



# Outlander

*Diana Gabaldon*

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## **Outlander** Diana Gabaldon

Claire Randall is leading a double life. She has a husband in one century, and a lover in another... In 1945, Claire Randall, a former combat nurse, is back from the war and reunited with her husband on a second honeymoon--when she innocently touches a boulder in one of the ancient stone circles that dot the British Isles. Suddenly she is a Sassenach--an "outlander"--in a Scotland torn by war and raiding border clans in the year of our Lord...1743.

Hurled back in time by forces she cannot understand, Claire's destiny is soon inextricably intertwined with Clan MacKenzie and the forbidden Castle Leoch. She is catapulted without warning into the intrigues of lairds and spies that may threaten her life ...and shatter her heart. For here, James Fraser, a gallant young Scots warrior, shows her a passion so fierce and a love so absolute that Claire becomes a woman torn between fidelity and desire...and between two vastly different men in two irreconcilable lives.

"Absorbing and heartwarming...lavishly evokes the land and lore of Scotland."

--Publishers Weekly"

"Stunning!"

--Los Angeles Daily News"

"It is a large canvas that Gabaldon paints, filled with strong passions and derring-do. Strong-willed and sensual, Claire is an engaging modern heroine plopped down in a simpler, more primitive time.... Great fun ...marvelous and fantastic adventures, romance, sex ...perfect escape reading!"

--San Francisco Chronicle"

## **Outlander Details**

Date : Published August 10th 1998 by Delta (first published June 1st 1991)

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Author : Diana Gabaldon

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endless agonizing death. His singleminded foxhunt of Jamie is confusing at first and later, every time his name is mentioned, I literally became filled with rage. I'm one of those that cried when I'm angry and I can't even tell you how hard I cried. Enough that I couldn't read any more. I had to calm down first.  
Poor Jamie :(

Here is my reaction, of which I typed in the buddy read I was taking part in after I read the specific part that made me hate...literally hate Randall. **Do not read this if you don't want a huge spoiler. You've been warned!!**82%  
(view spoiler)

Yeah, suffice it to say that I really hope we get more of Randall and that Ms. Gabaldon feels the black rage that I felt toward him. I hope, I hope, I hope. Even rereading my reaction makes my blood pressure rise.

### **Final thoughts:**

Yes, this is a great historical fiction novel but Jamie and Claire..their love, their devotion to each other is what makes this story epic. You just can't get around that fact. This is a love story. And so much more. I was so conflicted from the position that both Claire and Jaime were put in. What is right and wrong here? Claire loves her husband. But here she is, in this impossible situation, of which she can confide in no one. Not a single person. And so she goes first with her gut. Then with her head, and finally, FINALLY with her heart. **"Does it ever stop, Claire? The wanting?"**

**"You're mine, *mo duinne*," he said softly, pressing himself into my depths. "Mine alone, now and forever. Mine, whether ye will it or no." I pulled against his grip, and sucked in my breath with a faint "ah" as he pressed even deeper.**

**"Aye, I mean to use ye hard, my Sassenach," he whispered. "I want to own you, to possess you, body and soul." I struggled slightly and he pressed me down, hammering me, a solid, inexorable pounding that reached my womb with each stroke. "I mean to make ye call me 'Master,' Sassenach." His soft voice was a threat of revenge for the agonies of the last minutes. "I mean to make you mine."**

and later...

**"Oh, aye, Sassenach...I am your master...and you're mine. Seems I canna possess your soul without losing my own."**

With the gorgeous backdrop of Scotland, the descriptions alone, and the way the dialogue forces you to sink into the setting is worth the entire read.

I'm beyond happy that I finally started this series. I'm trying to pace myself while reading the next stories, as I feel the greatness in ma bones. This book itself was so amazing, I can't imagine what's in store for me. There were a few hints...very, very tiny hints in this book of some strange happenings with regards to the time travel aspect. Things always get convoluted when it comes to the whole switching time thing. What came first, Claire in real time or Claire in 1743? What will she change by going back and messing around with her ancestors, or more so her husband's ancestors? I can't wait to find out.

