. She replied that she was agreeable and that she and her brother would provide an allowance for his upkeep and education, but on the condition that the arrangement be in strictest confidence.

He was not happy to be receiving financial support from his arch enemy, but the additional funding gave him more freedom to explore the possibilities. Previously, with essentially no income, living hand to mouth from handouts from the Jacobite Court at

St Germain, he was very much tied to following the instructions attached to each amount. Now he could live in some comfort and be free to choose his own path.

He then had to arrange for the christening of his son. France under Louis XIV was fiercely anti-protestant, so he had no choice but to convert to Catholicism. This was good politics anyway, so he did it very openly with a letter to the Pope. He christened his son Simon Archibald; Simon as was proper for his eldest son and possible future chief, and Archibald in honour of his chief mentor, Archibald Campbell, 1st Duke of Argyll. In traditional Gaelic style, and to minimise confusion, the boy was always referred to by his nickname, Archie.

His next task was to find a way of getting his evidence about Tullibardine's visit to St Germain to the English authorities. He succeeded in persuading the powers at St Germain to fund a visit to Scotland to sound out the level of Jacobite support, with support from King Louis. While in London, Simon managed to meet with the Queen's High Commissioner, the Duke of Queensberry, to whom he presented his case, claiming to have irrefutable evidence. Tullibardine had just been elevated to 1st Duke of Atholl, as an expression of gratitude from the Queen for his discrete service in communicating with her half brother, James. The Queen was very upset by the imputations from Queensberry and he was instantly removed from office in disgrace. Tullibardine remained relatively unscathed, certainly not in disgrace as Simon had planned.

His situation was not helped by the sudden death of his old mentor, Archibald Campbell, Duke of Argyll, so he was left without anyone to speak for him at the Palace.

When Simon returned to France, the news of his attempt to disgrace Tullibardine followed him. Providing a report of confidential Jacobite information to the English authorities was clearly an act of treason, and King Louis was asked for him to be executed as a traitor. King Louis was not impressed by the internal politics of St Germain and considered that Simon, as a true representative of the highland clans, might still be useful, so he was exiled to Bourges, about 150 miles south of Paris, and provided with a purse for his maintenance. He was given the freedom of the city but not permitted to leave its precincts. Archie was now over a year old and no longer in need of a wet-nurse.

He was devastated by the failure of his scheme, and that he was now seen as a traitor by both sides. There seemed to be no possibility of him being accepted at St Germain, and a pardon from Queen Anne was clearly impossible.

He decided that his only chance was to gain the support of King Louis, so, in a manic gesture, Simon spent all of the purse in providing a grand party for the people of Bourges, and then asked King Louis for more. The King and his ministers were not impressed and decided that this wild man of the Highlands needed a sharp lesson, so had him moved to the ancient prison at Angoulême, even further from Paris.

This prison was a converted fortress, Le Chatelet, with little comfort but room for apartments for gentlemen. At this time, it was not a prison for criminals, except in the dungeon, but a holding place for French nobles that had fallen out with the establishment, sometimes with mental illness being part of the problem.

Simon was treated with some respect, keeping his servants and still with his young son, but not permitted any contact with the outside world. The financial support from Atholl was enough to provide a little comfort, and the jailers were considerate in minimising the impact on the young boy. After the Queensberry fiasco, Atholl (previously Tullibardine) wrote to Amelia suggesting that it was no longer appropriate to maintain this support, but she wrote back that the purpose of the stipend was to

support her child, and that, from what she had heard, Simon was being punished enough in France, and did not wish this punishment to be also visited on to her child.

Once Simon realised that he had also lost favour with King Louis, he fell into a deep depression, not being able to see any way of establishing his rights or of protecting the Clan. Young Archie was a bright and active toddler, and soon became everyone's favourite, helping to bring some light into lives otherwise gloomy and hopeless. His birthdays became a celebration for the whole prison.

Simon had some social contact with the other inmates, and with the superintendent of the prison, but remained depressed, telling his young son of his rightful place in the world and how he had been cheated. Archie was too young to understand but his natural affection for his father was a comfort.

After Archie's fourth birthday, the superintendent suggested to his superiors that this was not a suitable place to raise a child, who needed education and the company of other children. He was also concerned that at least one of the inmates was displaying grooming behaviour towards the young lad, whose naturally affectionate nature could be misunderstood. It took a few months, but the order came through for a move to Saumur, a large town on the River Loire that had once been a thriving Huguenot centre, but was now in a state of poverty since King Louis' removal of the rights of Protestants, leading to mass migrations of the middle classes, many to England. Simon had the freedom of the town, but was not permitted to leave without a pass.

Archie was fortunate in his father finding a tutor of great capability and with a substantial library. Monsieur Pierre Fresnau had been a lecturer at l'Académie de Saumur, formerly a Huguenot university of renown until closed down under the orders of King Louis. M'sieur Pierre, as an elderly widower, did not choose to leave his wife's grave nor his library, and had no ambitions for a new life, so did not join the emigration. He lived quietly, not publicly supporting or practising his religion, and provided tutoring for a few children in the town.

Archie's first language was French, closely followed by English, with a smattering of Gaelic. He was an avid student and became proficient in written Latin, French and English. The world of knowledge was opened up for him by M'sieur Pierre's knowledge and library.

Simon was not really accepted by the townsfolk, being both a prisoner and a stranger from another place and culture. He tried to re-establish a connection with the Jacobites at St Germain, only to be rebuffed.

There were times, particularly when maudlin after an extra glass of wine, that he would tell Archie stories of his childhood in Fraser country, and of his many kinfolk. Also that he was the rightful chief of the highland Frasers and hoped to one day return and reclaim his inheritance. Archie dreamed that he would then be the son of the Chief, reunited with his mother, and at last be part of a family. Some days when he saw children with their mothers, having brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, he ached for an escape from his solitary life.

8. The Return and Rejection

Hearing of the death of Sir Roderick Mackenzie, Simon sent letters to the Fraser Lairds, expressing his desire to be their Chief once more. The Clan was not supportive of

their imported chief, Alexander of Fraserdale, and sent Major James Fraser of Castleleathers to Saumur to persuade their real chief to come home. Simon was hesitant, not wishing expose himself to the possible consequences of breaking his parole, but was finally persuaded after the Jacobite Pretender made it clear that Simon would never be accepted as the Fraser Chief. He was never to be forgiven for interfering with the discrete communications between James and his half-sister, Queen Anne.

Then events turned to Simon's advantage, with the death of Queen Anne and the Parliamentary selection of King George I of Hanover as the new sovereign leading to outrage in Scotland and a revival of Jacobite feelings.

Simon and his party, including Archie, now eleven years old, arrived in London, but were unable to go to Scotland as Simon was still a wanted man and it was necessary to arrange for a pardon from King George, or at least a pass from the authorities. Simon explained to Archie that he could not be acknowledged as his son until things were straightened out with his mother, and that he was to pretend to be Simon's servant. Archie had no choice but to accept the situation and continued his solitary life, escaping into whatever books he could find.

After many months, Simon and his party, including his little French boy who was his servant, managed to travel first to Edinburgh, then by boat, getting as far as Fraserburgh, on the south entrance to Moray Firth, with a fierce westerly preventing them getting closer to Inverness. This was fortuitous as Inverness had just been taken over by the Jacobite rebels. After years of imprisonment and exile, his luck finally changed, and he was ready to take full advantage. With the west wind on one's side, anything can happen.

During Simon's long absence, the Lovat estates were claimed by young Amelia's husband, Alexander Mackenzie, and his father, Sir Roderick Mackenzie. They had a son Hugh, who was touted as the Master of Lovat. Sir Roderick, a lawyer, used all the legal ploys at his disposal to establish his dynasty as having the rights of Lovat, with opposition from the Clan. The Dowager, with background assistance from her brother, now 1st Duke of Atholl, worked to sustain the Fraser Clan, and not let it become a cadet branch of the Mackenzies.

Young Alexander did his best to be the Chief, but was not generally accepted because he was not a Fraser, and changing his name to Fraser of Fraserdale was more of an insult. The rebellion was an opportunity for him to establish his chiefly credentials, and he gathered a force of Fraser clansmen in support of King James III and VIII, joining the rebel forces in Perth.

Simon, having just escaped from being a prisoner, was more interested in his Clan than in the Jacobites who had treated him so poorly. So he called for clansmen to relieve Inverness, with many of those who had gone with Alexander now coming to his side. In true clan tradition, Inverness was lost and won with much show, but very few lives lost, and those essentially accidentally.

With overwhelming support from the Clan, he returned to Castle Dounie, sending the daughter Amelia and her children to a farmhouse, and set about establishing his rights to the Lovat estates. Then he went to visit Amelia, Dowager Lady Lovat, at her dower house, taking Archie to meet his mother.

She kept them waiting at the door for a good time, and when they were ushered into her presence, finding her sitting upright with hands folded in her lap. She nodded to Simon and smiled at Archie, gesturing that they should sit down. Simon performed a formal introduction,

'I would like to present Simon Archibald, our son, whom I have raised as best I could in the circumstances.'

Archie looked at his father with surprise, he had not ever been called Simon before. He turned to Amelia and, stuttering a little in discomfort,

'Enchanté, Madam!'

He had planned to say 'Ma Mère' but his courage failed him. Simon continued, still in a formal manner,

'We have had many hard times, but he is healthy and well educated, speaks but little Gaelic, but is literate in Latin, English and French, with a wide knowledge of literature and ancient culture. I would like that we can continue to raise him together and resume our marriage.'

Amelia looked down, and then reached for a small bell on the table beside her, and gave it a brief tinkle. A maid came in.

'Millie, will you take this young man to the kitchen, and ask cook to give him something special? We have some things to discuss.'

Archie looked at his father, not wanting to leave, but Simon gave a nod, and Archie got up and followed the maid. Amelia had been steeling herself for this moment since hearing that Simon had a young French boy with him, knowing that it could only be their son. She and her brother had been sending money for his upkeep for twelve years, and she had some sparse reports on his progress, but never expected to see him again. She looked at Simon, with some sadness,

'We have never been married. We thought that we were for a time, but it was not valid without the approval of my father.'

'But we were married twice, and once in a church with witnesses!'

'There is no record of those events, they have been removed, and the witnesses are no longer with us.'

'Why are you denying your son?'

She spoke very calmly and quietly,

'I had a choice. Either to stay in France with you, in poverty and exile, while the Clan was taken over by Mackenzie, or to return to Scotland and persuade my brother to help protect the Clan. The Clan would not still be Fraser if it were not for our efforts. I supported the idea of sending for you to return, even though it meant betraying the interests of my daughter and grandson, because it was what the Clan wanted and the best way of thwarting Mackenzie.'

'But your evil brother had me arrested in London, presumably to stop me getting to Scotland, or at least hang me if I did.'

'He will never forgive you for using his visits to St Germain to try and disgrace him through Queensberry. Up to then I had thought that it might be possible to negotiate your return much sooner. But as soon as I heard of your arrest in London, I wrote to John and asked him to back off, explaining that your return was the wish of the Clan, and therefore my wish also.'

Simon made a rueful face,

'I mightily wish that I had known that he was on the Queen's business. I managed to betray both the Queen and King James at the same time, even though they were supposedly opposed to each other.'

Amelia shrugged, as if to say that the past was history,

'I could not become Dowager without denying our marriage, and so it is dead, and has been these last thirteen years. It cannot be revived. So our son cannot be legitimate, and cannot stay in Scotland.'

Simon stood up, much agitated,

'So Archie becomes the victim of our intrigues. I raised him with the hope that one day he would rejoin the Clan.'

'Not a victim, but, yes, a casualty, of circumstances and politics, and our mistakes, through no fault of his own. We will have to do what we can to support him.'

'But then he will be an orphan, without mother or father, or any other family for that matter.'

Amelia paused, looking down at her hands, then looking directly at Simon,

'You could go back to France with him.'

'And then what would happen to the Clan?'

'Precisely. I had to make my decision whether to put the Clan first at the time of his birth. Now it is your turn to make your decision.'

Simon sat down, putting his head in his hands, mourning over what he had to do, but not seeing any alternative. If he insisted on making Archie's parentage known he would put Amelia into disgrace, then making the possibility of Archie becoming the heir to Lovat all the more difficult, as well as re-igniting the enmity of Atholl. He had just had a heady time as Chief, leading his highlanders and rejoicing in their loyalty. He had to put them first.

Amelia felt for him and respected his caring, also wishing that there was another answer, and trying to soften the blow,

'I will write to my brother and ask him to help with a pardon and the restoration of the estates to your name.'

'Why will he help, if I have alienated him so much?'

'He owes me. He will always owe me.'

Simon looked at Amelia with a distraught expression,

'How will we tell Archie? Perhaps I should do it later.'

'No, I will tell him myself, as it is I who have let him down.'

And she rang the small bell and asked the maid to bring in the young man. Archie came in with some eagerness, looking forward to spending more time with his mother, but something in her expression stopped him,

'I am sorry but I cannot acknowledge you as my son, because I am not married to your father. At one time we thought we were married, but that was a mistake.'

He did not understand what she was saying, totally bewildered by the turn of events. She continued, gently but firmly,

'This means that you will not be able to stay here in Scotland, but will have to return to France. We will see that you are well provided for, and you have my very best wishes that you find a good life.'

