



# **The Outlandish Companion: The First Companion to the Outlander series, covering Outlander, Dragonfly in Amber, Voyager, and Drums of Autumn**

*Diana Gabaldon*

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## **The Outlandish Companion: The First Companion to the Outlander series, covering Outlander, Dragonfly in Amber, Voyager, and Drums of Autumn** Diana Gabaldon

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Diana Gabaldon has captivated millions of readers with her critically acclaimed Outlander novels, the inspiration for the Starz original series. From the moment Claire Randall stepped through a standing stone circle and was thrown back in time to the year 1743—and into a world that threatens life, limb, loyalty, heart, soul, and everything else Claire has—readers have been hungry to know everything about this world and its inhabitants, particularly a Scottish soldier named Jamie Fraser.

In this beautifully illustrated compendium of all things Outlandish, Gabaldon covers the first four novels of the main series, including:

- full synopses of *Outlander*, *Dragonfly in Amber*, *Voyager*, and *Drums of Autumn*
- a complete listing of the characters (fictional and historical) in the first four novels in the series, as well as family trees and genealogical notes
- a comprehensive glossary and pronunciation guide to Gaelic terms and usage
- The Gabaldon Theory of Time Travel, explained
- frequently asked questions to the author and her (sometimes surprising) answers
- an annotated bibliography
- essays about medicine and magic in the eighteenth century, researching historical fiction, creating characters, and more
- professionally cast horoscopes for Jamie and Claire
- the making of the TV series: how we got there from here, and what happened next (including “My Brief Career as a TV Actor”)
- behind-the-scenes photos from the *Outlander* TV series set

For anyone who wants to spend more time with the Outlander characters and the world they inhabit, Diana Gabaldon here opens a door through the standing stones and offers a guided tour of what lies within.

## **The Outlandish Companion: The First Companion to the Outlander series, covering Outlander, Dragonfly in Amber, Voyager, and Drums of Autumn Details**

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Author : Diana Gabaldon

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# **From Reader Review The Outlandish Companion: The First Companion to the Outlander series, covering Outlander, Dragonfly in Amber, Voyager, and Drums of Autumn for online ebook**

## **Tracy says**

I'm currently with my mom who is in the process of passing away from a terminal illness. She is an Outlander fan and I've spent many hours over the last few days reading to her from this book. It has been enjoyable for both of us to spend our time in this way. There were parts of the book we really liked and parts that weren't really something we wanted to know about, but probably interesting for others (things about the herbs and medicine Claire gets into).

We enjoyed very much discovering some of the finer points of the author's research which led to some of the details of the books, such as there really being a James Fraser, a Madam Hildegard and others.

We loved hearing the author plans to write a prequel about Jamie's parents! We loved the idea she has for a novel about Master Raymond! And most of all we loved that she intends for there to be a happy ending to this massive tale...

If you're an Outlander fan I do recommend this volume. It's like having your own chance to ask the author all the questions you've ever had about the books. She pretty much answered everything I've wondered about so far and even things I hadn't thought of yet.

We have the next volume as well. We'll see if we want to dive into that one as well...

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## **Alison says**

*The Outlandish Companion* is definitely for the lover of all things *Outlander*. A reader who has never laid eyes on Diana Gabaldon's series will no doubt find interest in the sections that delve into her writing technique and research, past career in academia, and the sprinkling of folk lore. But, I fear, the rest of the 600 page book will be lost on the non-lovers. Thankfully, I am a lover.

It has been quite a few years since I have read the first four books: *Outlander*, *Dragonfly in Amber*, *Voyager*, and *Drums of Autumn*. Part One is a synopsis of each book, whittled down to approximately 15 pages. I was able to get a general grasp of each book before I moved on to the more specifics, the why and the how behind every detail. Yes, you must be a lover to truly appreciate Jamie and Claire's horoscopes.

Part Two takes on the characters: Mushrooms, Onions, and Hard Nuts. Who fits into each category? I'll let you find out for yourself. Now maybe the most helpful section for me, the one section that would make me want to keep this book in my library, is the Cast of Characters. There are hundreds, thousands of characters in the *Outlander* universe and keeping them all straight is a chore. Every character is here in this book, explained in a short paragraph. This section is just perfect for when you are reading *Drums of Autumn* and don't quite remember how Jared Munro Fraser fits into Jamie's family tree. (He's a cousin.)

After Part Two you're going to delve into Family Trees (part three), Glossary and Pronunciation Guide (part

four), both interesting and filled with tidbits of information you'd never know and will no doubt find very interesting once you do learn of them.