## Chelsea says

Man, after the pitch I've heard about this book from basically every (female) reader I've ever met, I was expecting something that was NOT THIS. Fairly offensive, needlessly graphic, and smutty in that skeezy way, rather than the hot way. At one point, Jamie punishes Claire for disobeying him by literally spanking her - which was treated as perfectly understandable, and was quickly dismissed. I know that I cringed throughout the entire thing, and found it hard to believe that any relatively modern woman would have put up with it, especially as Claire is supposed to be extremely well educated, capable and professional. I honestly find it hard to believe that there's five more books of this, and that people read them.

That said, I have read worse romance books, but the fact that Gabaldon dragged the novel out across nearly 900 pages just makes me cranky. UGH.

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## Emily May says

I wanted to write a better review for this book to coincide with the release of the new TV series, where Jamie actually does look pretty hot...

Back when I read this as a wee lass (okay, like, three years ago), there weren't quite as many interesting interpretations of the novel going on. I remember reading a bunch of reviews that either sold it as sophisticated, well-researched historical fiction, or a trashy kilt-wearing romance full of sex, violence and violent sex. In my opinion, neither is too far from the truth.

I'm going to be honest: I never finished the series. And I'm starting to think that it's likely I never will. **But this means nothing.** I thoroughly enjoyed the first four books, which equates to several thousand pages of enjoyment. They are huge, time-consuming volumes, which is why starting one is such a huge commitment and why I think the remaining books may stay forever unread. But I still think *Outlander*, at least, is worth reading.

This book is an entertaining, fast-paced romp through 1783 and has numerous close encounters with torture, sexual assault, witch trials and a whole lot of bloodshed. I'm not going to sell you some spiel about historical accuracy - I don't have a damn clue what Scotland was really like in the 18th century - but I can promise that it's hard to avoid being dragged in and devoured by this novel that is as gruesomely violent as it is exquisitely romantic.

Oh, and about that... this book tells the story of Claire Randall who finds herself suddenly transported back a couple hundred years and lands amid the warfare and dangers of Scottish clan life. In these strange circumstances, she meets Jamie. Readers often end up completely divided over Jamie because, although he is sweet and lovable for the majority of the novel, there is one disturbing scene that saddens and enrages any sane 21st-Century reader, including me (though not sure about the sane).

So I will spoil that one thing for you if you like (it's not a major spoiler)... (view spoiler)

I always found Gabaldon's characters delightfully complex and well-developed. Maybe not everyone feels

the same about Claire and Jamie, but I think one of the signs of a great writer is when they can really test my love for their characters, make them do the worst kind of things and still have me angsty over whether or not they would be okay in the end. **And I cared for Claire and Jamie.** They're one of the few literary couples that I have completely fallen in love with and cared about.

I only hope the TV series is just as good.

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## Holly says

A special note to those who say my review stopped them from reading this book: No no no! Read it! I actually reread the whole series last summer and enjoyed it immensely. Just read it for what it is: ludicrous, well-written, humorous, delicious TRASH. Just don't expect it to be the most brilliant novel ever written and you'll be fine.

How To Commit Adultery Without Being a Cheap Slutty Whore: A Q&A by Diana Gabaldon

Q: I love my husband but I'm feeling kind of restless. But adultery is wrong. So what do I do?

A: Easy! Go back in time!

Q: What do you mean, Ms. Gabaldon?

A: If you go back in time, your husband hasn't been born yet. So you can have wild and crazy S&M sex with impunity.

Q: But won't I still be married to him?

A: Aren't you listening? He hasn't been BORN yet. So you aren't married! But if you are really being such a stickler, then just have someone force you to get married to someone else.

Q: But, but, no one can force me to get married against my will!

A: Okay, let me lay it out for you: You're really hot for this sexy warrior barbarian guy, right? I know this, because you stop thinking about your husband about 24 hours after you've been dropped in this guy's arms. So you get in this situation where some obscure tribal law insists you have to get married, make a little protest, sign some papers, and voila!

Q: But that doesn't mean I have to sleep with him.

A: Oh but you do, because some random dude insists that you have to. Don't worry, the sex will be great even though he's a 23 year old virgin. So you see, you HAVE to do it, so it's okay.

Q: But isn't it a sin?