He stood, open mouthed, as the meaning of these words sunk in. Then, with desperation in his voice,

'What do you mean? Cannot you get married now?'

Neither of his parents had thought of this possibility. They looked at each other, and both ruefully shook their heads, and looked back at Archie, who took a deep breath and continued,

'So I have spent my life on prison, dreaming of the day that I could be with the Clan and part of a family, and now you tell me that this is not possible. I am your family. Does that not count for something?'

His parents sat there, not knowing what to say, so he shouts at his mother,

'I hate you! I hate you! You are just a horrible old woman! You cannot be my mother!', and ran from the room.

Simon and Amelia sat in silence for a few minutes, each thinking their own thoughts. The Amelia said,

'Yes, I am a horrible old woman. But if I had not put the Clan first, there would likely now be no clan for you to lead.'

Simon found that he was not really surprised that Amelia had rejected his offer to resume the marriage. He never really considered it as other than a possibility, but he could not have just abandoned his son to foster parents. He mused that there was always a gulf between a clansman, putting family and kin first, and a noblewoman, putting duty first. There was nothing more to be said. He stood up, bowed farewell to Amelia and walked steadily from the room.

Amelia sat alone and sad, mourning the departure of her only living son, and remembering the few moments that she had had with him. Sad moments, and the only ones that she was to have. But how could she have done otherwise?

Archie ran and ran and ran. He found himself at the River Beaully and ran upstream along its steep bank, through the woodlands, never to know that the trees were oak, elm, pine and alder, following the faint deer tracks through the bracken. His breathe came in gasps, he was scratched by branches, sweat getting into his eyes. Eventually he stopped and went down to the river's edge. Looking up the hill he could see the roofs of Castle Dounie through the trees, and realised that he had run back, with his path along the winding river being much longer than by road.

He looked down at the river, rushing past, and thought to throw himself in and be swept down and out to sea, perhaps with his body to be later found by a fisherman. He wondered how his parents would react; knowing that his father would be distraught and depressed for a time, but that the irrepressible need to be respected would bring him back to his life of intrigue; thinking that his mother would be sad, but still firm in her course of life. His death would not have a great effect.

Archie did not have his father's need for recognition, nor his sense of entitlement, and felt that he had perhaps inherited his mother's steadfastness and determination. He remembered how she had sat upright and indomitable.

Then, talking to the river,

'I have not been lucky with my parentage. have I?' The river murmured its reply in its timeless way.

Looking deep into the swirling eddies, he uttered the words that were to become the motto of his life,

'Je survivrai, malgré tout.' (*I will survive, despite everything*)

He turned up the bank, with the river sound and the sight of the trees, bracken and deer trails to be a forever memory, believing that he was never to return. He made his way up to the road leading to the castle and stood in the afternoon sun, waiting for his father to return.

Simon rode up shortly, leading the second horse by its reins, and saw Archie standing straight, reminding him of Amelia, and knew that this 13 year old was no longer a boy. He dismounted and embraced his son, with a scant formal embrace in return, stepped back and said,

'We will go to London.'

9. The Servant in London

It took a few days to organise, with Simon and his retinue, including Archie, then setting off to take passage on a small ship to Edinburgh, and thence to London.

On the way to Inverness, they stopped for a meeting with the Clan gentlemen at Bunchrew, on the southern shore of Beaully Firth, to discuss strategies for the future and the expectations from the visit to London. Archie was not part of the proceedings and went off on his own. He sat on the shoreline and saw a vast expanse of mud, with some lumps of seaweed. He had read about tidal waves as described by Greek historian Herodotus, in the Thereau library in Saumur; about how the water first receded leaving the seabed bare, with fish flapping helplessly; the vast wave to then come sweeping in, causing destruction and death.

The thought was terrifying and he ran to the house. There was a group of young men socialising around the back door, and he excitedly tried to explain in his mixture of English, Gaelic and French that they should all run for the hills. The young men were primarily gaelic speakers and had difficulty in understanding what Archie was saying. Eventually one of them caught on and explained that it was just the tide, happening twice every day, and that the full moon made the tidal movement even greater. The young men looked at each other with raised eyebrows, amazed at this strange boy who did not know about tides, and returned to their socialising.

Archie, feeling deeply humiliated, returned to the shore line and watched the tide come racing in over the flats; no wave, just an advancing edge of water. He took a deep breath, accepting a little more that he had never been a highlander, only in his dreams, and that he was an alien in the land of his forefathers. 'Je survivrai.'

They had quick but rough passage from Inverness to Edinburgh, helped by a stiff nor'wester. Archie found again that he enjoyed the rough and tumble of the sea and wind, allowing him to momentarily leave his troubles behind. Simon was seasick and miserable, while Archie stood on deck balancing with the motion of the ship. The skipper noticed how well Archie was handling the conditions and jokingly offered him a position on the crew.

They spent a few days in Edinburgh as Simon attempted to remake some old contacts. He had an uncertain reception and it was clear that his situation needed to be clarified by the visit to London.

This voyage was much pleasanter with a gentle nor'easter and Simon gathered his strength for the political tasks ahead. He was successful, first in getting a Royal pardon setting aside the Athol indictments, and secondly in being granted the rights to the

Lovat Estates. His claim to the title of Lord Lovat was challenged, until finally settled many years later.

All of this, including his now being a de facto peer, required frequent visits to London, so he set up a residence not too far from Whitehall, at least in part as a place for Archie to live. He employed a housekeeper, a Fraser widow with two small children, with Archie being the only other servant except when Simon was in town with his retinue.

Archie tried to fit into London life, finding a tutor to help continue his education. He was particularly interested in arithmetic and mathematics, finding solace in the precision of numbers. He looked for an apprentice position with a merchant so that he could learn the arts of commerce, but his strange background as a highlander with a French accent made this difficult. The French were deeply distrusted in England, after generations of warfare between the two nations.

On one of Simon's visits, after Archie had been in London for nearly two years, Simon became very ill and in his delirium thought that he was dying, so felt the need to write an emotional letter to the Clan, but, finding himself incapable of holding the pen, asked Archie to take dictation. The delirium made this difficult as Simon kept losing track of what he was trying to say, but Archie persevered, making notes and then preparing a final draft for approval. Simon approved the draft and managed to append his signature, but then asked Archie to add a postscript saying that the letter had been dictated to "the little French boy who is my servant". The letter was sealed and sent to Beaufort.

The next day the fever broke, and Simon recovered over the following week to being close to his normal self. Archie approached him and said,

'I found it difficult to write that I was your servant.' Simon was confused as his memory of the time of delirium was not clear, so Archie explained and showed him his copy of the letter.

'But I have never treated you like a servant, have I?'

'Non, mon père, you have not, but everybody else does.'

'How do you mean?'

'In the eyes of the world I am your servant, not your son. If I am to be myself, I think that I need to live my own life.'

Simon looked closely at his son and saw the depth of his distress, asking him what he would like to do.

'I have not been able to fit in with Londoners, I am too different. I have tried to find opportunity here, but my French accent counts against me and I have no family to vouch for me. I am not permitted to go to Scotland. I have spent most of my life in France, but even there I am a foreigner. There is nowhere that I feel that I belong.'

He paused and looked at his father, seeing the concern in his eyes, but knowing that there was no easy answer. Simon, after all, was newly married with a pregnant wife, sensibly hoping for a son that could be a legitimate heir.

'I would like to go back to Saumur and see if I can find a life there.'

Their eyes met in mutual regard and affection. They had survived many years together in difficult places, but there was no escaping the present situation.

'I am deeply sorry that things have not worked out better for you,' said Simon, 'But I cannot see any way of making it different. You will always be my son to me and I will support you as best I can. What do you plan to do in Saumur.'

‘I am not sure, but I would first like to see Professor Joseph again and study more. I thought to be a soldier, but cannot see how to do that in France or England. Perhaps I will exercise my mathematics to learn accountancy and become useful in the world of commerce.’

Simon sat in thought, then, ‘I will get Stuart to travel with you and help you get established, and provide you with enough money, and then I will arrange a small income for as long as necessary. I wish that I could do more. Your situation is not your fault, but it is at least partly mine.’

He pondered further, ‘I will give you a letter to Professor Joseph expressing my support and asking him to assist in your future. I will also write to the Marquise de la Frézelière to tell her of your plans and ask her to keep an eye on you. You remember that their country residence is near Saumur. It is a pity that the Marquis is no longer with us as I expect that he would have been actively supportive.’

A few days later he saw them onto a small ship to cross the Channel, with tears in his eyes as he might never see his son again, having raised him from infancy. A determined fifteen-year-old setting out to make his way as best he may, but still a boy, not yet a man. As the ship was pushed away from the dock into the Thames’ run-out tide, Archie was standing at the bow, tall and straight, again reminding Simon of the mother, that horrible old woman.

On the other hand, Simon was relieved that Archie was going to be far away. There are few secrets in a clan, and there were those who still viewed Archie as his rightful heir, holding that his first marriage was valid, and willing to use this story as a way to diminish his chieftainship.

10. The Years in France

The journey to Saumur was complicated but uneventful, made easier by the peace agreement between France and England, so it was no longer necessary to take a route through Holland. They were favoured by a gentle norwesterly, easing them out through the Thames estuary and then reaching south down the Channel to Le Havre. The conditions were, if anything, too mild for Archie, who was anxious to be getting on with his life and some rough weather would have taken his mind off things.

From Le Havre they bought two nondescript horses for the four or five day ride to Saumur. When they arrived they found that the Professor was terminally ill, bedridden and incontinent, but still with enough mental capacity to be totally embarrassed and depressed by his helplessness, simply wanting to die and angry that his wish was being slow to be granted. Not having any relatives still in France, his neighbours were doing what they could, but his house was a mess. Archie moved in, sleeping on a couch in the parlour, and did what he could to look after his old mentor. In between times, he immersed himself in the Professor’s library.

He persuaded Stuart that there was no need for him to stay in France and that he should return to London, giving him a letter for Simon explaining the situation but reassuring him that all was under control.

A few months later, the Professor was finally granted his wish and slipped away in his sleep. He was quietly buried with his wife in the abandoned and unkempt Huguenot graveyard, without official religious ceremony, but words of remembrance and blessing were said over his coffin before the internment.

Archie could no longer stay in the Professor's house and moved to lodgings in the town. He was kindly treated, both from being remembered as a young boy and from respect for the care he gave to the Professor. He borrowed a horse and rode to the country residence of the Marquise de la Frézelière to ask for her advice. She now lived mostly in the country, finding Paris too difficult since her husband's untimely death, and she enjoyed the simple rural life. Her son and daughter remained in Paris and raised their families.

She received him kindly, as the son of a good friend, albeit his lovechild.

'Welcome Archie. And how is your father?'

Archie explained that his father was well and finally achieving the chieftainship that he believed was his right and destiny. He knew that his father corresponded with the Marquise so did not consider that he had to give her all the news, such as of his new marriage.

'You are welcome to stay here, Archie, but it is very quiet and a long ride from town, so perhaps may not be suitable for you.'

'Thank you, My Lady, but I more came to ask your advice as to what I should do next,' Archie replied, 'I had originally planned to continue my studies with Professor Joseph, but now that he is gone, I am at a loss.'

'You would like to continue your education?'

'Yes, I need to learn to have a career of some kind so that I can lead my own life. My father has a new life, necessarily without me, so I have to find my own way.'

She asked some more questions, about his financial situation and what his interests were.

'I would like to think on this. Perhaps we could talk again in the morning.'

The next morning they sat together in the parlour of the country house, filled with old furniture.

'I have thought over your situation,' said the Marquise, 'and have had some discussions with my staff. And while you are welcome here, you would basically become a servant of the house, and I am sure that that is not what you want.'

She looked at him for confirmation, and he nodded.

'So it must be Saumur, with education a part of the plan. As you are only fifteen and without a family, it would be difficult for you to find a way of living and attend a normal school. I think that we have to consider the best way for you until you are eighteen. Then you can perhaps go to Paris and find further education and opportunity there.'

'We think that perhaps the best option is the Oratory. You will be able to live there and they provide some basic education for children and also teach theology.'

Archie knew something of the Oratory from his childhood, as being a community refuge run by a secular Catholic order, providing housing for the impoverished, abandoned women, the insane and orphans. They also ran a theological college, originally set up as a challenge to the Huguenot movement. The Professor, despite being a Huguenot himself, had expressed respect for their dedication to the community and, to a lesser extent, to their erudition.

Archie wryly acknowledged to himself that he could be considered to be an orphan, for the want of a better description. The possibility that he might learn from a college of theology was not unattractive.

‘Yes, My Lady, I think that would be satisfactory. There does not seem to be any other choice. Looking for lodgings with a family so that I could go to a local school would be difficult, and the school may not allow me entrance, seeing as I am a foreigner.’

The Marquise became very businesslike, ‘That is settled then. I will write to Sieur Bernard, who is the director of the Oratory, and ask him to take you in. And I will send a donation to the order to make it difficult for him to refuse, even though, as you say, you are a foreigner.’

‘I will also write to Lord Simon and ask him to send a regular donation whilst you are there, just to make sure that you are properly looked after.’

The next day, Archie rode back to Saumur with a letter for his father, to be delivered to the wine merchant for forwarding to England, and a donation and letter for The Oratory. He was neither happy nor sad, just determined.

