

Five Days in Skye

Book Club Kit

"This story has guts and heart as well as the depth and heat necessary to satisfy any romance reader's palate."

USA TODAY



Praise for Five Days in Skye

"With enviable finesse, author Carla Laureano weaves romance, hope, healing, and faith into a spunky and sparkling tale that made me sorry to say good-bye to the characters and the alluring Isle of Skye."

Tamera Leigh, *USA Today* bestselling author

"Carla Laureano brought Skye alive with vivid detail, drew me into the main characters' budding romance, and kept me turning the pages late into the night."

Beth K. Vogt, award-winning author of the Thatcher Sisters series

"*Five Days in Skye* swept me away to Scotland! . . . Laureano's voice is deft, seamless, and wonderfully accomplished."

Becky Wade, Christy Award-winning author of the Bradford Sister series and *Stay with Me*

How to Prep Easy Book Club Snacks

Tips from Carla Laureano

If you're looking for some inspiration on snacks to serve at your next *Five Days in Skye* book club gathering, read through this article by Carla for some ideas.

So you've decided to start a book club—or maybe you already belong to one, but it's your turn to host. What happens when your biggest culinary skill is calling for takeout? Never fear, these easy snacks will make you look like a hostess extraordinaire and no one will ever know about that time you burned water.

1.) Charcuterie Board

I recommend this every single time I talk about book club snacks because it's filling and easy to put together. Just try to pick mild, medium, and bold selections in every category. When in doubt, ask your deli manager for ideas!

- Cured meats like mortadella, a good Genoa salami, and prosciutto (3+)
- Cheeses like fresh mozzarella balls, goat cheese, Stilton, or Gorgonzola (3+)

- Sweet options such as fruit chutney and fresh whole honeycomb (1-2)
- Tart condiments like whole grain mustard (1-2)
- Savory add-ons like smoked or roasted almonds and cured green olives (1-2)
- Fresh fruit such as grapes, sliced apples, blueberries, or segmented mandarin oranges (1-2)
- Something to eat the condiments on like toast points, baguette rounds, water crackers, or seeded crackers—don't forget the gluten-free options! (3-4)

Arrange it on a pretty marble cheese board or wooden cutting board, add a couple of cheese knives and spoons, and you've got an impressive spread that looks far more difficult than it actually is.