A: Fine, find a priest at the end of the book to absolve you, whatever. And anyway, it's okay because your husband basically told you it was okay, right before you were whisked back in time. Seriously, go for it. When else will you get the chance? You've been married for years. You deserve a little hot and heavy barbarian action.

Q: So what's this hot barbarian guy like?

A: Well, watch out, because he loves to reminisce about how his dad used to beat him and how wonderful that was. And he really gets off on beating you, but it's just the once. Oh, and it seems that he wants you so badly he can't restrain from ramming you repeatedly with his male member while telling you how much he

can't restrain himself and that gets seriously annoying after the twentieth time. But otherwise, it's all good.

Q: Anything else I should be aware of?

A: Surprise! Buttsex! But not for you, so it's okay.

Oddly, I'm going to read the next one in the series. Because I'm bizarrely fascinated. It's like a train wreck.

Edit 1:

Someone in the comments said I should copy this into the review, so here you go:

#### Plot Summary

Claire: I love my husband! I love sex!

Frank: But it's okay if you have sex with someone else, in certain circumstances.

Standing Stones: SUCK! Ha ha, you're in another time!

The Anti-Frank: Ooooh, I think I will rape you.

Claire: Eeek!

Clansmen: Scots to the rescue! Here, meet Jamie and his manly manhood.

Jamie: Och, aye, I'm a tough laddie. And I'm going to kill the Anti-Frank for beating the shit outta of me and raping my sister.

Claire: Ooooh, he's cute. Hey, wasn't I married?

Dougal: Ye have to marry the laddie to get away from the Anti-Frank.

Claire: Okay.

Dougal: And ye have to have sex wit' him.

Claire: Mmmmm.... but.... well, okay.

Jamie: I'm a virgin. Oooh, but I love sticking my manhood in ye. It's like a sacrament and all.

Claire: I should get back to Frank, I think I will take this opportunity to run away... I guess... sort of... meh.

The Anti-Frank: Ha ha! Found you. Now to rape you!

Jamie: Och, that's my wee lassie. First I'm going to rescue her, then I'm going to beat her for disobeying me. And then I'm going to tell her about how me Da beat me and how much I liked it.

Jealous wench: The village witch is looking for you.

Claire: Okay!

Villagers: She's a witch! Burn her!

Jamie: Over my dead body!

Claire: Honey, I have something to tell you. I'm not a witch but...

Jamie: Ye must go back!

Claire: I can't. I long for your manhood too much. It's a manhood like no other.

The Anti-Frank: I too long for your manhood. I think I will bugger you right after I crush your hand with a hammer. But, I love you. You remind me of my dead brother. Here's some grease.

Jamie: Ouch. Oooh, but that feels sort of good. Och, I'm so ashamed.

Claire: We must rescue Jamie! Send in the cows!

Jamie: OCH! Me hand! Just let me die!

Claire: Never! Let's go to France.

Jamie: Och, aye lassie, I feel much better now.

Father Anselm: God says it's okay that you're a bigamist.

Claire: Awesome. Time to use my foreknowledge of past events for good!

Diana Gabaldon: The sequel will be 900 pages.

Finis

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## Julianna says

Reviewed for [www.thcreviews.com](http://www.thcreviews.com)

I've read that *Outlander* was originally marketed as a romance novel because the publisher didn't know what else to do with it, but this book is no ordinary romance novel. It doesn't follow any typical romance formula and is a real genre bender that doesn't fit neatly into any one category. *Outlander* has a swoon-worthy hero and dozens of truly romantic scenes that should be sufficient to satisfy even the most discriminating romance reader, while its time travel aspect and a few references to witches and fairies should be of interest to readers of fantasy and paranormal stories. At its heart though *Outlander* is a historical novel rife with details of 18th century life in the Scottish Highlands both inside and outside a castle or large estate. It also recounts some of the events leading up to the Jacobite Pretender's Uprising of 1745. Diana Gabaldon is an amazing writer who delves deep into her character's lives and the history surrounding them, painting an extraordinary picture that truly transports the reader to another time and place.

