



The Fiery Cross

Diana Gabaldon

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New York Times bestselling author Diana Gabaldon mesmerized readers with her award-winning **Outlander** novels, four dazzling tales featuring eighteenth-century Scotsman James Fraser and his twentieth-century time-traveling wife, Claire Randall. Now, in this eagerly awaited fifth volume, Diana Gabaldon continues their extraordinary saga, a masterpiece of pure storytelling that is her most astonishing **Outlander** novel yet....

The year is 1771, and war is coming. Jamie Fraser's wife tells him so. Little as he wishes to, he must believe it, for hers is a gift of dreadful prophecy—a time-traveler's certain knowledge. Claire's unique view of the future has brought him both danger and deliverance in the past; her knowledge of the oncoming revolution is a flickering torch that may light his way through the perilous years ahead—or ignite a conflagration that will leave their lives in ashes.

The Fiery Cross Details

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From Reader Review The Fiery Cross for online ebook

Sherry says

This is a hard book to review. Besides the fact that it's over 1400 pages and took me over a month to read... it's Diana Gabaldon. She writes fascinating accounts of history, trivia, mythology, a great love story, science fiction and people with great detail.

In some places I wanted to hurry through the details and get to the heart of the story, and other places I savored every word. That's the beauty of her writing, you have to read every word, absorb every detail because it will come back (maybe 700 pages later, but it does come back) and it has some importance.

I also love the fact that she doesn't waste time with back story, she throws you right into the action where the last book left off. She repeats a few of the important details, but for the most part lets the reader read between the lines or call upon their own memory of the previous books.

Barb says

Like a Glucose Tolerance Test,
Only Recommended for Absolute Die-Hard Fans

A glucose tolerance test is a test given to a pregnant woman in order to determine whether or not she has gestational diabetes. The test is administered by forcing the poor pregnant woman to drink a, beyond human portion, of a glucose drink, something that tastes like a sugared soft-drink. Then glucose levels of the blood are measured at different intervals after the glucose has been metabolized by the body. It's not the substance as much as the quantity of the sweet tasting drink that is so difficult to stomach and that it has to be consumed after fasting for eight or more hours. It's making me a little queasy remembering it... Anyway, that's what this book reminded me of.

I understand that letting Diana Gabaldon run wild without a heavy handed editor worked like magic in the past but there's always an exception to a rule and this would have to be it.

I loved, Loved, LOVED the first four books in this series and I have given them as gifts to one of my best friends, my mother and my mother in law. I thought they were fabulous, I can't say enough good things about them.

I'm having a hard time thinking of something good to say about this book, I do however have plenty of criticism. My dilemma is where to start...and then, when to stop, I think I could go on and on.

First, let me say that there is absolutely no reason for this book to be 979 pages long, almost nothing happens. There is no unifying thread of story that draws the reader along in this story, there are a few interesting mysteries but they happen somewhat suddenly and then are resolved rather quickly. There are two exceptions that will obviously be continued in the next book.

I loved these characters going into this book. I read in The Outlandish Companion that Diana Gabaldon, when asked how she keeps all the details of her characters straight, said that they are like real people to her

and she wouldn't forget things about someone she knew. Well, I think she must be suffering from some form of long term memory loss because she forgot plenty.

A few things that were huge, beyond forgiving in my opinion: that Duncan has only one arm, that Jamie is left handed. I couldn't understand how those two things could ever be forgotten. There is a scene where she describes Duncan being carried to bed by Jamie and Major MacDonald 'limp arms about their shoulders'. There's another place where she describes Jamie's injured right hand and how it makes writing difficult for him, he's been left handed in the previous four books and he is again at the end of this book but somehow he's using his right hand to write in the middle of the book? There were so many other details that were inconsistent but I'm not going to try to list them all here.

I also thought that Gabaldon really victimized Roger, to the point of annoyance. I thought she completely changed Brianna's character and failed to develop or reveal the character of any of the rest of the family. Fergus seemed an after thought, Lizzie and Marsali as well.