My next favorite section was Six, Research. I loved reading the back and forth between Diana Gabaldon and her many online friends and cohorts. Many give her insight and pose questions that challenges her writing, but in a way that would only make it better. Also, if you've ever considered writing historical fiction this section gives you a good idea about what you're in for...a second home, the library.

Part Seven was also a quick interesting read, Where Titles Come From and The Gabaldon Theory of Time Travel. Actually, as an avid reader of all things Outlandish I've never quite understood her theory in regards to time travel. This was a concise tutorial that will surely help me while reading upcoming books.

I haven't included every section, this review would be as long as one of Galadon's books if I did! I've only written about the ones I truly enjoyed reading. While some this companion wouldn't need to be read over and over again, there is a wealth of information that would be useful for the *Outlander* lover and fiend. The book is worth it's weight in gold (and gemstones) just for the section on characters.

Have an Outlandishly good time reading this, it is well worth the time!

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### **VoyagerSassenach says**

El culmen perfecto para toda seguidora de la saga Outlander. Información extra historica, de idiomas, lugares, etc, que aparecen durante la historia de Claire & Jamie. Muy entretenido y útil.

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### **Ana says**

Besides coming in handy to readers who've paused mid-series for a lengthy period of time and want to remember the events of the previous books, before picking up where they left off, *The Outlandish Companion* is a captivating insight into the writer's creative process. How the first book came about, plus the research that went into further developing the story of Claire Randall Fraser.

I was pleasantly surprised by her down-to-earth vision on the craft and all the little (self)ironies regarding what it means to be a writer of historical fiction: ““*I've done my research, and now you're going to pay.*” *That is, novels that include mind-numbing masses of detail, because the author can't bear to “waste” any of the effort spent in research.*” Of course, even though Gabaldon is not the kind of writer who tortures her readers with pages and pages of descriptions and historical facts, she is careful to point out her own misdemeanours and even responds to the criticism she faced for her books over the years.

I loved the tiny illustrations scattered across each chapter and, simply by flipping through the book, you can recognize the amount of work that went into the production of this companion.

I look forward to reading volume 5!

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### **Nicole Karlson says**

I'm kicking myself for not reading this sooner. Until now, I have used the companions as reference books- which they are wonderful for-but I didn't realize how much I would love reading all they contain from cover to cover. If you are an Obsessenach like me, I highly recommend you READ these. It was simply delightful from page one. Can't wait to dive into Volume 2.

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### **Mo says**

So excited that my secret Santa gave me an Amazon.co.uk gift voucher and I could purchase this!! Merci beaucoup, mon amie. Je t'aime. xxxx

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### **Amanda says**

This was an enjoyable extra to the Outlander series, though I did skip some sections, such as the list of characters, horological interpretations, Gaelic glossary, etc. It was amusing to see her write about being an author in the early days of the internet, and about her plans for the series when there were only a few books published, and to see how those plans have changed. I read the updated edition, but not all sections were as up to date. One section listed The Fiery Cross as the 2nd to last book, another section mentioned Written in My Own Heart's Blood. It definitely made me want to get a hurry on with the rest of the series so I can discuss it fully with my mom.

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### **Barbara ★ says**

I was rather disappointed in this companion book. After reading J.R. Ward's Blackdagger Brotherhood Insiders Guide, I kinda expected this companion to be similar with inside insight into the characters and little tidbits of information not presented in the books. It read more like a dictionary. There are synopses of each book (through book 4 Drums of Autumn). She actually broke down each novel into roughly 15 pages or so. No insight just straight text giving the highlights of each novel. I expected more information here.

The chapter on characters was rather interesting but again no new information except the horoscope charts for Jamie and Claire which were impressive but irrelevant IMHO. Sections on Family Trees, glossary/pronunciation guides and websites/online venues, I found pointless and a waste of space (I did not read but quickly skimmed). The chapter on Lallybroch was interesting but again nothing new just bits and pieces pulled from each of the four novels. The frequently asked question section was really interesting. The nerve of some people (readers) is absolutely amazing. Then there are 100 pages of bibliographies - boring and other than an historian, who would read these pages?

Regardless of the amount of work that went into this publication by Diana Gabaldon, definitely not worth the \$40 price ticket.

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### **Liz says**

I discovered this book when I was in the middle of the series and found it useful, but I think it could be improved (and hope it will be when Diana completes the series and another such volume might be required).

- 1) It would have been easier to find negotiate the glossaries if the terms had been listed in alphabetical order rather than the order in which they appeared in the book.
- 2) What was the point of horoscopes for the two main characters? They are fictional characters, after all. I thought this was a terrible waste of space.
- 3) The info on Scottish clans, herbal medicine, family tree of the main characters, etc. were nice side notes to the Gabaldon books. But did we really need Gabaldon's reprinting of reviews and fan mail?