Claire is an incredibly strong heroine, who can sometimes be a bit brash and sassy, but deep down she is a kind and caring person at heart. She adapts amazingly well to a new time and place, much better than most people ever would if faced with the dilemma she was. Claire is a very intelligent woman who uses every ounce of knowledge at her disposal to reverse her predicament, while helping others, especially with their medical needs, and bringing a much needed modern perspective to ancient methods. She somehow finds the courage to make difficult choices in an era when choices were sometimes few or non-existent, especially for women, and to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done. Claire is stubborn and persistent even in the face of nearly impossible odds. Best of all she is a pillar of strength to her beloved Jamie as much as he is to her, and she has a powerful underlying passion that matches his own for her.

Jamie, in my opinion, is the best romantic hero ever to be penned by an author. He exhibits both physical and mental strength, as well as a strength of character, that go above and beyond any ordinary romantic hero. His word is his honor, and his commitment to that honor is moving beyond words. If only there were more men in reality who could be so easily trusted and taken at their word. Jamie shows a deep respect, not just for Claire, but for all the women with whom he comes in contact, a true gentleman in every sense of the word. On the outside, Jamie is tough as nails, enduring more physical pain than any one person should ever be expected to, while on the inside, he is kind, gentle and sensitive, often instinctively knowing things that others don't. He is thoroughly intelligent and well-educated and often beautifully poetic in his speech. He is lighthearted and self-deprecating, never taking himself too seriously. I loved the way he was always teasing Claire. Jamie is simply a wonderful character, a man who loves selflessly and with his whole being.

There is much to enjoy about this book. Together, Jamie and Claire make a formidable couple, and it is obvious from the outset that they are soulmates. Their absolute trust in each other, basically from the moment they meet, is in and of itself, romance at its finest. There are no contrived misunderstandings between them, only naked honesty, which brings an openness and vulnerability to both characters that is breathtaking. I love the way the author creates a beautiful friendship between these two characters before they end up at the altar and of course then become lovers. What's even better though is how that friendship continues to blossom and grow deeper and deeper even after they are married. The intimacy level of these two characters is something I rarely see in a novel, and most of it has little or nothing to do with sexual interludes. During the times when Jamie and Claire were apart even for short periods of time, I simply couldn't wait for them to be reunited, as the two of them together absolutely electrify the pages. All the secondary characters are extremely well-crafted and surprisingly well fleshed out, even those who play only minor parts. The setting is beautifully rendered as well, almost becoming a character unto itself. The time travel aspect adds an extended element of intrigue, and Ms. Gabaldon has certainly taken the time to think through the ramifications of such a feat if it were indeed possible. Every scene simply adds to the richness of detail in the book, and there is nothing that I felt was excess. The author's care in seamlessly weaving all of





## **Kelly says**

Yes! I read this. I admit it! You caught me! Not only that... I loved it. It is a double sin I will likely have to one day repent for by reading piles of Dostoyevsky while I tear out my hair. In any case. Right, once again into the breach to defend myself!

This book is incredibly long. It's just a fact. All of them are. But they go by so incredibly fast. By the time I got to the third one? I read it in three days. The pages just keep turning. I read at double speed I was so engrossed in the story. And I must admit that usually I hate time travel romances (... I mean.. not that I have any experience trying them before... never...) but this one is not even about that. Or if it is, it just makes it better.

Also? There is a pile of historical information in this text. It deals with the Bonnie Prince Charlie uprising, and the rest of the books go on to deal with the American colonies and the Revolution by the time that they're done. It's not just about the romance. It's about medical treatment, what horrid things Scottish people ate, the reality of what people would have suffered through. Which is in some cases I think a direct indictment of the Scottish Highlander bodice-rippers in which everyone is shining and perfect and with awfully clean white teeth. I'd say this is more historical fiction than romance.

But fine, let's deal with the romance. Yes. There is a lot of sex. However, I found it to also be deeply intimate and true, brutal, and real. Claire and Jamie, while apart, are deeply attractive and sympathetic characters with a good deal of nobility about them. Throw them together in love? And they are beautifully frail, selfish, angry, flawed. I love that statement. I really find them so incredibly touching.

So there. It's not just a romance novel. I stick my tongue out oh so maturely at the readers of this review.