And the preoccupation with all things scatological was over the top and the phrase 'comically blank' used to describe someone's facial expressions was used so often it almost became a catch phrase. And just one more thing I have to get off my chest. There is a scene where Jamie and another man have an altercation and the man calls Jamie a c*** (the c-word). Let me say that I am not offended by the c-word but that the use of it in this situation was just completely incongruous and gave a false ring to the entire scene.

I was so disappointed by this book that I'm not sure I will read the next one...

As a reader and fan of the Outlander and the first four books in the series I'd really like to know "What the heck happened?"

Mo says

And so book 5 comes to an end. I started reading this series on June 16th and they have consumed me for all of my summer holidays. I swore I would take a break after each one but could not. They are long, they are detailed, all the names get a little confusing sometimes. I suppose I, myself, could be accused of jumping on the bandwagon, what with the TV series airing last night in the USA. Maybe so, but as I have had the books on my kindle and some of them in paperback for some time now (certainly before the glorious casting of Jamie Fraser), I feel I can join the legion of true fans, those of you who started reading this series when it was first released, many moons ago.

To be honest, I am not sure where the last book finished and this one started. All I knew is that I wanted to read more about Jamie and Claire and their journey in the New World.

"Let the dead bury the dead, Sassenach," he said softly. "The past is gone - the future is not come. And we are here together, you and I."

I was lucky enough to see the first episode of the TV series and it was wonderful. I thought it stayed verra true to the book and I am sure that is what Ms Gabaldon and the fans wanted. Jamie is perfect. He is soooo romantic. He is tough too but he has a heart of gold.

“D'ye ken that the only time I am without pain is in your bed, Sassenach? When I take ye, when I lie in your arms-my wounds are healed, then, my scars forgotten.”

We did not study a lot of American History in school. We did learn about the obvious major historical moments, The American Revolution, the Colonial period (och, aye, anything where the British are trying to take over, us Irish are verra interested). I do like history and am very proud that my son is starting his first year in University (IN SCOTLAND) to study history.

I think this book was over a two or three year time spam. I sort of know because Jamie was the same age as me when the book started and he did then turn 50. Even a fifty year old Jamie is a fine figure of a man.

**“You are beautiful,” he whispered to me.
“If you say so.”
“Do ye not believe me? Have I ever lied to you?”
“That’s not what I mean. I mean—if you say it, then it’s true.
You make it true.”**

But this was not just Jamie and Claire’s journey. We had Roger and Brianna - I love Roger. What the poor man had to go through. Bloody hell, I nearly gave up at one stage when one part was happening.

ROGER?

BRIANNA?

There is still a lot more to happen in this adventure. That ballocks, Stephen Bonnet is still out there, or is he? God, I hate that bastard. He would have to be Irish, wouldn’t he. Here is who I imagine the toad would look like ...

I will have the *Gandy Police* on my case now! Och, bring it on - I have Jamie on my side!

“There may be a day when you and I shall part again,” he said softly, at last, and his

fingers brushed my lips, light as the touch of a falling leaf. He smiled faintly. "But it willna be today."

Off to find my next read. It will be a hard act to follow this one.

And how could we forget "wee Jemmy"?

Nichole (DirrtyH) says

So far, the weakest book in the series. This book dragged on and on and on... It took me about four times as long to finish this one as it did the other four. There was just a lot of unnecessary drama. The interesting parts were few and far between, but were just enough to keep me reading. And I will admit, by the end I was finally engaged enough to want to read the next one, so it didn't turn me off completely. There were just a lot of things that didn't need to be in the book. This is the first time reading the series that I've really felt a need for better editing.

You will read this book because you're already deeply involved in the story and invested in the characters, and there's just enough in the book to keep you, but on the whole it's exhausting and a little disappointing.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life.

Anyone who knows me knows how much love I have for this series. I really enjoyed listening to this book. I have recently listened to the first four books in the series after having read them years earlier. This was the first time that I have experienced this book and I was a little nervous about listening to it instead of sitting down with a book but I think it worked out well in the end.

