

## What Scotland Taught Me

Molly Ringle

Fresh out of high school, Eva Sonneborn is headed to Scotland with her best friends: scholarly, sarcastic Laurence; gorgeous, ghost-seeing Amber; and responsible, sweet Shannon. They plan to spend the next six months in Edinburgh, enjoying an adventure-filled work-abroad journey before parting ways for college.

But when Eva meets Gil, a local bartender, she figures a little innocent flirting won't hurt her relationship with Tony, her ever-faithful boyfriend back home. But just when things turn less innocent with Gil, the trip starts throwing curveballs at not only her but her friends too. By the end of the trip, they've all fallen in love, sometimes with the wrong people - and with consequences that may tear their friendship apart forever...

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“Eva’s voice, expressed in first-person, is engaging from the first paragraph — both in her head, as narrator, and in dialogue with her peers. She’s smart and sassy without being disrespectful, and her quirky observations about self, friends, and the alien world of Scotland keep the story fresh and realistic.” ~ *Dark Divas Reviews*

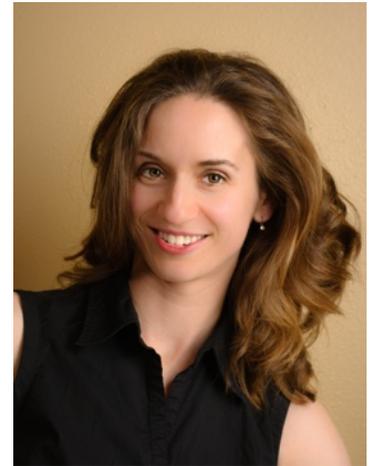
“...I laughed out loud over some of the antics of these four friends. If you're looking for a story with a different storyline, fun characters and you enjoy reading Young Adult themes then you definitely have to pick this one up!” ~ *Night Owl Reviews*

### Discussion Questions

1. What details about living in Scotland did you find most interesting? What do you think would be the most challenging part of living in another country?
2. This story shows several types of relationships--those between friends, family, and lovers. Which relationships did you think were the healthiest? And the least healthy?
3. Did you feel Eva's friends were too judgmental of her, or did you feel she deserved their disapproval?
4. What stereotypes do Americans and Brits still have about each other? What is the best way to get past these stereotypes?
5. Do you think the paranormal experiences were ever real? Or do you think they were all within the characters' minds?

**Molly Ringle** has been writing fiction for over 20 years, and her stories always include love and humor, as well as the occasional touch of tragedy and/or the paranormal. Her book *THE GHOST DOWNSTAIRS*, was a 2010 EPIC Award finalist for paranormal romance.

Molly lives in Seattle with her husband and kids and worships fragrances and chocolate.



## Interview with Molly Ringle

*Q: How did you come up with the idea for this book?*

A: I took a work-abroad trip to Edinburgh myself after I graduated from college, and it was indeed an adventure, though not to the same crazy degree as Eva's. But it got me thinking, as a writer, how such a trip could easily become the premise of a novel. I made everyone a bit younger, just out of high school, because it felt like the kind of plot that would make good YA. And I included ghost stories because I've always liked them, and because Edinburgh and Britain in general have so many of them.

*Q: Did you visit Edinburgh again to research the story?*

A: Unfortunately, no! I haven't been there in several years. But I spent a lot of time checking facts on the Internet, and also sent the manuscript to a few British friends who corrected my dialects, setting details, and other fine points.

*Q: How long have you been writing?*

A: Since I was a little kid, to some degree, but I first got excited about putting stories together when I was about twelve years old. I suppose the unfairness and cruelty of other middle-school kids had something to do with it. I discovered I could take refuge in an imaginary world where I controlled everything, which was reassuring. Since then, I've always been at work on some novel or another.

*Q: What books or authors have most influenced your own writing?*

A: My reading is eclectic, all over the map. There are the classics that have influenced me from my teen years on: the Bronte sisters, Victor Hugo (*Les Misérables* in particular), George Eliot, E.M. Forster, J.R.R. Tolkien, Daphne du Maurier. Those are probably my biggest influences when it comes to sweeping romance and beautiful literary prose. But I also love modern writers who have taught me quirky humor and wildly creative (sometimes paranormal) story ideas, such as John Irving, Susanna Clarke, and Neil Gaiman. But I could never pick a single favorite writer, and to decide my favorite book would be almost as hard. I crave variety too much.

*Q: Do you hear from your readers much? What do they say?*

A: So far, they've usually been friendly and delightful, and sometimes even say the things I most want them to say: 1) I made them laugh, and 2) I made them fall in love (or infatuation) with the characters. Best recent example is a woman saying she "squealed in unhinged delight" at certain romantic twists in *What Scotland Taught Me*. I feel I've done my work if I've temporarily unhinged a reader.