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2.) Bakery Buffet

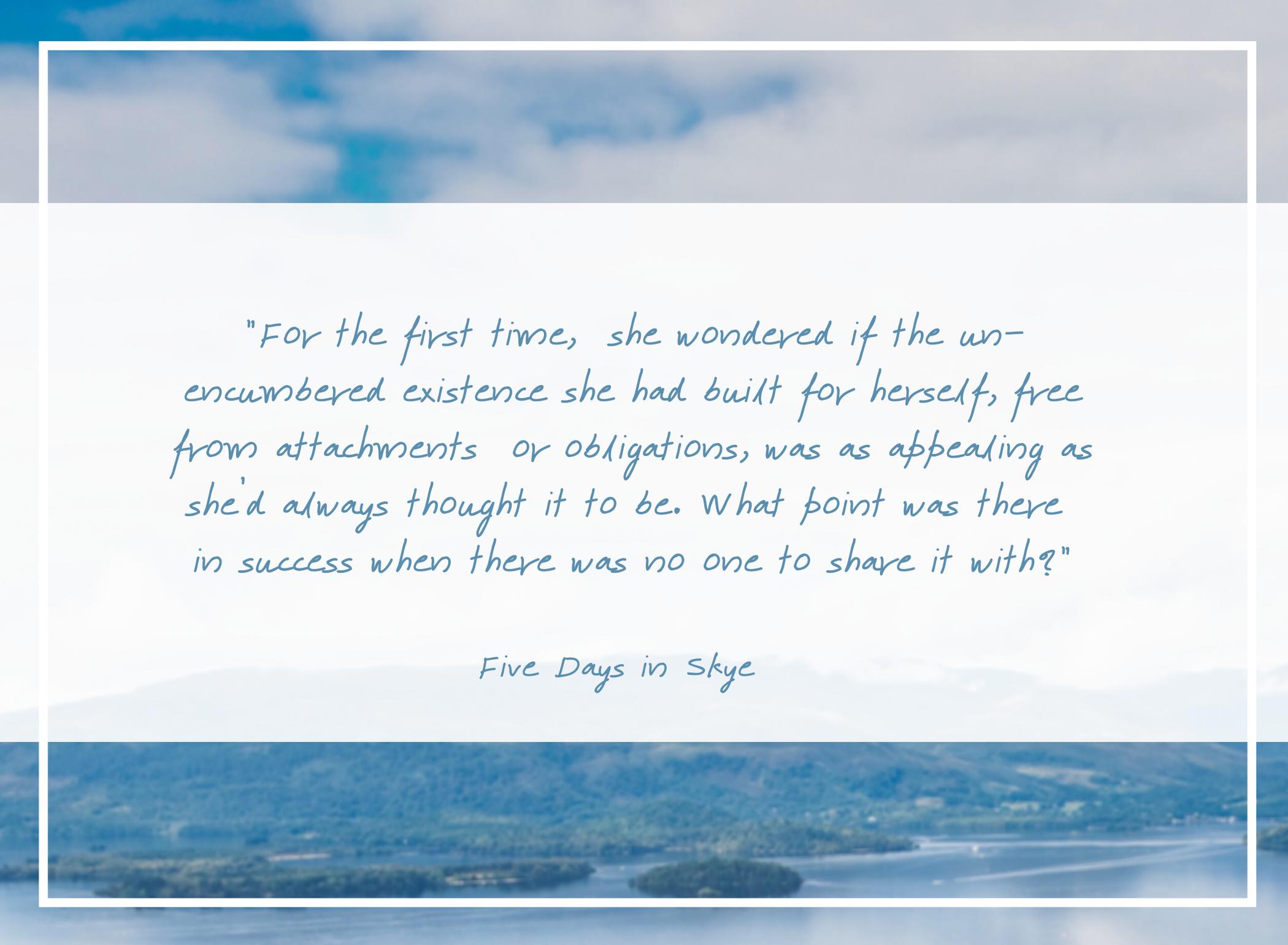
Bigger grocery and natural foods stores provide an amazing bounty of petite sweets, and they tend to be good quality as well! Try five or six varieties of pastries like bite-size brownies, two-bite scones, mini cinnamon rolls, mini sugar cookies, tiny Danishes, rugelach, small éclairs, and cream puffs. Display on pretty plates and serve with coffee and a variety of teas and you've got an instant book club/tea party.

3.) Coffee and Chocolate Pairing

What two flavors go together better than chocolate and coffee? Make your book club meeting into an impromptu tasting by selecting a variety of different chocolates and coffees.

One idea would be to choose by region: chocolates from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana along with Ethiopian Yirgacheffe and Kenya AA. Another would be to select coffees and chocolate from mild to bold: white, milk, dark, and extra dark chocolates along with blonde, medium, and dark roast coffee. If you need a little variety, you can also add in a selection of nuts and dried fruit.

When in doubt, think variety over time in the kitchen. After all, the point of a book club is to enjoy fellowship and discuss literature; the food just makes the time together all that much sweeter.

A scenic landscape featuring a large body of water in the foreground, surrounded by lush green hills and mountains in the background. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, creating a serene and atmospheric setting. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

"For the first time, she wondered if the un-encumbered existence she had built for herself, free from attachments or obligations, was as appealing as she'd always thought it to be. What point was there in success when there was no one to share it with?"

Five Days in Skye

Discussion Questions

1.) The story opens with a mistaken-identity meeting straight out of one of Andrea's favorite old movies. Both Andrea and James "stick to the script," acting in expected ways because of the setting. Are there situations in which you behave according to others' expectations? If so, why?