So much happens in this book! That is really kind of normal for this series but this book has so many things going on. I guess that really should be expected since this book is also really long. It is like 3 or 4 books if you just compare page counts. There were a few sections of the book that I did think went on a little longer than was really needed. The book starts out at a gathering and I wasn't sure that they would ever leave but they did in the end and the book did start to really pick up steam quickly.

All of the characters that I have grown to love over the years were back in this book. Jamie and Claire are getting a bit older and it is really nice to see watch them grow over the course of the series. It is refreshing to see a couple that have been married for a long time still have the passion and love that Jamie and Claire have for each other. Brianna and Roger go through a lot in this book. In a lot of ways this book isn't very kind to poor Roger. Jemmy is growing up and his personality really starts to shine through in this book.

I really enjoyed the narration of this audiobook. I think that Davina Porter does a fabulous job with this

series. In this book, she is able to give a unique voice to all four of the main characters. She is able to convey a lot of emotion during her narration. I found myself not wanting to stop listening because I had to know how things would work out.

I would highly recommend this book to others but I do believe that this is a series that needs to be read in order so please start with Outlander. The ending of this book really was exciting for me and I came really close to moving directly into the next book in the series. I can't wait to read more about Jamie and Claire!

Initial Thoughts

I feel like I deserve some kind of reward for finishing this audiobook in a month. 55 1/2 hours is looong!

This book started out slow for me but picked up eventually. There were a lot of new developments and some heartbreak moments. The last part of the book was fascinating. I can't wait to read more of Jamie and Claire but I will probably take a break for a bit first.

KatieMc says

Audio reread (at 2x). 2.5 stars.

This is a long meandering book that might have a plot. It establishes the family on Fraser's Ridge and follows them for about a year. There are medical and military related story lines, and a lot happens in 1400 pages. Some highlights:

- Clare sets up a penicillin factory on the mountain.
- Jamie develops a foot fetish.
- Bree takes on the persona of the Professor on Gilligan's Island.
- The family seems to be an unhealthy obsession about knowing who Jemmy's biological father is.
- Sadly Lord John only shows up in correspondence.
- Ian mysteriously returns.
- Clare starts having hot flashes.
- Jamie turns 50 but is ok with it because he still gets morning wood.
- Then there is poor, poor Roger. I am convinced that Diana Gabaldon hates him.

I like to complain about this book. In a series of 8 books (for now) there is bound to be a stinker. It's not really a stinker, it's just not as good as the rest, and probably 500 pages too long. That being said, I love this series. I love Jamie and Clare. Good, bad or ugly, I am invested in it.

Rating relative to the series overall.

Holly says

Went something like this:

50 chapters of camping and sexual frustration where nothing really happens.

Nothing happens, repeatedly.

50 chapters of a wedding with a LOT of sexual frustration followed by a murder most foul, an autopsy, and sex in the stables (FINALLY!)

More nothing happens.

50 chapters of a large scale battle.

Confrontation where guy gets his balls shot off. Maybe.

Ending with us waiting for the revolution to happen.

Throw in a couple of major characters almost dying (okay, she really got me with the bit about Roger, I'll admit it...)

Also, a lot of assgrabbing. Which is probably better than the spanking. But still. EVERYBODY is grabbing butts here. What is up with that?

I question why I keep reading these books but they keep me just entertained enough to keep going. Also there is some self loathing involved.

Amanda says

When I finished this, my knee-jerk reaction was to give it a 4 star. However, after some consideration, I have to be honest with myself and say it was really just a 3 star read. *The Fiery Cross* is the 5th book in the Outlander series, a fantasy/romance/historical/time travel/everything-but-the-kitchen-sink series which began when Claire Randall, on a second honeymoon in Scotland, is thrown back in time from 1946 to Scotland during the Jacobite uprising that ended tragically at the battle of Culloden. While stuck in the past, she of course falls in love with a Highland warrior named Jamie Fraser. Through four long-ass novels, they've been separated and reunited and managed to get themselves right smackdab in the center of any significant historical event taking place in the 18th century, Jamie's natural ability to lead heightened by Claire's knowledge of what the future holds. In *The Fiery Cross*, Jamie and Claire are now living in America with their daughter, Brianna, and her husband, Roger. Jamie finds himself in the role of "laird" to a group of Scottish immigrants who populate his land grant known as Fraser's Ridge.