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## **Leslie says**

This series changed my life. I cannot even begin to go into the details of how much I fell in love with the main characters: Claire Beauchamp and Jamie Fraser. The love story between these two beautifully written characters actually transcends time and logic. Their devotion, respect and soul-reaching love was one of beauty and even awe inspiring. Theirs is a long and beautiful historic journey together reaching limits and boundaries of both heartwarming depth and gut-wrenching tragedy. Not to be cryptic, it's just that this indescribable story is meant to be told through the words of the brilliant author, Diana Gabaldon.

Fyi...this is an incredibly long series, with 7 books published, (most average 1,000 pages), with an 8th book due in 2014. It's a commitment to say the least, but very worth the absolute loveliness that is Gabaldon's brilliant and stunning love story. My words will never do this series justice.

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## **RandomAnthony says**

(Ok, first off, there are going to be minor spoilers/hints in this review...read at your own risk, although I'll

try not to reveal too much.)

Outlander is a damn good book. Sure, the book has a blue fake leather cover, costs four bucks, and screams “spinning rack at the airport bookstore”. I approached the text with suspicion but found myself invested in the language and storyline within the first hundred pages. Here’s why:

#### TEN GOOD THINGS ABOUT OUTLANDER

1. The characterizations of Jamie and Claire, along with a few other less important figures, are stellar. Ms. G. goes out of her way to create rich, deep personalities. If you thought Jamie was only going to be a caricature of romantic manhood, you’d be wrong. If you thought Claire was going to be a plucky damsel in distress, you’re wrong.
2. As I’ve said before, Ms. G. did her research. Her sense of detail, whether discussing plants or historical elements intrinsic to the plant, is admirable.
3. There are a few truly funny passages in the book. Claire’s interactions with men who try to tell her what to do, and her sharp tongue, are often quite entertaining.
4. There are a few very, um, stimulating parts in Outlander. You know what I mean, those of you who have the reached the cave scene and a few others earlier in the book.
5. Ms. G. displays strong insight in trust and relationships. The fights between Claire and Jamie seem real and at times harrowing. Jamie’s recovery near the end of the book and his description of his trials are nothing short of terrifying. She doesn’t spare her reader or the characters tough questions and emotional pain. Outlander is not an easy read.
6. The plot moves quickly. I found myself wanting to cheat and page ahead to find out what was going to happen. This book screams screenplay. Why is it not a movie?
7. Ms. G. writes well. I know that sounds trite, but she structures her sentences intelligently and reading rarely dragged. I knocked out 850 pages in three busy weeks but looked forward to picking up the book after the house grew quiet.
8. John Randall and the witch (can’t remember her name, Ginnie or something) were both well-drawn. Randall in particular fascinated me. Villains are usually less complicated than Mr. Randall.
9. The “time travel” facet of the book, as Kirk pointed out, is handled very well and not overused in a sensationalistic manner.
10. Outlander raises some fascinating ethical questions. I could see it as a good book club book. Should Claire get married? Did she put herself in unreasonable danger and some of her friends in danger in turn? What’s up with Randall? Those types of questions.

#### THREE THINGS I THOUGHT OUTLANDER COULD DO BETTER

1. There were times when I felt Ms. G. was setting up the sequel a bit too much. You know when you’re watching a movie and you can tell some plot points aren’t going to get resolved until the next one? That feeling? I could feel that a couple times.
2. The prison and Lollybrook (sp?) scenes dragged a bit. Outlander really could have been two books.
3. I wasn’t comfortable with some of the religious discussion during Jamie’s recovery. I’m not sure why Ms. G. put the priest in and the conversation in which Claire’s actions are rationalized. I didn’t think that was

necessary.

Ok, I have a question. Why is the quality of Outlander so controversial? It's a flat-out good book. Is it because Outlander is aimed, it seems, primarily at women? Is it the huge, smelly pile of Fabio-covered romance novels tainting Ms. G.'s work? I swear, and I think I've said this before, market this book differently and you've got a respected hit on your hands rather than a less-respected novel that sold a zillion copies but appears to be of lesser quality than it is (thanks, fake leather cover!). Don't be afraid of Outlander. It's a solid adventure story with decent psychological insight and some good sex scenes. I doubt you'll be disappointed. Take the risk. Don't be a wuss.