Sieur Robert Bernierd, Frère Robert to his charges, was well respected in Saumur, having been raised in the Oratory and spent his life caring for the unfortunate in the local community, and now the senior member of the organisation, but not of the Theological College, which had its own hierarchy. Frère Robert had met with Simon during his town arrest, and they had discussed spiritual matters with many viewpoints in common, also knowing of Archie and hearing about the rumours of a complex marriage situation leading to him becoming a lovechild. It was clear that the marriage had not been by Catholic clergy, and so was not considered to be valid in France. Frère Robert was also aware that Archie had been tutored by Professor Théreau, and that this education was likely to be at least partly beyond strict church guidelines.

However, the Oratory was going through a difficult time with funding becoming increasingly difficult, at least in part because the learned brothers of the Theological College had become influenced by the Jansenist schism within the Church, and the Bishop of the Diocese of Angers was determined to support the orthodox teachings of Rome.

Frère Robert read the Marquise’s letter, weighing the donation in his hand and knowing how useful it would be in putting food on tables and clothes on backs. It was not usual for the Oratory to have students paying board, as its main business was supporting the destitute. He looked at the boy sitting opposite him, sitting firmly upright and looking down at his hands gently folded in his lap, and could see intelligence and determination. He thought that he could see how to make this work,

‘Simon, sorry, Archie,’ he corrected himself remembering that no-one used Archie’s first name, ‘I will be happy if you come and live with us. You are too young to enrolled in the College, but, if you are happy to help in teaching the children, I will arrange that you can do some courses at the College.’

‘I would be happy with such an arrangement. What will I be expected to teach?’

‘We try to teach our young children how to read and write, French of course, not Latin.’

Archie fitted into his new life as best he could. He found the teaching to be very hard work, as these were orphans who had no real interest in becoming literate as they could not see how it would make their lives any the less miserable. From their perspective they were locked into a world with no choices under their control, with the range of

possibilities ranging from rural slavery, through being a beggar, to various levels of crime. Frère Robert helped him understand the business of teaching, himself finding a paternal interest in his intelligent young assistant.

He accepted that his permission to attend courses at the College was on the understanding that he was studying for the priesthood. He was not totally committed to that thought, but considered it as a possibility. Frère Robert also discussed the theological studies. He himself was not entangled in the Jansenist activities, having long accepted that his role in life was to simply be a faithful servant of the church, taking comfort in the certainty of faith.

He wrote to his father every few months telling him briefly of his life, and, in return, Simon continued to send donations.

The Professor's house stood empty. There were many empty houses in Saumur following the mass exodus of the Huguenots, as there were also empty shops and workplaces. A few had been successfully sold, but there were not enough buyers so many remained empty or became the domain of squatters.

The parish priest of St Peter's Church, one of several in Saumur, was ambitious and looking for ways to impress his immediate superior, the Bishop of the Diocese of Angers, who was known for his conservative views and intolerance of any teachings not strictly according to Rome. So the priest arranged for a mass burning of heretical books in the Place Saint-Pierre, in front of his church. His main source of material was from the Professor's library. While there were a few Jansenist and Calvinist tracts in the collection, in truth most of it was collections from classic history, many translated into Latin from the original Greek or from Arabic, and then printed. The Professor had forgone many luxuries to pay for this collection, his love of knowledge being his only remaining solace.

With due ceremony he set light to the pile and delivered a powerful sermon about the evils of heresy, and that God's way was the only true way. He had a few avid supporters who cheered, but the huge crowd that he had envisaged did not materialise. There was a small group of townspeople soberly surveying the conflagration, mostly mourning the passing of a fine gentleman who had been part of their community all their lives.

Archie heard that the burning was to take place, and immediately regretted that he had not hidden away some of the books that were special to him. He made his way to the square, but stayed hidden in a side street, both from considering his position at the Oratory, and because he might otherwise be overwhelmingly tempted to rush into the flames. The memory of the feel of Euclid's Elements of Geometry came to his hands like a physical presence.

He felt a great sense of outrage that these sources of knowledge had been so wantonly destroyed, as well as feeling that he had betrayed the memory of his tutor and mentor.

Frère Robert noticed that his protege was deeply upset, and guessed the cause. He thought the action of the parish priest was unnecessarily political and an expression of ambition rather than faith, but did not discuss it with Archie, not wishing to disturb him further.

After Archie had been at the Oratory for two years, the Bishop finally lost patience with the Jansenists ensconced at the Theological College and, with approval from his Archbishop, closed the College, requiring that all those students studying to be priests

move to the Seminary of Angers, providing, of course, that they could demonstrate that they had not been spiritually contaminated.

Now Archie was without educational opportunities, and wrote to his father expressing his frustration at being simply an assistant teacher in an orphanage, and asking for help in finding a better situation.

Simon wrote to the Marquise de la Frézelière asking that she discuss the situation with Sieur Bernierd. She made the short journey to the Oratory and wrote back that Sieur Bernierd had assured her that he would continue to look after Archie as best he could. The Marquise was somewhat disappointed that Simon was not brave enough to acknowledge his son, gently emphasising the lovechild aspect of Archie's situation, aware that Simon suffered remorse and himself wished that it could be otherwise.

Sieur Bernierd, on his part, had developed an almost paternal affection for Archie and knew that it was time to discuss the future for this seventeen-year-old, knowing that this would lead to Archie leaving the Oratory. This would also mean the loss of the donations from Simon, which would lead to increased hardship for all those dependent on the Oratory, but he thought it possible that the Diocese would be more generous after the purging of the College. In any event he was accustomed to doing the best possible with whatever resources were available, and the idea of manipulating Archie in order to retain the donations was repugnant.

'Archie, we need to discuss your future. One option is that you continue your theological studies and become a priest. I could write a letter of recommendation to the Seminary of Angers, if that is what you wish.'

Archie looked down at his hands, and then directly at Frère Robert, with an expression of some anguish on this face,

'Professor Joseph was a good man, and taught me many things, including Latin and, more importantly, the love of learning. His library was foremost a place of knowledge, not of heresy.'

'I take it that this means that you do not wish to be a priest?' Archie moved his hands and shoulders in agreement and apology. To become a Catholic priest would be an act of disloyalty to the memory.

Although this was as he expected, Sieur Bernierd gave a small sigh of regret, then,

'The next suggestion would then be that you go to Paris to continue your education. There are few opportunities in Saumur. It is still suffering from the loss of so many citizens.'

'My thought is that we could discuss this with the Marquise. She has contacts and family in Paris and perhaps can help. I expect that the donations that your father has kindly given over the past two years could become an allowance for your upkeep while studying. In addition, I have got some of the money aside, just in case, and this should be enough to get you established in Paris, and to let your father know where you can be contacted.'

The Marquise was very generous and welcomed him as a guest in her house for a few days. But Archie knew that this was because of her friendship with Simon, doing what she could for his lovechild, and that this was not a way towards building his own life.

The Marquise's youngest son Hilarion, was going through officer training as a cadet in Paris, so she wrote to him asking that he help Archie find his feet. Archie thanked her but knew that Hilarion would only be doing as little as he could to satisfy his mother,

having much more important things to do, establishing himself in the military, both as an officer and with social standing.

So Archie travelled to Paris, determined to make his own way, hopefully with some continuing financial support from his father. He found Paris much easier than London, even though he still spoke French with a slight foreign accent. An explanation that his family came from Scotland was enough to get him accepted without suspicion.

He found lodgings in a boarding house and set out to find educational opportunities. He explored the possibility of studying accountancy and discretely attended some lectures, carefully dressing in a manner similar to the other students, mostly being sons of bureaucrats doing their preliminary training to follow in their father's footsteps. Archie understood that he had little chance of being accepted within French bureaucracy, having no family contacts and not being acknowledged as a French citizen. The subject matter of the few lectures that he attended was also directed to governmental procedures, whereas his interest was towards commercial accounting.

He found some basic texts, and the precision of the double-entry procedure was to his liking. He then approached merchants to find an opportunity to learn more, perhaps as an apprentice. After many attempts, his proposal was finally accepted by a clothier specialising in military fabrics, supplying the manufacturers of army uniforms. He was employed on trial as an apprentice, which meant that he had to pay, nominally for the training. He was luckier than some of the other apprentices in having an independent income so that he could maintain his lodgings, and not sleep under a work-bench.

The clothier was delighted to find that Archie was not only literate but also had a good head for arithmetic and some understanding of the basics of accounting, and so put him directly under the control of his chief clerk.

The chief clerk considered himself to be superior to the workers in the warehouse and cutting room, and did not start work before dawn as they did, but sometimes worked late into the night if the work demanded it.

This allowed Archie time to stop for a pastry at a small patisserie on the way to work, considering himself quite the gentleman. The patisserie was crowded at this hour, and, queuing not being an French custom, there was a degree of jostling as the customers tried to attract the attention of the counter staff. On several occasions Archie noticed a young woman, not very tall and of slender build, who was easily pushed aside by those customers who were in more of a hurry. On one occasion, she was just in front of him and he helped her get to the counter, so they started to converse.

Over the weeks that followed they fell into the habit of waiting for each other so that they could make their way to the counter together, continuing their conversation. Eventually they got to the stage of exchanging names; Archie Fraser meeting Marie de Beaufort. He was startled by her name because his father had always said that he was a Fraser of Beaufort, and asked where she came from.

'I was born and raised in Paris', she said, and then, quickly looking to see that no-one was listening, and so quietly that he had to stoop down, 'But my family came from Anjou. And you?'

'I was also born in Paris, but my parents are Scottish. I spent much of my childhood in Saumur.'

When he mentioned Saumur, she again looked around nervously, saying quietly that they should continue their conversation outside. He could see that she was nervous and not sure whether to trust him.

‘Who did you know in Saumur?’

‘I lived with my father, but I had a wonderful tutor, Professor Th reau, who taught me many things.’

‘I have heard of him. Is he not a Huguenot?’

‘Yes, he was a Huguenot, but has died.’

Marie seemed to be getting agitated,

‘I had heard that all the Huguenots from Saumur had emigrated.’

‘Professor Joseph was old, had no children, a wife’s grave to tend and a library, so he chose to stay.’

Archie apologised for having to leave, but he had to get to work. They agreed to meet again the next morning. This time Marie walked with him to work so that they may have longer to talk.

‘Did you find it difficult with the Professor being a Huguenot?’, she asked, rather shyly.

‘I didn’t know in the beginning. And he was a really good gentle old man. It was a bit difficult when he was dying, and afterwards the parish priest burned the books from his library, even though they were mostly Greek and Roman classics.’

She looked behind her as they walked, and said quietly, ‘I am a Huguenot too. I hope that I can trust you.’

Archie found that he was not surprised. He had sensed something of her difference and isolation.

Over the next few days, he learned that she was staying in Paris to look after her maternal grandmother, who was too old and frail to travel to London with the rest of the family. Marie’s parents had died and she was supported by her uncle, who had gone to London with his wife and children, leaving her in Paris, being the eldest of the grandchildren. She was nervous of her situation and lived very quietly, trying not to draw any attention to herself.

Over the following weeks they became friends, spending some time together on Sundays, with Marie teasing Archie a little about not going to mass.

He met the grandmother, who was very frail, both in body and mind. They lived in a two-room apartment on the second floor, and it was clear that the old lady had not left her bed for some time, with Marie looking after all her needs, feeding her and dealing with the excretions.

Then one day she was not at the patisserie. He thought that maybe she was not well or had other things to do. The same the following day, and he started to be a little worried, so detoured on his way from work to check on the apartment. It was a cold, windy and rainy night. There was no answer when he knocked on the door, and when he walked around to the side of the building he could see no lights in the apartment windows. He did not know what to think, and felt bereft that she had gone somewhere without letting him know.

However, the next morning she was waiting for him at the patisserie, looking stressed and worried. His heart leapt, but was quickly concerned. She took him aside.

‘My grandmother has died, and now I need to get to London,’ she said, with a pleading look, ‘Can you help me? I do not see how I can do it on my own.’

Their eyes met and he knew that he would do whatever he could to help her. He asked some questions and learned that the old lady had died peacefully in her sleep, had been quietly buried next to her husband and a daughter who had died young, in the unkempt Huguenot cemetery. Arranging this had taken nearly all the money that she had, and now she had a small chest of family treasures to take to her uncle in London.

‘Where are you staying now?’ he asked.

‘The family below our apartment are sheltering me, which is very kind of them, and it is very crowded. I cannot stay long with them because harbouring a Huguenot puts them at risk.’

He thought quickly over the possibilities.

‘I will come and get you this afternoon, and you must stay with me tonight. Then we will leave together for London in the morning.’

‘Are you sure that will be alright?’

He took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, and smiled down at her, ‘Oui, nous survivrons, malgré tout.’

‘Be ready to come with me.’

She nodded, and he set off to talk to his employer. As he walked through the door of the workshop, the clothier was waiting for him.

‘I hear that the old lady has died,’ he said with a kind smile, ‘and now the granddaughter must go to London. And I expect that you would go with her.’

Archie’s jaw dropped, ‘How did you know?’

‘I hear the gossip, and believe some of it. You are young and not without courage. Perhaps you are in love, or nearly so.’

‘I am sorry, master, to be letting you down,’ Archie stammered, ‘But you are right and I must go.’