I freakin' love these novels and that's why it pains me to say that I'm suffering from PTDGD (Post-Traumatic Diana Gabaldon Disorder) at the moment. Gabaldon has always written massive tomes stuffed full of historical detail and it's clear that this woman does her research, which sets her novels apart from the typical offerings of historical romance. This isn't just costume drama. However, I don't think I've ever read a novel in which so much happens and, yet, nothing really happens. The novel is so focused on the minutiae of day-to-day life (pigpens are built, militias are gathered and disbanded, fields are plowed, laundry is done, buffalo are hunted) that any narrative momentum is nil. It just doesn't go anywhere. There are rumblings of the American Revolution in the distance, but no real battles (other than a brief interlude in which Jamie gathers together a militia to help the governor put down the Regulators) and the one driving narrative thread--the hunt for Stephen Bonnet, who raped Brianna in an earlier novel--fizzles with no real resolution (clearly to be picked up in the next novel). Admittedly, all of the mundane tasks of daily life are vividly brought to life and

readable because the characters are so likable, but Gabaldon can certainly beat a dead horse. As evidence, I offer the following:

- 1) She repeatedly overuses some words/phrases (sardonic, gimlet eye, wry smile, and everyone's mouth twitches at the corner with suppressed amusement at some point in the novel). Everyone's eye color is commented upon in every other paragraph. Details that diehard fans should be aware of by now are tediously repeated.
- 2) I read more about breastfeeding than I ever wanted to--Brianna's breasts spend so much time hardening between feedings of her offspring, Jemmy, they should be given their own novel. And I won't even comment upon the milk-sodden love scene. Let's just say it gave a whole new meaning to "Got Milk?" Blech.
- 3) Why does Roger MacKenzie still listen to Jamie? Sure, I know Jamie is his father-in-law and Roger wants to impress him, but Jamie is constantly sending Roger out on dangerous solo errands to give Roger (who is from the future) a chance to prove his manliness in a time when men are defenders, providers, apparently tireless lovers, etc. However, Roger always almost dies during his undertaking of these tasks. He is hung, nearly burnt to a cinder, beaten to within an inch of his life--how much more must Roger endure? Just let him stay home for a couple of chapters. Sheesh.
- 4) The alternating point of view is vexing to me. Some chapters are told in 1st person from Claire's point of view (and these are definitely the more interesting chapters, especially since you are reading about historical events from the perspective of someone who is conflicted about what knowledge she brings from the future and the dangers of revealing too much; it's easy to forget that there's a time travel element when Claire isn't narrating), but others are told in third person from other characters' perspectives. Most of these are told from Roger's point of view. Strangely, we never really get anything substantial from Jamie or Brianna's point of view.
- 5) Some chapters seem shoehorned in just because they were too darn cute to leave out. In particular, these chapters serve to show how clever someone is or how adorable little baby Jemmy is. Don't care. Don't give a shit. Move on.

And then there's James Alexander Malcolm MacKenzie Fraser himself (or Himself, as he's often called in the novel, denoting his social position of laird). God, is there anything this man cannot do? As much as I love the character of Jamie, it's becoming increasingly obvious to me that he's female catnip (although he does not sparkle; he's the anti-Edward Cullen and yet they both share a similar function--to make women long for men that do not exist and would probably be endlessly exasperating if they did). First off, he's the physical embodiment of masculine perfection: tall, well-muscled, blazing red hair, piercing blue eyes, fills out a kilt quite nicely (if you know what I mean--and if you don't, read the book. Gabaldon will make it quite apparent). He's a fierce warrior and yet a well-educated intellectual who is just at home in the courts and palaces of Europe as he is on a battlefield. He's multilingual and can read Latin, Greek, French, etc. and quote from high literature at a moment's notice. He can be a brutal or tender lover (depending on whatever Claire's in the mood for). He can be a man's man and then inexplicably lapse into shy boy-like behavior and whisper sweet nothings. Men of the world, give up. Compared with Jamie Fraser, you fail.

