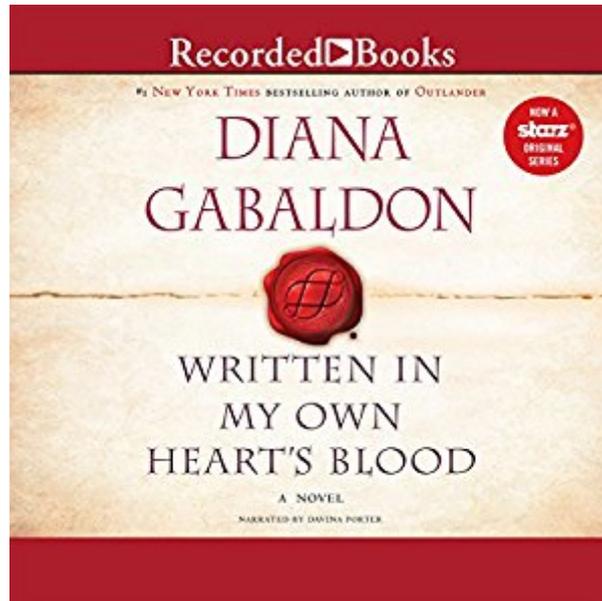


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Written In My Own Heart's Blood: Outlander, Book 8



Synopsis

In her now classic novel *Outlander*, Diana Gabaldon told the story of Claire Randall, an English ex-combat nurse who walks through a stone circle in the Scottish Highlands in 1946, and disappears... into 1743. The story unfolded from there in seven best-selling novels, and CNN has called it "a grand adventure written on a canvas that probes the heart, weighs the soul and measures the human spirit across [centuries]." Now the story continues in *Written in My Own Heart's Blood*. It is 1778: France declares war on Great Britain, the British army leaves Philadelphia, and George Washington's troops leave Valley Forge in pursuit. At this moment, Jamie Fraser returns from a presumed watery grave to discover that his best friend has married his wife; his illegitimate son has discovered (to his horror) who his father really is; and his beloved nephew, Ian, wants to marry a Quaker. Meanwhile, Jamie's wife, Claire, and his sister, Jenny, are busy picking up the pieces. The Frasers can only be thankful that their daughter Brianna and her family are safe in 20th-century Scotland. Or not. In fact, Brianna is searching for her own son, who was kidnapped by a man determined to learn her family's secrets. Her husband, Roger, has ventured into the past in search of the missing boy - never suspecting that the object of his quest has not left the present. Now, with Roger out of the way, the kidnapper can focus on his true target: Brianna herself. *Written in My Own Heart's Blood* is the brilliant next chapter in a masterpiece of the imagination unlike any other.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

**** I received an advance review copy of the book from the publisher ***** No MOBY Spoilers. I

promise. But there are spoilers of other books in the Outlander series! ***When we left these characters after 'An Echo in the Bone', way back in 2009 (and 1980, and 1778, respectively) the Fraser clan were spread far and wide and swimming in various levels of hot water. Believing Jamie to be dead and lost at sea, along with his sister Jenny, Claire married Lord John Grey after rumblings in the British Army had her targeted for arrest on account of being a spy. Not, in fact, being dead and lost Jamie returned to find Claire at Lord John's house in Philadelphia where he was at once confronted with the fact that his wife was married to his dear friend, and his son William (Ninth Earl of Ellesmere) was confronted with the world's worst kept secret - that he is in fact the illegitimate son of James Alexander Malcolm MacKenzie Fraser - a rebel Highlander. Elsewhere in 1778 - young Ian, Jamie's turned-Mohawk nephew was laying his heart at the feet of Quaker woman, Rachel Hunter, and making plans to wed her. Meanwhile, in 1980, Claire and Jamie's time-travelling daughter Brianna was in her own pickle. Confronted by her colleague Rob Cameron, who claimed to have kidnapped her son Jem and taken him through the Craigh na Dun stone circle (to when?) Brianna's husband, Roger, went after his son unknowingly leaving Brianna and daughter Mandy in the clutches of Rob Cameron and unknown accomplices whose scheme for buried treasure is coming to a fore. Jem, meanwhile, was trying to remain calm inside the deep, dark hydroelectric tunnel where Cameron had stashed him. Are we all caught up then?

Spoilers - please don't read if you want to avoid me giving away some narrative points in this novel I love this Outlander series and enjoyed being with the characters through this telling, but I agree that it was a disappointing read for these reasons: 1) Rape as the go-to tension builder/plot point. I was starting to feel this before this novel, but WiMOHB takes it to a new level. Look, I get that there are lots of rapists in the world, but when every bad guy tries to rape every main female character in the story, it doesn't just get old, it diminishes the impact of the violence and violation of rape. Jamie was violently tortured and raped. Claire was sexually assaulted in France and watched as her companion was violently raped on a street, then she was forced to barter sex with the King to save Jamie's life after he attacked his male rapist in France. Fergus was forced to prostitute himself as a poor urchin in France. Brianna was raped, then she had some kind of weird relationship with her rapist, which I never understood, and led to her being put in danger and almost being sold into slavery (where she was again physically assaulted as a potential buyer "assessed" her person). Claire was beaten, sexually assaulted by multiple men and then raped by a complete stranger. And in this novel, Brianna is forced to strip and be touched by Rob Cameron, who intends to rape her, but she grabs him by the balls (literally) and disables him before he can finish the deed (it's still a

sexual assault...if this was supposed to be cathartic, like, look she can fight back and defend herself now, it was not).

I'm torn. There are parts of "Written in My Own Heart's Blood" that are equal to some of the best I've ever read, but then there are some elements that I came to feel were self-indulgent vanities on the part of the author. About half-way through I had the sudden thought that this series needs to come to an end and soon. All of the praise for Ms. Gabaldon's writing is well deserved as this book is all that we have come to expect from her. She is able to establish setting and character better than pretty much any author I've ever read with the possible exception of Stephen King. I feel like I know Jamie and Claire as well as I know members of my own family. The author's powers of description are excellent and her ability to create tension are outstanding. The story contains all the familiar, well-loved characters, adds several new ones and continues smoothly connected to the one that came before it in Echo in the Bone. We find out the fate of Bree, Roger, and Jem in the modern times as well as seeing Jamie and Claire through some of the early and bitter battles of the American Revolution. Lord John and William also get a fair amount of play in this novel. Truth be told, I found Lord John's story and struggles in this novel thoroughly engrossing almost more so than that of many of the other characters. However, I must confess that William's bellyaching and moaning about his paternity wore out its welcome well before it ended and his and Jamie's collaboration on a problem near the end of the novel stretched my credulity a bit. So, what then is the problem that has me so torn on how to rate this novel?

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