‘You have nearly finished four years of your apprenticeship. Another year and you would be qualified. If you leave now it will all be wasted, and I cannot imagine that a letter of reference from a small Paris clothier will be of much use in London. You have done good work for me, and thank you. I will be sorry to see you go.’

He bought his left hand from behind his back, holding a small bag, ‘Here is a part refund of your apprentice fees. It is not enough to get you both to London, but may help along the way. Good luck, my friend, travel gently.’

Now they both had tears in their eyes. Archie nodded wordlessly. They shook hands for the first and only time, and Archie left.

His next call was to his landlady at the boarding house, explaining that he would be leaving in the morning to go to London, and asking her if she could accommodate a young woman for the night.

She also replied that she had heard that the old lady had died, and that Marie would have to go to London, saying that she was glad that Archie would be looking after her, and that he was ahead with his rent, enough to cover his notice and Marie’s accommodation.

Archie retired to his room and considered what he should take with him. Not the accountancy text books, but he was tempted by the battered and falling apart Euclid which he had found at a street market, even though it was in Greek, which he could not read. He could understand the diagrams, and he had a ruler and compass so that he

could work them through himself. Then there was a chipped bust of Socrates, also from a street market, who he fancied looked a little like a younger Professor Joseph. In the end he decided to travel light, with just his clothes. He counted the money that he had, and reckoned that there was enough to get to London, but not much to spare.

He then went to enquire about getting from Paris to London. He asked about the possibility of using a boat down the River Seine to Le Havre, but was told that, while the river was used for cargo transport, it was too slow for passengers, who would normally travel by coach. The ship from Le Havre would take him to Southampton, with then another coach trip to London. Alternatively they could take a longer coach trip to Calais and then a ship direct to London. He was concerned that a coach trip in England might be difficult with his French accent and Marie not speaking English, so decided that the Calais route would be better, and made the necessary arrangements for the coach.

When he went to collect Marie that afternoon he realised that her baggage was more than he could carry. The small chest of family treasures was not the major problem, but her bags of other clothes and household items led to the need to hire a horse and cart. As they walked behind the cart, he suggested,

‘It is best if we travel as brother and sister. It would also be better if we used a name that is not Huguenot. So may I call you Marie Frézeau, and you are to call me Archibald Frézeau. It is a good name, and I think that the Marquise will not be angry if I borrow it.’ He was not so sure that the Marquise’s son, now a newly fledged officer in the French army, would be so forgiving, but neither of them should ever find out.

‘Our story is that we are travelling to England to meet up with our father, who is a merchant in fabrics, and has fallen ill while on a buying trip to Manchester.’

She was taken aback at the need for subterfuge, but was very relieved that Archie was arranging the journey for her.

The next morning they boarded their coach for Calais. This was to take six days, with overnight stop-overs at coaching inns. While in the coach, without privacy, Archie started to teach Marie some English, much to the amusement of the other passengers. When they were to themselves they told each other the stories of their lives and became intimate friends.

The sea journey from Calais required easterly winds, so they had to wait a few days until the westerly gale blew itself out, giving them more opportunity for English lessons and friendship.

The sea voyage was reasonably calm, but Marie was still seasick, which Archie enjoyed the wind and sea, moving easily to the surge of the ship.

An advantage of an east wind was that the stench of London was blown to the west as they made their way up the Thames estuary, so that Marie recovered and was amazed at the busy activities of the port. Archie looked at her and asked, ‘Do you think that we could get married?’

Her smile was radiant, and in English, ‘I very content,’ then in French, ‘you will have to ask my uncle for his blessing. He is my guardian.’

Marie had the address for her uncle, so another horse and cart, with Marie riding next to the driver and Archie perched with the baggage in the tray.

11. The Huguenot Trooper

Marie's uncle, Georges, was a shoemaker and lived with his family above his shop in a three storey terrace house in Spitalfields, near the centre of London, in a street of nearly identical houses. The ground floor was the workshop, with a small display of his craft in the window on the street, and a lean-to at the back for storage space. The first floor was living space with two rooms, one with a small kitchen against one wall and the other the parlour. There were two bedroom upstairs, one for Georges and his wife, Annette, and the second for his three young children. It was a comfortable home, but crowded with little space for privacy. There was a privy in the backyard with a gate into a laneway, allowing access for the night-soil cart. Water came from a hand-pump at the corner of the street, when it was working; otherwise a longer walk or a purchase from a water cart.

Georges was delighted to see Marie. He had been very anxious at leaving her in Paris and would have been devastated if she had come to harm. He was effusively grateful to Archie for helping her make the journey, and almost made him one of the family. Marie would stay with them, albeit sleeping on a divan in the parlour, while a room in a lodging house in the next street was found for Archie, although he shared meals with the family.

Marie confided to her aunt that Archie had proposed marriage and that she was agreeable. Georges took his responsibility for Marie very seriously, and broached the subject with Archie when they were alone together in the workshop,

'I understand that you and Marie wish to marry.'

Archie sat down on a stool and nodded, feeling shy. George continued,

'I am very happy for you both, but I am concerned that you do not have the means to support a wife. I understand that you were apprenticed as a bookkeeper in Paris. Did you complete your apprenticeship?'

Archie did not mention the remittance that he was getting from his father, partly from a desire to be independent and partly because he was not sure that it would be continued now that he was back in London.

'No, I was in the final year when Marie needed to come to London.'

'I have only a small business with the shoes and boots, and do not have enough to need a bookkeeper, but I will ask amongst our community to see if there is a possibility. On another matter, I understand that you were baptised as a Catholic in Paris. I would not be happy with my niece marrying a Catholic. Our community has been persecuted by the Church of Rome and driven from our homes, so a Catholic husband would not be acceptable.'

Archie had already considered this, and had made his decision before proposing to Marie,

'I no longer consider myself to be a Catholic. The burning of the professor's books was an insult to a decent man who was very kind to me, and turned me against the Church. I would be happy to be Protestant.'

'Then come with us to chapel on Sunday, and we will meet some of our friends and see if they can offer employment. And we will talk to the elders about accepting you into our congregation.'

And so for the next three weeks, Archie went to the chapel with the family and was warmly welcomed by the community, as the story of his escorting of Marie out of Paris became well known. However there was no work available for a bookkeeper, even one fluent in both English and French, and unskilled weavers were only paid a starvation wage. The elders of the chapel arranged an appointment with a priest, who was impressed by Archie's knowledge of Calvinist doctrine, and officially welcomed him as a member of the congregation.

On the fourth Sunday, Georges announced that they would go to the big church, l'Eglise Protestante Française de Londres, a little over a mile away, and see if a more prosperous member of the Huguenot community could find employment for Archie. George did not know many in this congregation but did his best to introduce Archie during the social gathering after the service. One man, overhearing Georges' story of Archie, went to talk to Colonel John Ligonier of the Black Horse regiment, who was visiting London,

'Good morning, John. I heard you complaining at dinner last night about the burden of paperwork from the English Establishment, and perhaps I have a solution for you. That young man over there,' gesturing towards Archie, who was trying not to look too much out of place, 'is a bookkeeper recently from Paris who is fluent in French and English, and is looking for employment.'

Ligonier looked over at Archie, and saw a young man in his twenties, standing straight, very self-contained, but watchful of all going on around him,

'He does not look like a bookkeeper, does he. Though he looks like he might make a soldier. Thank you for pointing him out. There is hardly anyone in the Regiment who speaks French, I will go and talk to him.'

He came up alongside Archie,

'Excusez-moi, m'sieu.'

Archie turned. He had already noticed the colonel and identified his rank, but not his regiment, perceiving that he had a relaxed air of natural command.

'Oui, mon colonel.'

Ligonier then spoke in English,

'I hear that you are a bookkeeper seeking employment.'

'Yes sir, that is correct. I trained as a bookkeeper in Paris, but have now moved to London.'

'Would you perhaps be interested in being a bookkeeping soldier? If so could you come and see me at ten o'clock tomorrow morning?' Holding out his calling card.

Archie bowed in acknowledgement and accepted the card, 'Yes sir, I will be there.'

Archie had previously considered being a soldier, but could not in France, not being a citizen, and had similar difficulties in England, having been raised in France. He asked around about Colonel Ligonier, learning that he was a Huguenot who was now established in the English Cavalry Establishment, and that his regiment, commonly called Ligonier's, was stationed in Ireland, essentially as a peace-keeping force. He learned that the regiment had been in Ireland for over ten years, and was now filled, more and more, with the younger sons of Protestant Irish Gentry. Cavalry regiments were traditionally manned by young gentlemen, gallant horsemen, being a step above the riffraff of the infantry.

He discussed the possibility of living in Ireland with Marie. She was not against the idea, at least in part because London was not to her liking.

Ligonier had long learned to trust his judgement of men, and felt no need to find out about Archie. The friend who had pointed out Archie at the church recounted the story of Archie escorting Marie from Paris after the death of her grandmother.

Archie presented himself at the house in Westminster, in his best clothes and ten minutes early. He was shown into the study at precisely ten o'clock and greeted with a smile as to his punctuality.

Ligonier spoke in French, 'I have been thinking about how to make the best use of your knowledge, and it seems to me that I am more in need of soldier acting as a personal secretary. The quartermaster and paymaster each have their staff of civilian clerks, but I am burdened with the need to understand their accounts and report to my superiors. We have an official audit every year, and, in this time of relative peace, the bureaucrats seem to have more time to be fussy about details.'

Still talking in French, he then set out to test Archie's abilities, asking him to read aloud a financial directive from Whitehall, and explain in French the meaning of some of the more obscure terminology. Then Archie was asked to put pen to paper and copy a report from the quartermaster, to check that his writing was adequate for reporting purposes. Ligonier was satisfied that he had a potential soldier who was fluent and literate in both languages, an unusual combination.

Ligonier continued, "The commander of our Irish Establishment has been persuaded that we should consider embracing the double-entry bookkeeping system. Is this something that you would support?"

Archie sat and marshalled his thoughts, it being clear that Ligonier was not delighted with the prospect of more paperwork.

'I have some experience with double-entry and also with simpler ledger methods. The double-entry system is excellent for a corporation keeping control of multiple accounts, and while I understand the attraction of treating a regiment as a business, it may be that a simpler system would be adequate. I have not yet seen the accounts of the quartermaster and paymaster, but I expect that they use a simpler three column ledger, and this would seem to be adequate for both, with the quartermaster and armourer having also the more difficult task of keeping stock of assets.'

Ligonier was delighted, 'Magnifique! "A regiment is not the same as a business." I will use that as an argument when next I meet with the commander.'

Then, now in English, 'I accept you into my regiment. I will arrange for some training here in London, and then you will come to Ireland. It would be helpful if your family could purchase a low level commission for you, perhaps as a second lieutenant, as I can then nominate you as acting adjutant.'

Archie was hesitant, 'Excuse me sir, but would it be possible to have a written acceptance? I wish to get married, and I need to demonstrate to her guardian that I have a position.'

Ligonier looked at him, 'I have heard the story about you escorting Marie de Beaufort from Paris. Your gallantry has already made you famous, perhaps?. I will dictate, you write, and then I will sign for you.'

He reached into his desk for a regimental letterhead and passed it to Archie, "To whom it may concern, this is to confirm that this day Archibald Fraser has been

inducted as Trooper in the 8th Regiment of Horse. Signed Colonel Ligonier, Commanding Officer.'

Archie carefully copied the words, then presented it for inspection and signature, with effusive thanks.

Archie joyfully hurried back to Spitalfields with the letter safely in his coat pocket. Marie's uncle was satisfied and agreed that the wedding should take place as soon as possible. Archie wrote to his father, Simon, explaining that he was presently in London and about to be married, and that he was then joining the 8th Regiment of Horse in Ireland, and that the Colonel had asked him to apply for a commission, and would it be possible for Simon to arrange for a commission as a second lieutenant.

The newlyweds moved into lodgings while Archie started his training in Chelsea. He had to spend some time in barracks, but was mostly given leave. He encouraged Marie to work at learning English, thinking ahead about the move to Ireland, but she found it difficult, particularly when surrounded by her French speaking family and neighbours.

Simon was disturbed that Archie was back in London, and was married. He lived in constant anxiety that people were plotting against him, partly from his own nature, but made worse by his many years of imprisonment. Such an anxiety gives motivation for a good chief to be an even better chief, and Simon had set out to be the very best of chiefs. However, in his mind, at least, there were still those that would wish to use his marriage to the Dowager against him, and the situation would become very difficult if they had contact with Archie, or even knowledge of his whereabouts, and would be made even worse if Archie were to father a son as a potential heir.

On the other hand, he saw that a trooper in Ireland would be a safer proposition, being a long way from his real or imagined enemies. He also saw that buying a commission would remove the need to continue secretly sending a living allowance, as Archie would then receive an officer's wage. On his next trip to London, he made an appointment with the appropriate official at the Military Secretariat in Whitehall and broached the subject of a commission. The assistant was supportive, particularly as Ligonier had put in a request, and very happy to take the money, but pointed out that the process also required that the applicant be of gentlemanly status, so that Simon would have to acknowledge that Archie was his son, even if a natural son, and also identify his mother. After some discussion, the mothership requirement was waived, but the paternal remained essential. Simon could not bring himself to risk the exposure to his enemies from a public acknowledgement, so the meeting came to an end without a conclusion.