Despite all of this, I still enjoyed the novel. The relationship between Jamie and Claire has somewhat mellowed, although not in a bad way. There's still plenty of ridiculously hot sex between the two, but the relationship isn't marked by the fear of Claire going back to her own time through the stones. I also enjoy the good-natured vulgarity that runs throughout the characters' speech and the humor with which Gabaldon writes. And for all of my bellyaching about all of the details of 18th century life, I will concede that if

anyone can make it interesting, it's Gabaldon. I will be reading *A Breath of Snow and Ashes*, the 6th book in the series, but I'm definitely going to need a lengthy respite between the two.

Cross posted at This Insignificant Cinder

Tatiana says

I don't think any author is in love with her characters and her own writing as much as Diana Gabaldon. To the point that she is convinced that *absolutely everything* she writes about them *has* to be in her books. Who cares about the plot and moving things along and putting in her novels only events that would advance the plot? Not Diana!

I've loved the *Outlander* books for a while, in spite of their fragmented nature and sometimes convoluted story lines, but this time even the most dedicated fan would notice that **There is hardly any plot in it!** I am still trying to figure out what the purpose of this book was, my only guess is to lead to the confrontation with Stephen Bonnet? But then, hundreds and hundreds of pages in *The Fiery Cross* are dedicated to the events that have nothing to do with the main story line of it. At least 2/3th of the novel could have been cut out because the only thing that happens there is that Jamie, Claire and Roger have to go on some militia business and then come back (twice!). During these trips nothing important takes place, except, of course, they meet some random people. And don't get me started on Brianna's breasts. If all the bits about her breasts being swollen or leaking milk and her wanting Roger to suckle on them were taken out, *The Fiery Cross* would have been at least 100 pages lighter. And another 100 pages lighter without little Jemmie pooping in a diaper or otherwise.

Certainly, we, fans, have a fair amount of patience for Gabaldon's long books and a lot of love for the characters and scenes in their lives, but, come on, a novel is still a novel. If there is hardly any forward motion in the story, no danger, no intensity, if you can skip hundreds of pages without missing anything vital, and the author is preoccupied with indulgently recording every occurrence in her characters' lives, important or not, she might as well call her work fanfiction. Or a soap opera with no end in sight.

Interestingly enough, even after spending *a year!* reading *The Fiery Cross* and dropping it so many times I can't count, I still couldn't bring myself to give it less than 3 stars and I already have the next book in the series loaded onto my iPod. This crack has a firm hold on me. For now.

Ashley Daviau says

I think this has been my least favourite out of the series so far. I did still love it but I thought it dragged a bit whereas the previous books flew by for me. I especially enjoyed the new characters they were added, it really gave a new dynamic to the story. And seeing Jamie and Claire's relationship evolve is truly beautiful. I still wish it had packed more of a punch though, it just wasn't as spectacular as the other books in the series for me!

Katie says

Well, I finally finished The Fiery Cross.

sigh

I absolutely LOVE these books. This installment was no exception.....

I found that this installment had so many deep emotional scenes, that when i finished, I felt that i had connected to the characters, emotionally, more then ever before.

Starting with The Gathering, when Jamie calls his people out, and they all hold hands. The wedding scene between Roger and Brianna was both hilarious and touching. The various incidents at the Gathering really set up so much for the story. I love how Diana Gabaldon weaves the tale with details so deep, and how it all comes together in the end.