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### **Lori Anderson says**

I love love LOVE the Outlander series, so of course had to have this book. I thought it had many interesting bits, but also a bunch that I didn't care to read (and that's ok! That's what I expected!). I liked FINALLY knowing how to pronounce those Gailic words but WHY oh WHY didn't she have the Foreign Language Glossary in alphabetical order? What a PITA to look up anything.

I did like reading her email exchanges with her computer group as she was hashing out ideas -- that was interesting. And I loved her footnotes -- funny.

This would be a good gift for someone who loves the series, but not a must-read.

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### **Kitty says**

This book was written as a "companion" to the Outlander series - a book full of fun facts, background details, and stories about "the making of" the series written by Diana Gabaldon. It was written after "Drums of Autumn" (the fourth book in the series). I waited until I had read the first four before reading this - and I would definitely recommend that, as there many "spoilers" included here, as well as a "synopsis" of each of those books. The fact that I would actually read this big, heavy hardback "reference" book cover-to-cover probably says it all. While I am a big fan of the series, I wouldn't say I'm "obsessed". I just love the books. There is definitely something special, something rare about how readers connect with the characters. And I also feel that there is something special and rare about the author herself. Her "stories about the stories" are nearly as good as the stories themselves. I've skimmed a few other similar "companion" books, but found that they were much better used as a tool to refer back to - not something to curl up with and read just for pleasure. Not so with this one. While parts of this book were more interesting to me than others, I found all of it to be very readable, and very enjoyable. This is something that will remain on my bookshelf, as I continue to follow the story of Claire and Jamie Fraser.

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## Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

"4.5 stars" *The Outlandish Companion* is an indispensable reference guide to all things *Outlander*. This book covers the first four volumes of the *Outlander* series, but Diana Gabaldon is reportedly working on a second volume which will detail the books that have been written since this one was published. Being a hard-core fan, I read it from beginning to end, and for the most part found it to be very enjoyable. As with most books of this nature though, some sections were very interesting, helpful, and/or inspiring, while others didn't quite catch my fancy, but thankfully those were few and far between. Reading the book straight through like I did made the repetitions from one section to the next stand out more, but in all fairness, I think the author was simply trying to be thorough in her explanations for those readers who might pick and choose individual sections to peruse based on their interests. Overall though, this was an informative book that IMHO is a must-have for any true *Outlander* fan.

Below is a section-by-section overview along with my thoughts on each one:

\*The prologue lays out the complete story of how *Outlander* came to be, from the moment Diana Gabaldon came up with the idea of writing a book all the way through to its publication. I'd read most of the pertinent bits of this story before, but it was nice to have it laid out linearly and in detail.

\*Part One – Synopses – This includes thoroughly detailed synopses for *Outlander*, *Dragonfly in Amber*, *Voyager*, and *Drums of Autumn*. Reading these would be a great way to reorient yourself to the series before starting a new book or watching the TV show if it's been a while since you last read them. This is great, especially if you don't have time for a full re-read, which is admittedly a daunting prospect with these lengthy tomes.:-(

\*Part Two – Characters – This section begins with Ms. Gabaldon's explanation of how she develops and names her characters, as well as some info on her inclusion of real-life personages as characters. This was fascinating from a reader's standpoint because I enjoyed finding out how these characters I've come to love so much were created. It was also intriguing from a writer's standpoint, because she gives some insights into the craft of character building.

This is followed by a complete cast of characters (from the first four books) in glossary format, which is a great quick reference for finding out more about characters you may have forgotten and how they relate to other characters and plot.

Next is a brief primer on astrology and how astrological readings are done. Never having followed astrology much, I have to admit that this part went way beyond my understanding. The actual horoscope readings for Jamie and Claire that were cast by an experienced astrologist were somewhat interesting in that they seemed surprisingly spot on in describing their personalities, especially Jamie's.

Finally, the author gives a detailed account of how she came to give Claire a medical background and all the various decisions she had to make and challenges she faced in doing so.

\*Part Three – Family Trees – This section offers detailed genealogical information for the Beauchamps, Randalls, Frasers, and MacKenzies. I have to admit that the narrative genealogy was rather dry, reminding

me of all the begets and begats from the Old Testament of the Bible. However, I did enjoy perusing the family tree charts and found them helpful in understanding how the characters are related.