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## Lisa says

Contains SPOILERS ---

I was lying in a hospital bed with my leg broken, and once the library trolley came for a round of 'books, anyone?', my hand was in the air in no time.

Too late did the librarian notice the foreign literature on my bedside table and with a distraught expression try to recover 'Outlander'; I said firmly: 'Oh no, Madam, I'll read that.'. Just enough time left for her to make up with a tome of controversial French literature on the genocide in Ruanda...

But as I'd said: my first mission was 'Outlander'.

Anyway, it could not be that bad, since I'd seen it sold by the local bookclub before.

Ah yes, it could. After some forty pages, my jaw dropped in disbelief, after some hundred pages the case was as good as closed. But then, to tell the truth, Ms Gabaldon's warped morals kept me going.

Because this brave woman has achieved what I never thought could be done: she has fabricated some catholically correct porn.

Let me point that out:

Claire, pretty much a Mary Jane (on the first few pages her lovely -we know it is, curly and unruly, though she claims it is 'not'- hair is described at length, and - did you know she can heal people? Oh yes, and - Did you know she has a spitfire personality, but everybody likes her in spite of that, well not the women, but then, they're either jealous or uptight or both...?) is by some zing of the time-space continuum catapulted back to the Scotland of yore, without her husband (goodlooking, sensitive, a savant), but never mind, she finds some replacement in her husband's \*evil\* ancestor (looks just like him), who's just as much into Claire, but unfortunately lacks the morals to please and guts to take it up with Ms. Spitfire.

This proves to be helpful in forgetting husband#1, handy, since soon Claire arouses the ardour of a young, proud and good-looking Scotsman, Jamie, who, if a bit on the simple side, is as true as gold, not to mention built like....well yes... and just one twist of fate later, they find themselves exchanging vows.

Note: The \*good\* never have extra-marital sex in this book, that's for the evil and sluggish.

Surprise upon surprise, actually Jamie is a virgin on their wedding night, but with a few leads, quickly gets into his role: 'Matrimony turns into a sacrament what would otherwise be a sin', or so it goes.

In the following, this sacrament is bestowed upon darling Claire with unnerving frequency, about every two pages, but it only gets really colourful if preceded by conjugal beating - Claire did something bad, Claire has to be punished, yes, she herself acknowledges this in the end, or attempts of strangers (or \*evil\* husband) to rape her.

Yes, and of course, after Jamie has de facto been raped and tortured by \*evil\* husband. He's so desolate. Evil husband forced Jamie into actually enjoying the experience. This is not right, Jamie is straight, Jamie is disgusted by himself. But Claire does some sexual healing and re-enactment and 'pouf!' To top this off, in the end Claire learns from a monk that de facto both her marriages are considered valid by the church, since the one with Jamie precedes the one back in the 20th century.

Most distasteful because of the 'wifebeating' episode and the fact that homosexuality is shown as an evil trait

adherent to the \*evil\* guy (some young kid with a bible hung himself because of this, strange enough, female victims of rape are not half as suicidal in this book).

So we repeat:

-No sex without marriage.

-Woman has to obey man. Otherwise she gets into trouble, and he has to punish her.

-Homosexuals among the evil only.

Any questions? had there been the possibility to bestow 0 stars on this concoction..., ah well.

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## Deborah Markus says

I gave up on this book because I was sustaining permanent damage from reading it and I was afraid I'd start hitting back. And it's a borrowed copy, so that wouldn't be cool.

In fairness, I should say there's a lot of good writing here. I really enjoyed the beginning chapters. They even kind of cracked me up, because I have friends who love genealogy and their husbands always get *that look* when they start talking about it and that's exactly how I imagined Claire looking when her husband Frank started droning on and on about his ancestors.

And Claire is a nurse, which is a really good transportable skill if you're going to be thrown back in time which it turns out Claire is. (Sorry. Spoiler alert.) Can you imagine if you were one of those Nerds On Wheels computer repair people and *you* got sent to eighteenth-century Scotland? You'd be totally screwed.

But Claire's skills come in handy without seeming out of place. A woman who's a dab hand at healing is always welcome in Olden Tymes, so Claire is able to land on her feet and kind of get a job once she figures out what happened to her and comes to terms with it.