Simon wrote to Archie that his attempt to buy a commission had not been successful, but that he would continue to provide a living allowance for as long as Archie was in Ireland. From Archie's point of view this meant that he could live out of barracks and have a family life, so he was content.

When Archie had completed his training he was given his orders to join the regiment in Ireland. Marie was now pregnant and having a difficult time with severe morning sickness and general weakness, so it was decided that she should remain in London with her family, as the additional stress of moving to a strange country could not be considered. Marie assured Archie that she would come to Ireland once the child was born, and would continue to practice her English.

The itinerary was to Dover by coach, then coastal ship to Falmouth in Cornwall, another ship to Cork on the south coast of Ireland, and finally the Dublin coach, to be

dropped off near to Donagmore, Queen's County. As before, he found the coach trips uncomfortable and tedious, but enjoyed the sea voyages.

He had no difficulty fitting in with the barracks life, and made himself useful to his colonel by putting the accounts into order, which he did with a summary ledger of the quartermasters and paymaster accounts. This required him to ride to the other barracks of the regiment and view their records. Ligonier was appreciative of the clarity that this provided him and also enjoyed speaking French, this being his mother tongue, and only Archie being fluent in the Donaghmore camp.

He enquired for lodgings, finding that the married officers of the regiment lived in Rathdowney, being the nearest town, and only a mile or so away from the barracks.

Being a serving trooper, Archie was able to use the military mail service to correspond with Marie, but only infrequently. Then one day he received a letter with another's handwriting on the envelope. With a feeling of foreboding, he tore it open, to find that it was from Marie's uncle, in French, dated two weeks previous,

"It is with very great sadness that I must tell you that your wife, Marie, died in childbirth yesterday. The baby, a boy, was born dead, and then Marie haemorrhaged and we could not save her. As you know, she was very much part of our family, and we will bury them in the graveyard next to our chapel. I understand that it is not possible for you to get here in time for the burial, but please come when you can and we will mourn together. With all our best wishes, Uncle Georges."

Archie collapsed to his knees, the letter falling from his hand. The troopers nearby gathered to see what had happened. One of them picked up the letter but could not read the French, so asked what it said. Archie took a long deep breath,

'My wife is dead, my child is dead, my life is dead.'

One of the men ran to get the colonel, who came immediately, asking to see the letter. Reading it quickly, he bent down and helped Archie to his feet,

'Come, my comrade, let us find somewhere for you to sit.' He then called for brandy and sat with him, talking in French, and hearing the story about how she was to come to Ireland when the baby was born, and how much he now regretted that he had not stayed with her in London, regardless of anything. Now he would never forgive himself.

Ligonier was an exceptional military leader, and his regiment was his family and his life. It was always difficult to keep a war force in a state of readiness when there was no enemy in the offing, and while he worked hard at providing exercises, and training his officers in strategy, practicing the many classic cavalry moves, he knew that the most important aspect was esprit de corps; that feeling of brotherhood and loyalty to the group.

He returned to his quarters and penned a letter to the Military Secretariat, marked the envelope as confidential and sealed it twice. Then he discussed with his officers a plan for the next day.

Archie had had a very bad night, drifting in and out of a brandy fuelled sleep, and did not get up with the rest of the troopers. Ligonier's batman roused him and said the colonel requested his presence as soon as possible. Ligonier showed Archie the letter saying that this was an urgent and confidential letter that had to be hand delivered to Whitehall, and that he was to take it to London, and make time to visit his wife's grave. If he was quick he should be able to meet up with the weekly stagecoach to Dublin.

Archie hurried to pack the few things that he would need for the journey. The corporal of his section said that he would ride with him to bring the horse back. As they

rode out of the stables and out of the barracks, Archie was astounded that there was a guard of honour waiting him. Cavalry in full uniform, lined up on each side, with Colonel Ligonier. They saluted as he passed by, with tears streaming down his face. Archie was not aware at the time that this acknowledgement of respect for those in the Regiment who had lost loved ones was one part of Ligonier's way of reinforcing the ties that bound the group together, as well as demonstrating his respect for his troopers.

When they got to the main road, they could see by the wheel tracks that the coach had already passed. But men on horseback travel much quicker than a coach on a muddy road, so they quickly caught up and pulled the coach over so that Archie could board. There was room inside, but the coachman asked that Archie ride next to him as the sight of a military uniform made him feel more secure from highwaymen.

When the corporal returned to the barracks, one of the other corporals asked him, 'Do you think that our Frenchman will come back?' This was a subtle change as previously it would have been "the Frenchman".

'I think so. Once he was on the move, he looked like a trooper on a mission. He was mightily impressed by the guard of honour and would not be able to run away with without loss of self-respect.'

The next staging was at the coach inn in Portlaoise, with two more days to reach Dublin, all being well. Then ship to Liverpool, where he, in his misery, did not notice that the west wind gave him a quick journey. Followed by seven long days in a stagecoach.

His first task in London was to deliver the letter to Whitehall. He was asked to wait while it was taken to the appropriate official, coincidentally being the same one that had previously met with his father. Archie did not know that the letter was a formal request to consider Trooper Archibald Fraser for a commission, with an offer from Ligonier to pay for it himself, saying that he was a young man of promise and already fulfilling the role of adjutant. After a short time the official came out to the foyer and introduced himself as Undersecretary Bates, and asked Archie if he was Archibald Fraser, then asking if he knew of the contents of the letter. On being given a negative response, the official asked Archie to return in three days, at the same time, and ask for Undersecretary Bates.

He then went to visit Georges and Annette, who welcomed him warmly and insisted that he stay with them, making up a bed on the divan in the parlour. It was now late in the day so they made a plan to visit the churchyard first thing in the morning, and spent the evening talking about how much they missed Marie, and telling stories of her parents and her childhood. Archie was polite but lost in his own unhappiness.

The whole family went to the graveyard, where Archie said that he would like to have some time alone. It was a cold grey rainy day, as he stood in the mud next to the simple wooden cross that marked the grave; "Marie de Beaufort, 1705 - 1727, et enfant". He found the inclusion of the infant to be devastating, remembering his dreams of having a family of his own in Ireland, and feeling that his chance of being part of a family had escaped him. The graveyard was a place for the poor people, with no granite or marble memorials, just wooden crosses and slabs rotting away into the damp ground. Archie stood in the rain for a long time, with the cold of the ground creeping up his legs, feeling the grey day mirroring the deep sadness within.

'Je survivrai, malgré tout.'

The next morning he set out to his father's London residence on the possibility that he might be there. Simon had just arrived from Inverness for one of the seemingly interminable meetings with lawyers and committees as he sought to have his peerage reinstated. He was amazed to see Archibald, who he thought was safely settled in Ireland, but sat with him and heard the sad tale of Marie's death in childbirth, with the infant boy also not surviving. He found himself in two minds with the news; on one hand he was deeply saddened for Archie's loss; while, on the other hand, he felt a sense of relief that Archie did not have an heir that might complicate matters and lead to advantage for his enemies.

He was moved by Archie's description of the graveyard, and saw that Archie was distressed by its poverty, and remembered the relative splendour of the Mausoleum at Kirkhill where he intended to be interred in due course, and of the stone memorials to his ancestors at the Beaulieu Priory. He went to his desk and extracted a small purse, putting in some coins and giving it to Archie, saying,

'This should be enough for a memorial in stone. It is the least that I can do.'

'Merci, mon père.' Then after a moment of silence, 'I would ask your advice as to what to do next. I joined the Regiment so that I could marry Marie, and now there is no point to that.'

Simon found that he needed to have Archie far away from Scotland and London,

'I think it best that you should rejoin your regiment. I will continue to provide you with an allowance so that you can live like a gentleman trooper, for as long as you stay away from Scotland or London.'

Archie saw that his father needed to distance himself, and, while feeling abandoned yet again, knew well how his father was driven by anxiety, and saw enemies in every shadow. He was being given the choice between being a gentleman trooper, but without possibility of marriage and family, or having to find a living by other means, and still not having the wherewithal to raise a family. He did not wish to bring more anxieties into his father's life, and understood that the allowance included an undertaking not to encumber him with grandchildren of challengeable legitimacy. He remembered the guard of honour as he left the barracks, and felt that his loyalty should lie with his Regiment.

'Oui, mon père, I shall do as you suggest, and return to Ireland.'

At the door they embraced and parted for the last time, never to see each other again.

As it happened, Simon's beloved and legitimate wife, Margaret, died in childbirth two years later, with the child, his second son, Alexander, surviving, but somewhat brain damaged. In his darker moments, Simon felt that this was divine punishment for his rejoicing at the death of Archie's son, who was, after all, his first grandson.

Archie gave the money to Georges, asking him to arrange for a memorial, then went to visit the grave again, this time to say goodbye, not knowing when he would be able to come back. Some twenty years later he was in London on regimental business and made the time to go back to Spitalfields. To his dismay the graveyard was gone and had been developed into an extension of the markets. He then went to Georges' shop, to find that it was now a grocers. He asked inside about George and Annette and was told that they had died some five years previously. They could not tell him where to find the children.

Archie's last task was to go back to the Military Secretariat in Whitehall. Undersecretary Bates greeted him with some kindness and handed him a sealed envelope addressed to Colonel Ligonier, with instructions that he was not to break the seal, as it was confidential. Archie was never to know the contents:

“Dear Colonel, I appreciate your desire to promote officers from within the ranks of your regiment, and in some cases this is possible. However, I regret that Archibald Fraser does not satisfy the criteria, even though he may be excellent officer material. It is a firm rule of the establishment that all officers be gentlemen, and preferably English gentlemen. In this case I have already had interview with the father, who declined to publicly acknowledge his son. While it is sometimes possible to commission a natural son, particularly of a noble, it is necessary that the relationship be acknowledged by the father. It is also apparent that his upbringing is not that of an English gentleman, and, indeed, that he has spent little of his life in Britain. Yours sincerely.”

Rather than endure the long coach trip to Liverpool, Archie chose to travel via Dover, taking the sea route to Cork, even though this might take a little longer, depending on weather conditions. As it was the winds were favourable and he made good time. As much as possible he spent his time on the open deck, letting the sea and wind wash through his sadness.

Again taking the Dublin coach, also again mostly riding next to the coachman, he was dropped off at the nearest point to Donagmore, and walked to the barracks. He handed over the sealed envelope to Ligonier, who opened and read it, with a disappointed sigh,

‘Do you know the contents of this letter, Archie?’

‘No sir, I was instructed that it was strictly confidential.’

‘Perfectement. I do not think that you need to be troubled with it.’ As he turned and threw it on the fire.

Archie spent much of his small wage and more generous allowance on drowning his sorrows in drink over the next few months, always in the company of his comrades, who watched over him through this difficult time. But then he needed to build a new life, and became more solitary, finding the constant activity of the barracks unsettling. He moved into lodgings in Rathdowney, as did many of the troop, not only officers, and found solace in having his own space. He became resigned to his life as a trooper and could not see any other possibilities, becoming part of the community of Rathdowney. It was not such a bad life as many of the troopers were the younger sons of substantial families, educated and supported by their families, so he had companions with similar interests. He also used his bookkeeping knowledge to provide some support to local tradesmen and victualers to keep their books in order so that they could continue to do business with the military, and survive the periodic audits.

He could spend some money on books, although he never did manage a new copy of Euclid. He shared this interest with the vicar of Rathdowney, who was also interested in providing some education for the children of the district. At that time the Church of Ireland had taken over the medieval Catholic churchyard, which was in a state of some disrepair. Ligonier, as a Huguenot protestant was content to attend the Anglican services, and Archie, now also a Huguenot, would sit with him. Over time he became accustomed to the Anglican liturgy.

There were occasions when he travelled with Ligonier to meetings with the commanding officers of the other Irish Regiments of Horse, and had some time to

socialise. He met other troopers who shared his name, although they spelled their name as Frazer not Fraser. They were generally Protestants from good families that had settled in Ireland some years previously, and they explained that the “z” spelling was the most common in Ireland. So Archie decided to change the spelling of his name, and become part of the Irish Frazer family; not that they were highlanders, nor clan, nor kin, but at least some connection.

He had fifteen years of relative tranquillity, with the occasional police action, but nothing serious. Ligonier worked hard at keeping the Regiment battle ready, because that was the best way of maintaining morale. Then the war between England and France became very active and the Regiment was hurriedly mobilised to England and then to the Netherlands, where they wintered in Ghent. The Regiment was active and fought victoriously at Dettingen, being honoured for its performance, then less successfully at Fontenoy. Archie did not immediately hear of the death of the Dowager Lady Lovat, his mother.

The Jacobite rebellion led to most of the regiment being recalled to England, where they fought at Clifton Moor. Archie was with the contingent that stayed in France, and did not have to fight his unacknowledged kin. After the rebellion was finally crushed at Culloden, the Regiment was relocated back to Ireland, and then re-organised to minimise costs. The war in Europe had been very expensive for the English, with then further expenses from the Jacobite Rebellion.

The news of the attainder of the Lovat title and estates with the subsequent capture of the Old Fox quickly reached Donaghmore, with it being obvious to Archie that his allowance would no longer be available. He had saved over the years towards some sort of retirement plan, so was not immediately penniless, but it was obvious that he could not enjoy previous relative prosperity into the future. So he vacated his lodgings in Rathdowney and moved into barracks.