Following this, is a special genealogical note on Roger Wakefield. I was shocked to discover that quite a number of readers mistakenly believe that Roger is the son of Geillis Duncan and Dougal MacKenzie. Like the author, I found that one to be a head-scratcher as to where this notion came from, and that so many readers would be confused by that. This certainly was never an issue for me, but for anyone who *was* under this mistaken impression, Ms. Gabaldon lays it to rest with a detailed explanation of Roger's background.

\*Part Four – Comprehensive Glossary and Pronunciation Guide – Ever wondered how to pronounce those pesky Gaelic words and phrases? I always just muddled through, knowing that I was probably mangling them badly, since Gaelic isn't a phonetic language. Well, this section is exactly what it sounds like from the title, a complete guide to the meanings and pronunciations of all the foreign terms used in the first four *Outlander* novels, and it's not just the Gaelic words. It also includes Scots dialect, older English terms that might be unfamiliar to readers, Latin, French, German, Spanish, and Mandarin. The section also begins with a brief primer on Gaelic grammar. I'm sure this will be an indispensable reference when re-reading the books. My only small complaint with this section is that the words/phrases are not arranged alphabetically, which seems like it would offer the greatest ease in locating them. I believe they're arranged in order of their appearance in the books. This might be OK if you're keeping the glossary open while reading the books and referencing it every time a foreign term pops up, but if you're wanting to look up a specific word or phrase, this doesn't seem to be the friendliest way to find it.

\*Part Five – Outlandish Web Sites and Online Venues –I'm sorry to say that this section is almost entirely outdated, which is the unfortunate nature of printed materials regarding the World Wide Web. The only two sites that appear to still be operational (or at least that I could still find) were Ms. Gabaldon's own site (which of course has a new URL with her own name as the domain), and the Ladies of Lallybroch. However, their site could use a major design overhaul to bring it into the 21st century. On a side note, I very much enjoyed the author's story of meeting the Ladies of Lallybroch in Canada along with the 'Scottish' stripper they'd hired.:-)

\*Part Six – Research – This section begins with an overview on researching historical fiction. As a writer, I find the prospect of doing research rather daunting, and consequently, it's my least favorite part of the writing process. Therefore, I really enjoyed reading this part of the book, because Ms. Gabaldon gave me a new perspective on it by showing me that it doesn't have to be so scary.:-)

Next is an explanation of the author's research into herbal medicine. I found it particularly amusing how the UK publisher actually included a disclaimer in their edition of *Outlander*, which basically said, "Don't try this at home."

Lastly is a complete thread from the Compuserve Writer's Forum where the author was asking for feedback regarding her use of penicillin in an excerpt from *The Fiery Cross*. IMO, it was very much indicative of a typical online discussion i.e. the author is looking for specific information on penicillin and whether the scene she wrote rang true from a medical perspective, but in addition to getting the information she wants, she ends up receiving responses that focus on other details, which in some cases are helpful and in others, not so much.

\*Part Seven – Where Titles Come From – I loved learning about how Ms. Gabaldon came up with the titles for her books. Based on what I know of the publishing industry, it's a pretty rare privilege for an author to be allowed to title his/her own books, so I'm glad that she was able to have that kind of input. She also explains

why the UK title of the book is *Cross-Stitch* rather than *Outlander*.

The second part of this section is the Gabaldon Theory of Time Travel, which is utterly fascinating to the geek in me. I'm sure I've read parts of her theory before, but this presentation was very detailed. She has obviously put a lot of thought into how this time travel thing would work if, indeed, it were real.

\*Part Eight – The View from Lallybroch – The subtitle of this section is Objects of Virtue, Objects of Use, but otherwise there's no other explanation of the contents of this sections. Consequently, I was a little confused by it, as it seems to just be a collection of random excerpts from the books, along with a couple of anecdotes and some illustrations. I guess the purpose was to highlight various objects of importance from the stories, and perhaps to set the scene. [shrug] I did enjoy the illustrations of Lallybroch and the jewelry such as Claire's wedding rings and the pearls that previously belonged to Jamie's mother.

\*Part Nine – Frequently Asked Questions – This section is exactly what the title says, a list of questions the author is frequently asked by readers and her answers. Many of these I'd seen before, but there were some new ones that I found intriguing, especially those relating to the writing craft and character motivations. It's always interesting to hear straight from their creator what certain characters are thinking or feeling at a given moment in the story, because it can really help the reader to better understand them.