Which is pretty much immediately. Which is when the book started to lose me. There's, like, no culture shock whatsoever. She gets knocked back two hundred years or so. She goes, "WHOA. What the flimminy?" She starts being The Lady To Go To With Your Eighteenth-Century Scottish Boo-Boos. That's it.

There are a few mentions of things like how shoes fit differently back then and anachronistic language, but there's no sense of the kind of thing a person from the future would be startled by. Not the food, not the weird underwear, nothing. Claire just settles in and starts being the resident nurse at a castle. She keeps half an eye out for a chance to get to the place that can take her back to the future, but it has all the deep emotional urgency that I feel when I really should stop by the grocery store on the way home but it won't kill anybody if I go tomorrow instead. Like, whatever.

Still, there was plenty to keep me interested. Like – leeches! The stuff about leeches was cool. And the info about healing herbs. And that kid getting his ear hammered to a board because he was caught stealing.

Really, this book would have worked fine for me if it hadn't been for what everybody else seems to love about it, which is the Romantic Interest. Which *still* would have been fine, even with the whole SHE'S MARRIED ALREADY thingy.

But, okay – let's say that she *has* to marry that guy. They aren't in love when they get married and so the whole point of the book is to watch their relationship develop, while Claire struggles with guilt and fear and thoughts of how her *real* husband must be worrying about her and how the heck does time-travel work in this book and WHY IS SHE JUST ASSUMING THAT TIME IS GOING BY IN THE FUTURE AT THE SAME RATE IT IS FOR HER? WHY, I ASK YOU?

(Sorry. I'm a minor-league nerd, and this part really bugged me.)

So what I just described would have been a book I could read and enjoy, or at least read and not scream in pain. But apparently someone gave Diana Gabaldon the creepiest piece of writing advice EVER, and it was this:

"Listen – you know how if you're cooking and you're worried it's not turning out very well, just add bacon if it's savory and chocolate chips if it's sweet and everybody'll love it? Well, if you're working on your first novel and you don't know what to have happen next, just throw in some rape! Or attempted rape! Works like a charm!"

She follows this advice to the letter, and I'm sorry but I have to go home now.

I managed to read the "she disobeys him so he beats her with his belt" scene. I almost punched the book right in the face, but as I said, it's a friend's copy so I had to be nice.

Then I managed to get through the "she forgives him for the beating, like, the next freakin' day" scene. I started fantasizing about this book getting stuck in the elevator of a burning building, but I was able to hold on and keep going.

*Then* there was the scene where Big Kilted Oaf – I mean, Jamie – starts laughing about the whole beating thing and reminiscing about how hot she looked when he was holding her down beating the crap out of her *and she forgives him for that, too. Like, instantly.* And I'm all, "WHO AM I AND WHAT AM I DOING HERE?"

And *still* I staggered on. Heaven only knows why.

And *how* did the author reward me for my perseverance? What is this book all about? What's the recurring literary theme?

Rape. Attempted rape. More attempted rape. Marital rape. A little more marital rape. Conversations about rape. GIGGLING during conversations about rape.

And I'm all, "I'M OUT OF HERE AND I DON'T CARE HOW MANY OF MY FRIENDS HATE ME."

I read 444 pages in a row, plus I skimmed a lot of the rest of it including the creepiest, rapiest Chekhov's gun I've *ever* seen fired. Do NOT tell me I didn't give this book a fair chance. I TOTALLY DID.

In case you need proof, here's a list of all the things I learned about rape from *Outlander*.

**1. It's a bummer for the woman involved, but save your sympathy for her brother.** (Assuming you have any emotional response at all, which you won't if you're Claire.)

Jamie tells Claire about his sister Jenny being raped by a dastardly redcoat. He has a good chuckle talking about how Jenny punches and kicks her attacker. She isn't able to hold him off forever, though. And Jamie gets flogged for trying to defend her.

Claire's response?

*"I'm sorry. It must have been terrible for you."*

It *is* terrible for Jamie to have his sister "dishonor herself wi' such scum." (Nice.) So terrible that he can't

bring himself to go back home to her when he gets out of prison, and "see her again, after what happened." She's impregnated by the rape. Left on her own both emotionally and financially, she is forced to become the mistress of another English soldier. Jamie finally sends her what money he can, but can't bring himself to write to her. Because, you know, "what could I say?"