Then the news of the impeachment, trial and execution of his father left him completely alone in the world, with no kin, with the possible exception of Simon’s later children; but he did not feel that he had any right to make that connection, and, besides which, they were in a worse place than he was.

11. The Farmer and Father

Archie was in the doldrums, and becoming more depressed and isolated. There was no urgency but he started to look around for retirement possibilities, thinking perhaps of a small business in Rathdowney or Dunkerrin. He was now in his early forties and could not be charging full-tilt on a cavalry horse for much longer.

As an escape from the noise of the barracks, and from the smell of unwashed bodies and feet, he took to making long walks in the laneways around Donaghmore, deep into his lonely thoughts. On one fine day towards the end of winter, with spring just an unfilled promise, walking to the northwest, he came across a house cow in the lane. He could see where she had pushed through the hawthorn hedge, and tried to herd her back into the field behind, but she trotted up the lane away from him. He made some repairs to the hedge, bending and threading withies to close the gap, and then followed the cow. Rounding a bend, he saw her ahead, and, when he got closer, that she was standing by a gate. So he opened the gate and the cow passed through back into the field.

There was little grass left in the field, and looking across he could see that the hedge along the laneway was in poor repair, with several places where a hungry cow could push through. To his right he saw a farmhouse with a woman walking towards him. She was neat and petite, walking with a stride that showed strength and determination.

‘Thank you for getting Buttercup back into her field. She keeps breaking out.’

Archie felt awkward and clumsy in the presence of this small person, and replied,

‘I fixed up the hole in the hedge as best I could without tools, but I am sure that she will escape again soon. There are many weak spots. I expect that she is hungry.’

‘Yes, you are right. I hope that the warm weather will come soon and get the grass growing. The end of winter is always the hunger time.’

‘Do you have any hay that you could give her?’

‘I did not manage to harvest very much last summer, and it is all gone.’

‘Perhaps you could buy some?’

She hesitated, not sure whether to continue the conversation or to simply say thank you again and excuse herself, so, half hoping for a refusal, she said,

‘Perhaps I can thank you with some refreshment back at the house. I only have buttermilk, but it is fresh.’ Then with a smile, ‘and you know where it came from.’

Archie was also hesitant, but the warm day had left him thirsty.

‘Thank you, but just some water would be enough.’

As they walked together back to the farmhouse, he suddenly realised who she was.

‘Pardon me, but you are Mrs Whitehead aren’t you?’ She nodded, and he continued, ‘I heard that your husband died about two years ago. My condolences.’

In general, the Protestant settlers of Queen’s County were not there by first preference, but because it was their best, or only, option. The grand plan by the English government to make Ireland British through settlement had not been a success, but led to two societies, Irish Catholics and English Protestants, requiring constant policing to uphold peace.

Ruth’s mother, Anne Cheadle, had been a chambermaid in a grand house in Anglesey. The Master of the house was smitten and formed a long-lasting relationship with Anne. The Lady of the house was accepting of this arrangement, but not without some animosity. Her mother had advised her that if her husband was going to stray, it was better that he do so at home. Also she had two sons, with absolutely no desire to have more children, and she was content that the maid should deal with her husband’s base desires.

It became more complicated when Anne fell pregnant, with baby Ruth being raised as one of the household, but not one of the family. There was also a brother, Robert, also raised as a part of the household. Ruth grew into an attractive young woman, and the Lady reached the limit of her tolerance when her two sons started to compete for her attentions. She demanded that Ruth be removed from the household. It was decided that a husband had to be found for her, and then she be established away from Anglesey. William Whitehead, one of the farm foremen, was much taken with Ruth and offered to marry her and set up their own household. The Master was fond of Ruth, his daughter, and took responsibility. He had connections in Ireland and found a farm in Queen’s County, Dunnacleggan, which he purchased for the couple.

Once in Ireland, Ruth no longer had contact with her family, and never had news of her mother or brother. She still claimed them as family, in part to achieve some respectability in the settler community.

Will was much older than Ruth, but a kindly man and an accomplished farmer. They were not lucky with children, with a single pregnancy ending in a miscarriage. Then Will became ill and, over some years, progressively could do less and less in maintaining the farm, and their income. Ruth did what she could and cared for him until his death, but the farm became rundown and debts mounted.

She dictated a letter to her family with the news of his death, and explaining her situation, hoping that some help would be available. She never had a reply and was not sure whether the letter had got lost on the way. This was not the case. Both the Master, her father, and the Lady had died with the eldest son inheriting. His wife considered herself to be of superior nobility to the Anglesey establishment, and could not be expected to acknowledge an illegitimate half-sister of her husband, so he wisely washed his hands of Ruth, having enough difficulty in keeping her brother Robert, his half brother, employed. Ruth's mother Anne was still alive, but a pensioner with a small room in the almoner's cottage of the estate. The son did not tell either the brother nor the mother of Ruth's letter.

After Will's death, there were a number of suitors. She judged that they were really after the farm, and she would rather lose everything than be shackled to an unsuitable marriage.

Ruth asked Archie to sit at the kitchen table while she fetched the buttermilk. He looked around, peeking into the larder which did not have a door, and saw that there was little food other than potatoes and some home-made cheese. He had seen the kale yard, with little growing at the end of winter. It seemed that Ruth was surviving on the produce of her cow, with potatoes, at least until spring.

When she had sat down with him, he asked,

'How are you managing to run the farm on your own?'

She made a sigh and a little grimace,

'It is difficult. While Will was dying we ran up our debts so I cannot afford to pay for help. I am just scraping by, and this is the worst time of year.'

Archie considered that doing some farm work would be a welcome change from hanging around the barracks, and get him out into the fresh air, perhaps more interesting than going for walks.

'Would you let me come and help you every now and then? I would like a change, and doing some work on the farm sounds interesting.'

'But I cannot pay you.'

'I am not looking for money. I have my trooper's wage, which is not much but includes bed and board.'

She looked at him, wondering whether this was a plan to get the farm, but decided that he was genuine, or at least worth the risk. If he started to come on in the wrong way, she would send him packing.

'You would be welcome any time that suits you. What would you like to do?'

‘Well, I would like to make things better for Buttercup. She will keep breaking out of the field unless she gets some feed. And her milk will dry up if she gets too poor. Perhaps we could start by leaving the gate open, so that she can get some along the lane.’

Ruth had not thought of this, wishing to keep control of things, saying,

‘But then she will be in the lane all the time.’

‘The hedge is no better than an open gate, so I expect that she is already in the lane most of the time, but comes back to be milked.’

Ruth laughed and agreed. So they went together to open the gate. Buttercup had already gone through the hedge.

Archie asked, ‘Why do you not let her into the other fields?’

‘The byre is next to this field, and she is used to coming there to be milked. I have tried her in other fields, but then she has not been able to find her way back. We always used to winter the house cow here and feed her with hay, but now I have run out of hay.’

Archie thought over the situation, and said,

‘When I come back on Sunday, I will do some repairs to the hedge along the lane and then make an opening through to the next field down, which still has grass in it. And then get her back from the lane and walk her down through the opening. Perhaps she will learn to come back to the byre. If not it should be easy to herd her back. If I have time I will scythe some hay as well.’

Ruth was very happy to have someone helping her, and was impressed by Archie’s plan.

‘I will make sure that there is buttermilk,’ she said with a smile.

Archie looked away,

‘Your buttermilk is very nice, but would it be alright if I bought some tea? I used to enjoy a pot of tea when I was in lodgings, but I do not feel comfortable making a pot of tea in barracks. I have some left, and I would be glad to share it with you.’

‘I have never tasted tea, but I have heard of it. From China?’ she asked.

And so they fell into the habit of doing some work on the farm, and then becoming friends over the little brown teapot. Archie spent some of his savings on buying more tea. It was not of the same quality as he had been able to afford before, being smuggled, rough, black and bitter, and needing plenty of milk to make it drinkable.

Over the weeks and months they learned slowly to trust each other. They both had secrets that would make their lives more difficult if they were to become public knowledge. Little by little they traded the stories of their pasts. Archie learned about Ruth’s parentage and her expulsion from Anglesey. Ruth learned about Archie’s life in France, and about his marriage to Marie, with her death in childbirth. Then, one day, he took a deep breath and told her about his father, explaining about the allowance that had provided for him to live as a gentleman, with the understanding that he stayed in Ireland and did not marry and have children.

Ruth was astonished about this condition, asking,

‘Did he really say that he would disown you if you married?’

‘Not in so many words, but I understood his position that he did not want any possibility of his enemies taking advantage. So I became a confirmed bachelor, which was easy enough after Marie’s death.’

‘But you no longer have the allowance?’

So Archie explained that, following the battle of Culloden, that allowance was no longer possible. He then told her that his father was the Lord Lovat that had been executed at the Tower of London. She was not shocked, knowing from her own experience that acknowledgement of parentage was sometimes difficult, but then asked him to explain why he could not be acknowledged as a son. Archie told the story of his one meeting with his mother, and the politics that had led her to disown him, and eventually to his father sending him away.

Ruth was thoughtful,

‘If your father is now dead, and you no longer receive an allowance, does that not mean that you can now consider having children and a family?’

Archie had been so fixed in his mind about being a bachelor, now for more than twenty years, that this had not occurred to him. He suddenly felt the release of a great weight, and rose to his feet with his arms raised, ready to dance with joy, but then he realised that his freedom also meant that he did not have the means to raise a family. His arms dropped and he looked at the ground.

‘But I do not have the income for a family. I am just on a troopers wage, which has been cut to the minimum.’

Ruth looked at him and saw his distress, and found that she could make a decision.

‘We could raise a family together. Dunnacleggan could provide for a family.’

Archie looked down into her smiling face, and again raised his head and arms, smiling back. She also rose to her feet and they started a slow joyful dance, not touching - yet.

So Ruth made another pot of tea, and they started to make plans.

The most pressing issue was the debt that Ruth had run up while Will was dying, and subsequently. All the stock had been sold except for Buttercup, including the draft horse needed to pull the plough and other implements. Archie had some savings, but not enough to pay off all the debt and restock the farm. Without restocking the farm could not produce income and pay off the debts, let alone provide for a growing family. So they decided that Archie’s savings would be used to pay off the most pressing debt, but mostly to get the farm back into working order.

Ruth said that the most difficult debt was with Mr Henderson, a shopkeeper in Rathdowney, and she thought that he was trying to take over the farm. He was already married so he was allowing the debt to build up until he could make a claim. She thought that the total owing was about 35 pounds, over a five year period. Archie sat down with her and made a list of the items that she remembered getting from Mr Henderson, with her memory of their value. The total agreed with her estimate.

Archie went to meet with the shopkeeper, finding him to be a bluff fellow with an air of entitlement.

‘Good morning, Mr Henderson, my name is Frazer and I have come to start paying off Ruth Whitehead’s debt.’

‘What would you be doing that for? The debt is getting bigger every year and I will soon have enough to make a claim on Dunnacleggan.’

'Mrs Whitehead and I are to be married, and we will run the farm together. I have some money and would like to start by paying off some of the debt, and then the rest will be paid once the farm is productive again. How much do you think she is owing?'

'I reckon near 60 pound, and I would expect that to be paid off smartly, or I will take a claim to the assizes.'

Archie was expecting that the number would be inflated.

'Do you have receipts to confirm that amount? I have a list of goods received by Mrs Whitehead.'

'No, I keep a running total in my head, but I do not make mistakes, and I have a good memory.'

Archie took out his list and asked,

'Do you remember what she bought in the first week of September two years ago?'

'Why would I remember that? It was probably sugar. She bought a lot of sugar while her husband was still alive. Or it might have been the liver tonic.'

'It was an axe handle.'

Henderson was not convinced, so Archie showed him the list.

'Who are you?', Henderson asked.

'I have just put in my resignation as a trooper, and I am now planning to raise a family.'

With sudden recognition,

'Are you the one they call the Frenchman?'

'Yes, some of my comrades call me that.'

'Then you are also the bookkeeper?'

On an affirmative answer, and looking at the tall broad-shouldered man in front of him, Henderson saw his daydream of being a landowner dissipating before his eyes. Archie went on to say,

'I would like first to thank you for being so generous with Mrs Whitehead. She would have been hard pressed without the help that she received from you and her neighbours.'

'But now to business. With your agreement, I would like to pay you back ten pounds now and another thirty pounds over the next year or so, as we get the farm back into producing an income.'

With a sigh and a grimace, Henderson agreed, and they shook hands on the arrangement. He showed the ten pounds to his wife and explained that they had been thanked for helping out the Whiteheads, to which she replied,

'Oh good, the children need new shoes.'

Archie realised that his knowledge of farming was only at the common sense level, and that much more would be needed to make a living from Dunnacleggan. He believed that his bookkeeping would be useful from a management point of view, but, more usefully, he had been a trooper for more than twenty years and knew a lot about horses, particularly cavalry horses.

As he explained to Ruth, providing suitable mounts for a Regiment of Horse was a constant challenge. They had to be stallions, brave and strong with good endurance, but

many stallions were not steady enough and became unpredictable during manoeuvres. The provision of such horses was a significant industry. But nature provides that foals are more or less equal in numbers as colts or fillies, so there was an over-supply of mares and a scarcity of stallions, reflected in their price, with a useful looking young stallion being worth many times more than a mare. So the regiments had most of the stallions, except for a few of the rich and noble, while the rest of the population had to make do with mares and sometimes geldings. A stallion that proved to be unsuitable was gelded, with some kept in the regiment for new recruits to improve their riding skills, and some for quiet parade ground duties. Other geldings were sold off at a fraction of their original purchase price.