\*Part Ten – Controversy – This was actually one of my favorite sections. In it, Ms. Gabaldon shares her reasoning behind the inclusion of various elements in the story, which some readers have found offensive. This includes sex, language, homosexuality (not surprisingly, this section was the most extensive), abortion, wife-beating, and a couple of other minor issues. I thought all of her responses were extremely articulate and well-thought-out, as well as presenting a well-reasoned defense for the inclusion of such potentially controversial material. I couldn't have agreed with her more on all points, and it was nice to know that I've always been on the same page with her regarding these things. The only tiny thing she didn't address in the wife-beating part was Jamie's off-handed admission that he kind of enjoyed it. The actual beating never bothered me much, as I took it in the historical context in which it was intended, but his words after did, as it seemed a slightly sadistic thing to say. However, it was such a small part of the story, it never detracted from my overall enjoyment of *Outlander*, and I'm also willing to admit that maybe I took it the wrong way. Perhaps if I re-read that scene again with the enlightenment of Ms. Gabaldon's other remarks, it will provide more clarification.

\*Part Eleven – Work in Progress: Excerpts of Future Books – I admittedly skipped most of this section, as I'm not much for reading long excerpts of upcoming books, especially those which are already (now) published, and which I plan on reading soon. For readers who do enjoy this, it includes an excerpt from *The Fiery Cross* and “Surgeon's Steel,” which I read elsewhere in the book was originally published as a short story in an anthology but is included in its entirety in *A Breath of Snow and Ashes* (which at the time this book was written was titled *King, Farewell*). I did, however, read *The Cannibal's Art*, which was a wonderful sneak-peak into the busy every-day life of a best-selling author. I'm not even a best-seller, and this sounded a lot like most of my days. That made me feel so much better about not getting much writing done some days. Then again, we writers are always writing even if it's just in our minds.:-)

\*In the back of the book there is an annotated bibliography, organized by topics. It's a pretty comprehensive list of the books Ms. Gabaldon used for research. This would be very helpful to any writer who might be considering writing a novel set in approximately the same time and place as the *Outlander* books. It would also be useful for culture and history buffs or those who simply want to learn more about the settings, cultures, medical practices, etc. that are a such a big part of *Outlander*.

\*Last but not least, there are seven appendices, covering a variety of topics. The first, Errata, details all the errors which readers have brought to her attention. Some of them are mere typos, others are actual errors, and still others are simply perceived errors that aren't actually errors at all, accompanied by an explanation of why they aren't. I was quite impressed that it was a relatively short list for four monster tomes. It just goes to show what a skillful writer Diana Gabaldon really is. Next, is a list of Gaelic resources for readers who might be interested in learning to speak Gaelic. Then there are the full texts of various poems and quotations that are used in the books, followed by A Brief Primer on Genealogical Research that includes a number of resources for readers who may have been inspired by the books to look into their own family history. After that is A Brief Discography of Celtic Music for anyone who would like to add relevant background music to their reading material, and a list of foreign editions of the books, along with descriptions of their covers. It was interesting learning which covers Ms. Gabaldon liked and which ones made her cringe. To wrap things up she includes what she calls her Methadone List. This is a list of other books she recommends to readers who are looking for something else to read while waiting for the next *Outlander* installment to be released, and there are quite a few interesting titles on it. My TBR list is growing from having read it.:-)

Whew! That's a lot of stuff packed into a volume that's about two-thirds as long as the novels themselves (taking into account the larger size of this book and the fact that it's formatted in a two-column style). As I said before, IMHO, this is a must-have reference book for all true *Outlander* fans. There's so much information here, anyone who really loves these books as much as I do should find something of interest if not lots of things. So dig in and have fun!:-)

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### **Suzie says**

I really enjoy Gabaldon's books. I treasure her characters. I admire her imagery. Her fiction speaks to me.

But I can't stand her voice! I stopped in the middle of this book because it was ruining the magic for me. I don't want to know how unspectacular her inspiration was. I don't want to know her secrets. Let me remain blissfully uninformed!

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### **Susan says**

If you are new to the *Outlander* universe, this is a gem of a book to pick up. Not only are there detailed summaries of the first books in this remarkable series, the author also has different chapters on where she got her ideas for the characters, her thought process on writing, information about herbal cures, a list of music that would bring Scotland to mind, frequently asked questions, Jamie and Claire's horoscopes, a listing of other books to read once this series reading has been exhausted and many other interesting tidbits.

While I did not read all of it, I found the bits I read extremely interesting. I skimmed through some of the other sections and found the parts I picked out to be useful.

Recommend this book.

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## **Mimi says**

Like the title says, this is a companion to the series and should be read after reading the first four books. Since it contains whole book summaries and a full character index... spoilers abound. Obviously.

**Recommended for:** those who have finished the first four books and need an Outlander crash course

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