My complaint after "Drums of Autumn" was that, while i cared about Roger and Brianna, i didnt feel as emotionally connected to them, as i did with Jamie and Claire. In fact, i didnt really like Brianna very much. In Fiery Cross, i found that the deeper exploration of the relationship between Roger and Brianna was very satisfying. Roger especially, gave a whole new facet to the face of the family living at Fraser's Ridge. His brush with death, when he was hanged, was especially heart wrenching. The loss of his voice, and his constant doubts as to the paternity of Jemmy, and his own marriage really made me sympathize with him.

The atmosphere of Frasers Ridge is intoxicating. The natural beauty she describes. The danger. Fraser's Ridge is a character in itself.

I love these characters. When Roger almost died, before i realized that he was alive, i put my head down and cried. it was horrible!! but so well written, and thats the beauty of this author. His reaction to his "almost death" was heartbreak for the entire family and as a reader, you felt it yourself.

Wee Ian!!! I honestly didnt think we would ever see him again. I thought for sure he would turn up dead, or only mentioned in memory. I was thrilled when he came back. Because i enjoyed this character so much, i was thrilled that he now knows the family secret of the stones.

"I knew you weren't a wee fairie Auntie Claire!"

my favorite quote.

April says

I read this as soon as it came out. Had to have it in hardback because I couldn't wait for paperback and had to have my own precious copy. Wish I had waited or borrowed it from the library. I was so excited to see what Claire and Jamie were up to, but it was a very slow read, explaining every little thing in detail. I mean, I love to read books that don't gloss over the not-so-pretty parts of the day, but explaining that a child needs a

diaper change, and it's unpleasant aroma, over and over and OVER again is ridiculous and boring. They didn't go anywhere for most of the book, staying in one place this time whereas in the other books they were hardy and seasoned travelers, falling into tons of mischief. This was a big disappointment, especially since the rest of the series is such a huge success! Read it anyway, just to get you to the next book in the series.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

And the story continues. ♥

Listening to these audio books back to back, they are starting to run together. I think I mentioned this before, but it's like one big, ongoing Outlander movie or something. I don't know if what I listened to was something from the other book or vice versa.

Here's what I know. Everyone is living together at Fraser's Ridge. Jamie gets called into the army by the Governor and Roger is with him. There is some fighting but I think there is more to come.

And sweet baby Jesus, if Roger didn't go through hell. I mean he did do something stupid. I thought it was stupid. You can't do that stuff back in the day, you could hardly do it now. But, when he saw someone he knew he should have just waved and went on about it. But no, he has to be an idiot and go over and talk and what not, in the middle of people wanting to start a war. Then it just gets horrible from there. Luckily a man came and got Jamie and Bree and Claire in the nick of time to save him. They thought he was dead and my heart was on the floor until finding out he was still barely alive. At this point I would have been thinking, the hell did I come back to this damn arse time in history. Alas, it took some time but Roger got better.

And that slimy Stephen Bonnet is still out there somewhere and they can't seem to get their hands on him. And now there is another person they need to beat down, William MacKenzie. And of course he's kin so the hell.

I remember listening a lot about all kinds of babies and goats and horses and craziness and funny stuff. At one point I didn't know what freaking kid belonged to who!

And Ian, he comes home with wolf, Rollo. =)

This book was a massive tome to get through but listening to the audio with the wonderful Davina Porter narrating is wonderful. She does the best job, ever!

You would think a book that just goes on about random stuff during the majority of the book would be boring but I think they aren't to me. There is just something about them. And I'm still so happy to know that Jamie and Claire still love each other as much as they always have. I still really wish they didn't miss 20 years together though. It still gets to me, but I digress.

Now, onto the next . . .

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

Ashley says

I DID IT. I FINISHED THIS HULKING BEAST OF A BOOK.

The Fiery Cross is the fifth book in Arizona (woot) author Diana Gabaldon's time-traveling historical fiction saga. I have enjoyed all the books up until this one, some with reservations, but still enjoyed. They all felt like they had strong backbones, and even though they were long, most of the stuff stuffed up in there had a point. Not so with this fucker.

Since the book is sooooooo loooooooong, I'm going to respond by being more concise than I would usually, just to get my point across here.