There were two sources of horses for the regiment. Firstly from Army contractors in England, who bid for business directly to Whitehall. In reality all the good stallions stayed in England, and Ireland, being a long way away, ended up with the dregs. Secondly, local farmers raised a few stallions and sent them to market, hoping that a regimental horsemaster would like the look of them and have the budget to bid for them. These were the best horses in the regiment, but supply and budget was uncertain, and local supply was frowned upon by Whitehall.

Archie's plan was to buy a dozen or so mares. He was a good judge of horses, and could choose those that had the right conformation to birth suitable stallions. He then talked to the Donaghmore horsemaster, explaining that he would like to provide a service to the Regiment by providing superior stallions at lower cost. He asked that the horsemaster select one or two top-drawer studs from the regimental horses and allow them to be put across Archie's mares. Archie proposed that the price for any stallions from this arrangement would be available at a lower than market price.

The early years of this enterprise were difficult as it took over three years before a start of income. Archie and Ruth survived on the remnants of his savings. Then the plan started to take off, and in a few more years they were sharing their business with the neighbours, particularly those that had been supportive of the Whiteheads through their difficult years. Archie kept a breed book, both to keep a record and to make sure that there was no inbreeding.

Some officers and troopers in the Regiment also had a wish to have a colt from their favourite stallion, particularly as it came to the end of its career. Also, it turned out that there was a market for stallions outside the regimental requirement, albeit at a lower price, with there being a certain cachet about riding such a steed, particularly an ex-cavalry, for prosperous young men and successful older men, so it became possible to replace the English horses with Irish, and with reduced impact on the regimental budget.

After his resignation, the Regiment continued to be part of Archie's life, both socially and because he continued to audit the accounts. There were some who were envious of how well Archie had landed on his feet. One day he was sitting at a desk outside the quartermaster's office when an officer, Lieutenant Gore, came up and stood over him. Archie resisted the automatic response of leaping to his feet and saluting, but greeted him politely as a civilian. The lieutenant came straight to the point,

'Frazer, the armourer tells me that you have not handed in your sword. Is this true?'

'Yes, Lieutenant, I have carried it for nearly twenty years and it seems to be part of me.'

'You know that only commissioned officers can keep their swords, so you will have to hand yours in.'

'I was adjutant during the campaign in France. Does that not count?'

'You could not have been adjutant as that is a position for a commissioned officer. You were merely acting as adjutant.'

Archie took a breath,

'Lieutenant, you see that I am auditing the regimental accounts. I do not get paid for this, so I am a volunteer. I am very happy to provide this service because I still consider that I am part of the Regiment. Do you think that I could keep my sword for as long as I am working for the Regiment?'

The inference was clear that Archie might consider no longer doing his bookkeeping if the Lieutenant insisted, so he backed down, not gracefully, but considered how he would be received if he was seen as responsible for driving Archie away.

'Well, Frazer, make sure that you hand it in when you stop working for us.'

It was all much forgotten by the time the Regiment was relocated to Dublin, many years later. Lieutenant Gore had moved on, and the chaos of moving after being stationed at Donagmore for decades, on and off, was such that the small matter of a battered troopers sword did not register.

Their first child was a son. There was some discussion about a suitable name. While it would be traditional for an eldest son to be named after his paternal grandfather, Archie was not comfortable with this possibility, at least in part because he felt the need to keep his parentage as a secret, particularly after his father being executed for high treason. So they agreed on Joseph, at least in memory of Archie's mentor in Saumur, Joseph Thèreaux.

Their second child was a girl, and again the traditional name would have been after the maternal grandmother, but Archie persuaded Ruth that she be named after his first wife, Marie, and so became Mary. The third was another boy, Robert, in memory of Frère Robert Bernierd, and of Ruth's brother. Then, lastly, another girl, and Ruth insisted that she have her mother's name, Anne.

It was a busy and contented life, with Archie still doing some bookkeeping for the Regiment, local societies and local tradespeople, as well as running the farm and raising children. But there were times when his past weighed on him, and he would fall into melancholy. At such times he would walk outside into the night, after the evening meal. Particularly if it was a clear night at the first quarter of the lunar cycle, with the half-moon high in the sky. He would turn his back on the moon, in the southern sky, and look for the pole star to find north, and then turn some to the right to be looking towards the highlands.

The wound from his mother's rejection was always with him, but well scabbed over with time and events. He more mourned for his children. They had no grandparents, uncles, aunts or cousins. There were no family histories of past relatives and exploits, as both his story and Ruth's were too shameful to share. Most of all he would have liked for his children to have kin and clan, but such was not to be. He was used to being an exile himself, but deeply regretted that his children were also exiles.

'Mais nous survivrons, malgré tout' (But we shall survive, despite everything)

And then he would go back into the house, to the warmth and the noise of children, and an understanding hug from Ruth.

And we have survived, although still with the feeling of exile. And this is our story.

12. Epilogue

It would be sensible to ask why I gone to the trouble of writing this narrative. When I started I had no idea where it was going; it was simply something that I felt a need to do before shuffling off this mortal coil. Since then the story has taken on a life of its own, for better or worse, and I have learned from the journey.

It is obviously not history in the normal sense, although it is based on historical events, and, as I wrote in the Prologue, nothing in it is known to be false. So it is a story, not a history. It seems to me that stories have much more influence on our way of thinking and our perception of the world than dry historical facts, providing that they have the one essential ingredient, being some aspects of truth concerning the human condition. The truths do not need to be itemised or clearly stated but can be part of the weave, not necessarily discernible.

There is now a phrase that resonates - “trauma manifests itself through generations”. There is a growing body of scientific evidence that trauma can effect the ways in which DNA expresses itself, not only in the immediate victim, but also echoing down further generations. And then the ways that we pass on our cultural heritage from generation to generation are subtle and sub-liminal and it is very possible that a trauma can be passed on unintentionally. The stories and traditions of our family, many in the [Black Knee Chronicles](#), could be seen as symptomatic of such an occurrence.

In this context, the key component of the story is of a teenage boy, raised under disrupted circumstances, who was finally denied by his mother who had abandoned him as a newborn, and then exiled from the clan that he had long seen as his family, at least in his hopeful dreams of a golden future. He survived the trauma and went on to make a life for himself, living to a good age and raising a family, but the sad shadow was always part of his life, giving him an underlying and continuing sense of melancholy and loss. Am I being absurd to say that I still have this feeling?

Then our ancestors, with all best intentions, decided that we would be better off not knowing the details of the trauma, presumably in the belief that the unhappiness would then go away. In reality this made things worse because we then had to deal with the trauma without knowing its cause, so many and varied stories and theories were put together.

To put things into perspective, everyone carries baggage from their ancestors, good and bad, often being a sub-conscious part of our personalities. And there are many much worse off than we are, such as the descendants of the survivors of the holocaust, and members of displaced indigenous communities in many parts of the world. Perhaps we are a little bit unusual in that all our stories are so tightly focussed on one individual, Archibald, even after seven generations.

It surprises me that many who have discussed the narrative with me assume that the motive behind putting in the effort is to establish a claim against the present Lord Lovat, at least for the remnant Lovat estates. This is absolutely not my intention, and I have no sense of entitlement in this regard. I am perhaps a tribal throwback in that I believe that the hierarchy of loyalties is family, kin and clan, and in that order, with other issues such as religion and nationalism being essentially background that we have to adjust to as best we can.

My motives are three:

- Firstly to carry on the work of my grandfather, Wilson, who started this journey almost 100 years ago.
- Secondly, it is a really interesting challenge and I enjoy solving complex puzzles.
- And thirdly, our family tradition is that we have been denied our descendency. Some see this as an injustice that denies our entitlements, but I see it as an exile from kin and clan. So I would consider that I have succeeded if our Family can establish an acknowledged kinship within the clan.

I was raised to consider myself an exile, as were my progenitors through seven generations. I never felt entitled to join in with highland heritage and events. I have a waistcoat of my father's, faced with Fraser Hunting Tartan, but I never saw him wearing it. Now that I have published this story I have a sense that the exile is over, and I hope that others in our family can feel the same. The flag is now firmly nailed to the mast.

Appendix:

A: The Standard Narrative

There are variations on the theme, but the basic standard narrative is that Simon the Fox is the epitome of evil, with the Widow Lovat being a victim and Lord John Murray the white knight defending the honour of his family. The following is a summary from Electric Scotland:

(<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/nation/fraser.htm>).

FRASER, SIMON, 12th Lord Lovat, one of the most remarkable of the actors in the rebellion of 1745, was the second son of Thomas Fraser, styled of Beaufort, by Sybilla, daughter of Macleod of Macleod, and was born in 1667. Beaufort was another name of Castle Cownie, the chief seat of the family, and did not belong to Simon's father at the time of his birth. He had a small house in Tanich, in the parish of Urray, Ross-shire, where it is supposed that the future Lord Lovat was born. At the proper age he became a student at King's college, Old Aberdeen, the favourite university of the Celts, and in 1694, while prosecuting his studies, he accepted of a commission in the regiment of Lord Murray, afterwards earl of Tullibardine, procured for him by his cousin, Hugh Lord Lovat. Having, in 1626, accompanied the latter to London, he found means to ingratiate himself so much with his lordship, that he was prevailed upon to make a universal bequest to him of all his estates in case he should die without make issue. On

the death of Lord Lovat soon after, Simon Fraser began to style himself master of Lovat, while his father, 'Thomas of Beaufort,' took possession of the honours and estates of the family. To render his claims indisputable, however, Simon paid his addresses to the daughter of the late lord, who had assumed the title of baroness of Lovat, and having prevailed on her to consent to elope with him, would have carried his design of marrying her into execution, had not their mutual confidant, Fraser of Tenechiel, after conducting the young lady forth one winter night in such precipitate haste, that she is said to have walked barefooted, failed in his trust, and restored her again to her mother. The heiress was then removed out of the reach of his artifices by her uncle, the marquis of Athol, to his stronghold at Dunkeld.

Determined not to be baulked in his object, the master of Lovat resolved upon marrying the lady Amelia Murray, dowager baroness of Lovat; but as she would not consent to the match, he had recourse to compulsory measures, and, entering the house of Beaufort, or Castle Dounie, where the lady resided, he had the nuptial ceremony performed by a clergyman whom he brought along with him, and immediately afterwards, it is said, forcibly consummated the marriage before witnesses. He afterwards conveyed her, her brother Lord Mungo Murray and Lord Saltoun, whom he had forcibly seized at the wood of Bunchrew, on his return from a visit to her at Castle Dounie, to the island of Aigas, where he kept them for some time prisoners. Having by these proceedings incurred the enmity of the marquis of Athol, who was the brother of the dowager Lady Lovat, he was, in consequence of a representation made to the privy council, intercommuned, letters of 'fire and sword' were issued against him and all his clan, and on Sept. 5, 1698, he and ten other persons of the name were tried, in absence, before the high court of justiciary for high treason, rape, and other crimes, when being found guilty of treason, to which the lord advocate restricted the charges in the indictment, they were condemned to be executed, and their lands declared forfeited. His father having died in 1699, he assumed the title of Lord Lovat, but in consequence of the proceedings against him he was compelled to quit the kingdom. After a short stay in London, he went to France, for the purpose of lodging a complaint against the marquis of Athol with the exiled king at St. Germain's; after which he had the address to obtain an interview with King William, who was then at Loo in the United Provinces; and having obtained, through the influence of the duke of Argyle, a remission of his sentence, and a pardon of all crimes that could be alleged against him, – which, however, was restricted, on passing the Scottish seals, to the crime of which he had been found guilty, – he ventured to return to Scotland. He was immediately cited before the high court of justiciary, on 17th February 1701, for the outrage done to the dowager Lady Lovat, and, not appearing, he was outlawed. On the 19th February 1702 her ladyship presented a petition against him for letters of intercommuning, for levying the rents of the Lovat estates, which a second time were granted against him and his abettors. He now deemed it advisable to return to France, which he reached in July of that year, after the accession of Queen Anne to the throne. Previous to his departure from Scotland, he had visited several of the chiefs of clans and principal Jacobites in the lowlands, and engaged them to grant him a general commission engaging to take up arms in support of the Stuart cause; possessed of which he immediately joined in all the intrigues of the exiled court of St. Germain's, and even managed to obtain some private interviews with Louis the Fourteenth. By that monarch a valuable sword and some other tokens of reminiscence were bestowed on him as a mark of his confidence. He had also some meetings with two of the French ministers of state, on a project which he had proposed to the ex-queen, Mary of Modena, acting in her son's name, a boy at that time only fourteen years of age, for the invasion of Scotland and the raising of the Highland clans.