2.) James allows others to believe his playboy reputation is deserved, and Andrea plays along with the idea when confronted by jealous rivals. Is it wrong for them to allow other people to believe the worst? How much responsibility do we have for the way others perceive us?

3.) Andrea has been subjected to certain assumptions about her business sense because she is an attractive woman. Do you think that there is still a double standard for women in business? Do you think that women have to work harder to prove their capability than their male counterparts?

4.) James regrets the fact that he's been a bad example of a Christian man. How do you reconcile living freely under grace with the need to act as a good witness?

5.) Andrea is expected to do whatever it takes to get the contract. Have you ever been in a situation where your personal beliefs conflicted with the requirements of your job or school? How did you resolve that conflict? In hindsight, do you believe you made the right choice?

6.) Compare Andrea's relationship with her sister, Becky, and James's relationship with his brother, Ian. Both sets of siblings have experienced broken or disrupted homes, but they have vastly different relationships. Why do you think that is?

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Behind the Book: The Story of Five Days in Skye

By Carla Laureano

Take a few minutes and read this article by the author. Then, discuss with your book group how you think the author's own experience helped shape the story and its setting.

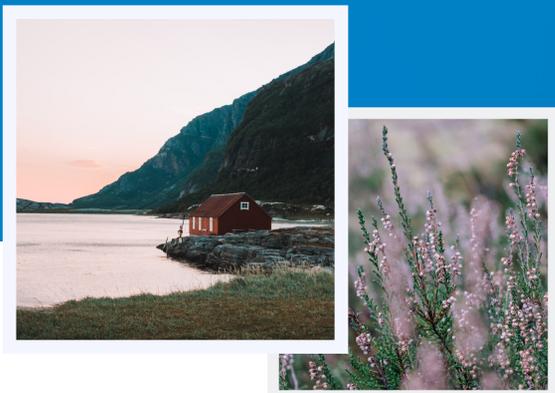
When I pitched the idea of my debut romance novel, *Five Days in Skye*, at the American Christian Fiction Writers conference in 2012, the idea of a Christian contemporary romance set in Europe was a fairly unusual one. There had been other books set overseas, of course, but American settings were still the norm. At one meeting, after I described the premise of an American businesswoman who learns to unplug and let go during a trip to the Isle of Skye, the editor leaned back in his chair and asked, “Why Scotland? Why Skye? Do you have some sort of personal connection to it?”

In a manner of speaking, I do. The fact is, at one point in my life, I had been Andrea Sullivan, with all the anxiety and a less impressive shoe collection. In 2004, my husband and I took a trip to Europe, which ended with several days on the Isle of Skye, doing nothing but hiking and sightseeing and relaxing. I’d been working as a marketing manager for a medical device manufacturer, and the previous year had been an endless stretch of trade shows and business trips with long office hours in between. I was so stressed out that I would wake up with a knot of dread in my stomach each morning, and I would end each day with half a bottle of wine on the patio. To say I needed a break was an understatement. There, looking out onto the blue waters of the Sound of Sleat, I took my first deep breath in what felt like years.

And then I went home to find flight reservations in my in-box for another business trip. A couple of weeks later, I found myself standing in an airport staring blankly at the departures board, unable to remember what city I was in or where I was going next. I realized I'd come to a turning point. And that was the beginning of my extraction from corporate life.

Fast forward eight years later, as I pondered writing a contemporary romance novel about a burned-out, stressed-out business-woman. I immediately knew I had the perfect setting for her transformation in the Isle of Skye. Add in a Scottish celebrity chef trying to outrun his playboy reputation, and I had the ideal foil for my closed-off, hardworking consultant. Given the setting and the company, how could Andrea do anything but dream of a life beyond an unending string of business trips?

It's been nearly fifteen years since that trip, and the changes it spurred apparently took, because I left my corporate career behind permanently, and I'm currently a full-time novelist and a full-time mom. But 2024 is coming up awfully quickly, making me think that a twentieth anniversary trip is in order. Given that the first trip resulted in a change of career and a completely new life, I can't help but wonder what amazing things might come out of a return visit.



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