Claire's response?

*"Oh, dear."*

(Really -- *how* could I give up on this book when the main character is so sympathetic?)

## **2. Rape can lead to comically inaccurate ideas about how people do "the nasty!"**

After Jamie and Claire consummate their marriage, Jamie confesses that he "didna realize that ye did it face to face. I thought ye must do it the back way, like; like horses, ye know." Claire tries to keep a straight face as she asks him why on earth he thought that.

*"I saw a man take a woman plain, once, out in the open. But that...well, it was a rape, was what it was, and he took her from the back. It made some impression on me, and as I say, it's just the idea stuck."*

So of course Claire flips out and asks him what the heck *that* was all about. Who was it? Why was he witness to a rape "out in the open"? Was he able to help the woman? What happened to her?

Oh. Wait. This is Claire the Emotionless. She doesn't ask him *anything*, and he doesn't say anything else on the subject. Instead, they cuddle and talk about how much fun what they just did was.

Because a story about rape out in the open is just the kind of pillow talk a woman wants to hear when she's relaxing after a nice bout of bigamy.

I mentioned I loved this book, right? I didn't? Good.

## **3. Nearly getting raped turns you on for Mr. Right!**

Jamie and Claire are off on their own in the woods for a spot of marital bliss when they're set upon by highwaymen. Claire is nearly raped, but manages to kill her assailant. Yes, she was a nurse during World War II, but I think there's a difference between witnessing violence and inflicting it yourself. She kills the guy in the nick of time. He's on top of her, so she undoubtedly gets his blood all over her. Meanwhile, Jamie manages to dispatch the other two guys.

And then Claire flips out about the fact that she was just attacked, and she had to kill a guy, and she had to kill a guy at close quarters *with a knife*.

Oh. Wait. This is Claire. She has *no response to any of this*, now or later.

Well, she does have *one* response:

*When I put my hands on his shoulders, he pulled me hard against his chest with a sound midway between a groan and a sob.*

*We took each other then, in a savage, urgent silence, thrusting fiercely and finishing within moments.*

If your marital love life has been a bit blah lately, why not get attacked and then kill the guy? It'll spice

things right up!

#### **4. It's not rape if it's your husband and he promises he'll hurry...**

*"Jamie! Not here!" I said, squirming away and pushing my skirt down again.*

*"Are ye tired, Sassenach?" he asked with concern. "Dinna worry, I won't take long."*

(next page):

*He took a firm grip on my shoulders with both hands.*

*"Be quiet, Sassenach," he said with authority. "It isna going to take verra long."*

I gather it's especially not rape if your husband has an ethnic-slur nickname for you. He should use this at least three times a page. (Yes, "Sassenach" is derogatory. It'd be like if you were white and your husband called you his little gringo. Although that would actually be kind of funny if he's white, too. I think I want to get my husband to start calling me that now. But I digress.)

#### **5. ...or if it's your husband and he just really, really wants it.**

Claire is saying no, and no again. She's still in pain from the last time they did it, because he didn't take no for an answer even when she told him quite honestly he was hurting her.

So how does our romantic lead respond?

*James Fraser was not a man to take no for an answer. ...Gentle he would be, denied he would not.*

I quoted that last line to my husband, and he got the same look on his face that I had on mine all through a two-day bout with food poisoning.

If this book works for you, fine. I'm not here to judge. I'm just asking that you understand how completely creeped out I was by all this, and not tell me I didn't give it a fair chance. I did. I really hate not finishing a book once I start it, but I just couldn't stand it any more.

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### **Sasha Alsberg says**

WHATTTT HOW DID I NOT MARK THIS MAGNIFICENT CREATION OF A NOVEL AS READ BEFORE???

I read this book 2 years ago and it has captured my heart and is my favorite book of all time <3

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### **Sasha Alsberg says**

This book is my love, you all know this. It deserves an infinite amount of stars, too bad Goodreads only allows 5!

Check out my review on YouTube here:

<http://youtu.be/FNfLLKhP-E8>