- - -

HOW TO WRITE A TURGID HOT MESS OF A BOOK, IN FIVE EASY STEPS!

1. Don't have an outline or any other sort of plan going in. Narrative arcs are not important, and neither is change. Just have your characters do thing after thing after important thing for a whole novel and **it doesn't matter if you have something to tie it all together by the end**. You can even switch genres halfway through your novel. It will totally not be confusing or frustrating at all! It is totally okay, even encouraged! to have your reader not be able to identify more than three or four parts that were actually important and relevant.

2. Describe in great detail meals, bowel movements, sweaty clothing, every poopy diaper, regular updates on the breasts of a character who is breastfeeding (a little swollen, leaking milk, rock hard, empty, etc.). Include extended excerpts from dream journals that hint at character arcs but never actually turn into anything. **No detail is too small or insignificant.** (DON'T EVEN MISS ONE!) EVERY SMALL DETAIL AND ACTION YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CHARACTERS DO WILL MAKE YOUR NOVEL EVEN LONGER AND HOTTER AND MESSIER. Don't listen to those people who tell you that most of the things in your novel should connect to the central storyline or theme. Don't listen to the people, even your readers, who will tell you that these moments are nice every now and again, but not all the time. Your novel should be mostly these moments, like we're following your characters around in a neverending documentary of their every waking moment over a period of years.

3. **Make your novel as long as possible.** Longer=better. More=better. Drown these people in words. Their hands should be black with ink and their wrists ache by the time they're finished. Never mind that pesky writing advice that says the more times you do something, the less impact it will have. Never mind all those people who praise concise writing, or get off on variation. Your characters are special, and the more time you let your readers spend with them, well, they should just be grateful, dammit.

4. When you're at the thousandth page of your manuscript and have been teasing your reader mercilessly with the promise of a plot for hundreds of pages by this point, **make sure to take one last completely pointless trip into the woods so your characters can deal with a mystical fucking white ghost bear*** because in previous books the natives had given them portentous names like The White Raven and Bear-

Killer, so they're the only ones who can help, obvs. Have the bear be killed in a freak storm by a giant bolt of lightning while your characters coincidentally watch. The whole episode should take up at least seventy-five pages and have no bearing on the plot whatsoever.

**Or equivalent thereof.*

5. Make sure to fit in the actual important bits towards the absolute end of the novel, after your reader has already checked out emotionally from the book and couldn't actually give a flying saucer about any of it anymore. **Just really make sure to bury completely the really interesting bits of your novel in absolute mundane as shit stuff so your reader can't even find it!**

Voila! Follow this formula, and even your most diehard reader will think twice next time about purchasing your books. Again, don't listen to those people with common sense. Turning away readers is an excellent way to make money.

abby says

In the end, I wound up liking this book, but it was a long (so, so long) and bumpy road to get there. Somehow, this book is written by the same author who managed to pack an epic fantasy adventure into 800 pages with the original *Outlander*. Yet 1500 pages were needed here to... to do what? I don't even know. There's more than a couple sweet scenes between Jamie and Claire, but in between it's a wasteland. Over and over, characters are described as hiding a smile or having the corner of their mouth twitch in amusement. The every action of a toddler including the contents of his diaper are described. Jamie & Co. march around the woods a bit and then they go home. They go to River Run and then they go home. Rinse and repeat. Fascinating.

Despite creating an ever growing cast of characters, this book focuses on the nuclear core of Jamie, Claire, Brianna and Roger. Ian has reason to be absent, but I don't know what happened to Fergus and Lord John. Then there's the mystery Gabaldon seems to shoehorn in her books of late. I get that the author started out wanting to write mysteries, but it's seriously time to reconsider. The second half of the book is improved over the first, especially the last 200 pages. But, overall, it lacks anything resembling a plot and contributes very little to the larger story arch of the series.

It takes a pretty devoted fan of the series to appreciate this book, and, even then, I'm not sure how necessary it is. Here's to hoping things get better with book #6.