He returned to Scotland in 1703, with a colonel's commission in the Pretender's service, and accompanied by John Murray, brother of Murray of Abercairney, who was authorised to ascertain if Lovat's representations, as to the intentions of the Jacobite chiefs, had been warranted by them. Immediately after his return he had interviews with his cousin Stuart of Appin, Cameron of Lochiel, the laird of MacGregor, Lord Drummond, and others, on the subject of a rising, but meeting with little encouragement, he resolved to betray the whole plot to government; which he did in a secret audience with the duke of Queensberry, who was then at the head of Scottish affairs. On his re-appearance in Scotland, letters of 'fire and sword' had again been issued against him and his followers, and he prevailed on Queensberry to grant him a pass to London, that he might be out of the reach of danger. With his grace he had some more secret interviews in London, and soon after he returned to France, by way of Holland, with the object of obtaining for government further secret information about the projects of the exiled court. In passing through Holland he assumed the disguise of an officer in the Dutch service, but soon after his arrival in Paris, he was, by the french government, at the instance of the exiled queen, arrested, sent to the Bastille, and afterwards imprisoned for three years in the castle of Angouleme, and seven years in the city of Saumur, where he is said to have taken priest's orders, and become a renowned popular preacher.

After making many fruitless efforts to regain his liberty, – the exiled court having refused to sanction his release, – he at last resolved, on the death of Queen Anne, to endeavour to make his escape, which he effected with the aid of Major Fraser, one of his kinsmen, who had been sent over by his clan to discover where he was, and to learn his intentions, in the event of an insurrection in favour of the Stuarts. Reaching Boulogne in safety, and there hiring a boat, they sailed on 14th November 1714, and after a storm, landed at Dover next afternoon. On his arrival in London, he kept himself concealed for some time; but at the instigation of his enemy the marquis of Athol, a warrant was issued against him, and on the 11th of the following June, he was arrested in his lodgings in Soho Square, and, with the major, kept for some time in a sponging house, but at last obtained his liberty, on the earl of Sutherland, John Forbes of Culloden, and some other gentlemen, becoming bail for him to the extent of £5,000.

He remained in London till October 1715, when the rebellion having broken out, he returned to Scotland as one of his brother John's attendants, being still under the sentence of outlawry. In a vindication of his conduct addressed to Lord Islay he says, that on this occasion he was taken prisoner at Newcastle, Longtown, near Carlisle, Dumfries, and Lanark, but succeeded in reaching Stirling. He proceeded thence to Edinburgh, to embark at Leith for the north, but had not been there two hours when he was apprehended by order of the lord justice clerk, and would have been sent to the castle had he not been delivered, he does not say how, by Provost John Campbell. A few days after he sailed from Leith with John Forbes of Culloden, but their vessel was pursued and fired upon by several large Fife boats in possession of the rebels. On arriving in his own country, he was just in time to be of considerable service to the royal cause and to his own interests. Joining two hundred of his clan who were waiting for him under arms in Stratherrick, he concerted a plan with the Grants, and Duncan Forbes of Culloden, afterwards president of the court of session, for recovering Inverness from the rebels, in which they were successful. For his zeal and activity on this occasion he had his reward. The young baroness of Lovat had married, in 1702, Alexander Mackenzie, younger of Prestonhall, who thereupon assumed the name of Fraser of Fraserdale; but engaging in the rebellion of 1715, he was obliged to leave the country, and being outlawed and attainted, his liferent of the estate of Lovat was

bestowed, by a grant from the Crown, dated 23d August 1716, on Simon, Lord Lovat, 'for his many brave and loyal services done and performed to his majesty,' particularly in the late rebellion. A memorial in his lordship's favour, signed by about seventy individuals, including the earl of Sutherland, the members of parliament and the sheriffs of the northern counties, having been presented to the king, George the First, his pardon had been granted on the 10th of the preceding March, and on the 23d June following he had a private audience with his majesty. In 1721 he voted by list at the election of a representative peer, when his title was questioned. His vote was again objected to at the general elections of 1722 and 1727. In consequence of which, he brought a declaration of his right to the title before the court of session, and their judgment, pronounced July 3, 1730, was in his favour. To prevent an appeal, a compromise was entered into with Hugh Mackenzie, son of the baroness, who, on the death of his mother, had assumed the title, whereby, for a valuable consideration, he ceded to Simon Lord Lovat his claim to the honours and his right to the estate after his father's death.

Although Lord Lovat had deemed it best for his own purposes to join the friends of the government in 1715, he was, nevertheless, throughout his whole career, a thorough Jacobite in principle; and in 1740 he was the first to sign the Association for the support of the Pretender, who promised to create him duke of Fraser, and lieutenant-general, and general of the Highlands. On the breaking out of the rebellion in 1745, he sent his eldest son, much against the young man's inclination, with a body of his clan to join the army under Prince Charles, while he himself remained at home. After the disastrous defeat at Culloden, the young Pretender took refuge, on the evening of the battle, at Gortuleg, the house of one of the gentlemen of his clan, near the Fall of Foyers, where his lordship was then living, and not at Castle Dounie, as erroneously supposed by Sir Walter Scott. According to Mrs. Grant of Laggan's account of the meeting, Lovat expressed attachment to him, but at the same time reproached him with great asperity for declaring his intention to abandon the enterprise entirely. 'Remember,' said he fiercely, 'your great ancestor, Robert Bruce, who lost eleven battles, and won Scotland by the twelfth.' Lovat himself afterwards retired from the pursuit of the king's forces to the mountains, but not finding himself safe there, he escaped in a boat to an island in Loch Morar. Thither he was pursued, taken prisoner, being found concealed in a hollow tree, with his legs muffled in flannel, and carried to London. His trial for high treason commenced before the House of Lords, March 7, 1747. He was found guilty on March 18; sentence of death was pronounced next day; and he was beheaded on Tower Hill, April 9, 1747, in the eightieth year of his age. His behaviour while in the Tower was cheerful and collected. When advised by his friends to petition the king for mercy, he absolutely refused, saying he was old and infirm, and his life was not worth asking. His estates and honours were forfeited to the Crown, but the former were restored in 1774 to his eldest son, as already mentioned earlier.

Lord Lovat's appearance, in his old age, was grotesque and singular. Besides his forced marriage with the dowager Lady Lovat above described, he entered twice, during that lady's life, into the matrimonial state; first, in 1717, with Margaret, fourth daughter of Ludovick Grant of Grant, by whom he had two sons and two daughters; and, secondly, in 1733, after that lady's death, with Primrose, fifth daughter of John Campbell of Mamore, brother to the duke of Argyle. By this lady he had one son. The lady's objections to the marriage he is said to have overcome by the following stratagem: She received a letter purporting to be from her mother, in a dangerous state of health, desiring her presence in a particular house in Edinburgh. On hastening to the house indicated, she found Lovat waiting for her there, when he informed her that the house was devoted to purposes which stamped infamy on any female who was known to have

entered it. To save her character, she married, him, but is said to have been treated by him with so much barbarity as to be obliged to leave his house, when he was forced to allow her a separate maintenance. Of the eldest son, General Simon Fraser, born 19th October, 1726, an account has been already given. The second son, Alexander, born in 1729, after serving in the army abroad, returned to the Highlands with the title of brigadier. Janet, the elder daughter, married Macpherson of Clunie. Sybilla, the younger, died unmarried. On the faith of his 'Memoirs written by himself in the French language,' Lord Lovat has been admitted into Walpole's list of Royal and Noble Authors.

Sarah Fraser's 'The Last Highlander' gives a more balanced picture of the character and activities of Simon, and is highly recommended reading.

B: Some Unexplained Mysteries

This narrative provides possible answers for those reported facts that are not covered by the standard version. There may be other explanations, and perhaps putting forward possible theories will lead to an improved understanding of the events and personalities.

- Why did the Widow Lovat refuse to deny the marriage and provide witness to the accusation of rape?
- Why was the marriage not solemnised by the Reverend James, who was Minister of Kirkhill, being the parish in which Castle Dounie was situated? Why was the first marriage carried out by the Minister of Abertarff, a neighbouring parish far to the west of Kirkhill? Why was there the need for a second marriage, and then by the Minister of Kilmorack, a parish to the north, but with the parish boundary close to Castle Dounie?
- Is the story true of the beating that was inflicted on the Lady Amelia at Atholl, with a miscarriage of Simon's child resulting? What were the circumstances?
- The Reverend James Fraser of Kirkhill was a chronicler, with his writings up to 1674 being the Wardlaw Manuscript. It is unlikely that he did not continue his work until his death in 1709. Where are the later writings? Have they been destroyed?
- Simon refers to his little French pageboy, and later to his French valet. It is would be quite expected that he might have French servants while in France, but why mention them in correspondence? And why bring the valet back with him on his eventual return to Scotland?
- The unknown wife of Simon referred in the letters of Sir John MacLean? ([BK1 Link](#)) By all accounts, Sir John was a conservative and reliable person, so it is likely

that he would still recognise the marriage of Simon to Lady Amelia, as did many in the Highlands. So it is most probable that the wife was in fact Lady Amelia. In addition, the reference to 'fire and sword' is likely to be code for Tullibardine as it was his legal actions that led to the Commission of Fire and Sword being raised against Simon and his father Thomas.

- What hold did Sir George Mackenzie of Tarbat or Sir Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall have over Atholl that they were able to choose the spouse of the heiress Amelia?
- How did the Clan survive during the time of Alexander of Fraserdale? Why was it not more absorbed by Alexander's father, Sir Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall?
- Why did Lady Amelia stay at Castle Dounie after the death of her husband? Why did she also remain after her daughter had been removed to Atholl?
- At what stage did Lady Amelia become the Dowager? Dowager being an honorary for a widow with continuing influence, typically having a dower house and income. It is improbable that she would become Dowager while still claiming to be married to Simon.
- Under what name was Archibald christened? The letter from the Marquise de la Frezeliere ([BK3 Link](#)) mentions 'l'enfant baptisé sous votre illustre nom'. Does this mean the baptismal name was Simon? It would be natural for Simon to christen his eldest son this way, and perhaps understandable that the second name would be Archibald, as a respect to Archibald Campbell, Duke of Argyll. So perhaps 'Simon Archibald Fraser', who later decided he preferred the use of his second name, for obvious reasons. But then were second names usual at that time?
- What happened to the record of the baptism? I remember a story, I think from my Uncle Oliver, that pages had been torn out of baptismal records in France.
- It is told that Major Fraser of Castle Leathers was sent by the Clan to bring their Chief home. Who were those that represented the Clan? Who funded the Major's mission?

C: DNA Explore

Two things that have altered the landscape since my grandfather's time are the internet and DNA testing. I sent in my cheek scrape to Family Tree DNA for a Y-DNA111, being the best for exploring male lineage. In overview it appeared that I am not closely related to anyone on the accessible databases, which is consistent with the story of exile. But then those on the accessible databases are a minuscule proportion of the total population, and then predominantly from the USA. There are also those who

choose to maintain privacy regarding their DNA, for whatever reasons, whereas I have chosen to make mine public in the hope of finding more information:

http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Hugh_Frazer_DNA_Certificate.pdf

http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Hugh_Frazer_DNA_Results.csv

I also wanted to explore the obvious - that we may be related to other Frazer's in Ireland, mostly from further north, around Roscommon. The results indicate that there is no close relationship, again consistent with the story of an exile coming to Ireland on his own.

Then Robert Frazer, a fifth cousin, also had his tested, and that showed that we are closely related, being my only close DNA relation on record. We share an ancestor five generations back, being a grandson of Archie, so this gives some veracity to our family tree.

If Simon the Fox is our ancestor, he is eight generations back, and, as far as is known, has no other surviving male line descendants. There is a tantalising possibility that the headless corpse at the Wardlaw Mausoleum is that of Simon, and there is a faint possibility that some DNA may be extracted from his remains:

[Wardlaw Mausoleum | The burial place of the 'Old Fox'](#)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-38930291>

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/forensic-experts-to-solve-270-year-old-mystery-of-clan-chief-the-fox-1-4362540>

If this does not work out, the next nearest male line of descent is through the Strichen lineage, Lord Lovat's, with a common ancestor 14 generations back, Alexander Fraser, 4th Lord Lovat, 1527 - 1557. The next nearest that I know of is the Saltoun lineage, Chief's of the Fraser name, being 21 generations back to Sir Andrew Fraser of Touch Fraser, 1224 - 1308. There may well be other lineages between 14 and 21, but not easy to find.

D: Timeline

Moved to:

<http://blacknee.com/adhtimeline/index.html>

E: Blacknee Links

web:

<http://blacknee.com/adh/index.html>

<http://blacknee.com/ffc/BKOIndex.html>

<http://blacknee.com/adhlinks/index.html>

<http://blacknee.com/adhtimeline/index.html>

pdf:

http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Dowager_Highlander_V6P.pdf

<http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/BKC1-5.pdf>
http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Archibaldeans_List_96.pdf
http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Archibaldeans_Chart_97.pdf
http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Hugh_Frazer_DNA_Certificate.pdf
http://blacknee.com/adhpdf/Hugh_Frazer_DNA_Results.csv

epub:

http://blacknee.com/adhepb/Dowager_Highlander_V6.epub
http://blacknee.com/adhepb/Dowager_Highlander_V6.mobi

F: Copyright and Versions

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Version 1: Published online 25 July 2016

Version 2: Published online 4 August 2016

Version 3: Published online 5 September 2016

Version 4: Published online 16 December 2016

Version 5: Published online 1 March 2017

Version 6: Published online 3 August 2017

The Huguenot Trooper: + completed draft narrative

The Farmer and Father: + completed draft narrative

Epilogue: + completed draft

Appendix: DNA Explore + rewritten

Appendix: Timeline + Version 6 moved to web page, removed from text as too bulky

Appendix: Blacknee Links + updated