

Empty Footsteps

by

Lorn Macintyre

‘An epic novel of extreme passion and tenderness; a deeply moving tale that blends its pain and sorrow with love and laughter, evoking memories of a time and a place once dearly loved, now gone forever, but never forgotten.’ *Scottish Field*

‘The painful transition from feudalism to democracy (of a sort) is accelerated by the cataclysm of the First World War. Macintyre has astonishing descriptive powers, whether writing of the horrors of trench warfare or the tranquillity of a Highland glen. He is also a master of dialogue and the use of a single word or phrase can unerringly portray a mood or a personality.

‘The novel is concerned with time and change, but also with tradition and timelessness. Hector Macdonald pipes his comrades into the Battle of the Somme with the same heirloom pipes that had been played at Culloden. Clearly Lorn Macintyre is passionately involved with his subject and has a thorough understanding of the social and psychological forces which bring about change. A feature of the book is the compassion he has for all his characters, even the least sympathetic ones.

‘In spite of its tragic inevitability, this is a hugely enjoyable novel with moments of high comedy, and one is gripped by the story throughout. It is a fine achievement and I urge you to read it.’ *Chapman*

‘Particularly good in its subtle modification of the past into twentieth-century dilution of old order with new . . . This book lights a slow anger, all the more intense because of its compassion, its accuracy of historical observation, and its balance and fairness of view.’ *Books in Scotland*

‘A very well crafted story told in a series of vivid snapshots which depict the four years of killing in France and life in the Highlands, as seen through the eyes of some memorable characters. Dochie MacDougall, the great kilted warrior with his love life and his lust for women, contrasts with the impoverished MacDonald of Invernevis who spends the war in his mansion drinking and selling off family heirlooms . . . But the novel is about more than the war, its long slaughter and moments of love and humour. [Its]over-riding theme is the death of the old Highland way of life with the laird in his castle and the gillie in his croft . . .’ *Scots Magazine*

‘The reality of the war with its enormous casualties cannot be ignored, but there are lyrical passages and several expressions of hope, for Maggie and her illegitimate child certainly, and for Alanna and Invernevis possibly. It is an ambitious work, recalling in some ways Henry Green’s *Loving*, which is considerable praise.’ *Herald*

‘Lorn Macintyre . . . one of the most brilliant of contemporary Scottish fiction writers.’
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