



"I Give You My Body . . .": How I Write Sex Scenes

Diana Gabaldon

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • For writers looking to make sure their next physical interlude on the page inspires readers to share the moment rather than to laugh at it, bestselling author Diana Gabaldon divulges the writing secrets behind the sex scenes in her wildly popular *Outlander* novels.

“Ask me to your bed,” he said. “I shall come to ye.”

In this revealing compendium, acclaimed writer Diana Gabaldon shares her invaluable lessons for creating an immersive reading experience, from evoking a mood to using the power of emotions to communicate physical intimacy. You’ll learn the difference between gratuitous sex and genuine encounters that move the story forward, and how to handle less-than-savory acts that nevertheless serve a narrative purpose. Gabaldon also notes that sex can be conveyed instead of described. With such tips as “The Rule of Three” for involving the senses, handy lists of naughty euphemisms (with instructions for use), and Gabaldon’s own examples from the *Outlander* novels, *“I Give You My Body . . .”* is a master class in writing to draw readers in and keep them riveted to the page.

"I Give You My Body . . .": How I Write Sex Scenes Details

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Author : Diana Gabaldon

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Kristen Kieffer says

Useful for far more than writing sex scenes, this is one of the most practical, actionable books on writing I've ever read. I'm already putting some of the practices Gabaldon outlines into use, and I'm happy with the results thus far.

What's in this book for you if you're not into writing sex scenes?

Breakdowns on crafting emotionally powerful scenes; changing the lens of focus to give a scene depth and immediacy; the power of the five senses in creating a visceral, believable scene; an understanding of "underpainting"; and more...all with vivid examples so you can see the techniques put into action.

What's in this book for you if you do write sex scenes?

How all of the above applies to sex scenes, plus the difference between erotica and a good sex scene; breakdowns on how to avoid cringe-y, unbelievable scenes; and insights into how to write sex scenes of all natures with care (consensual sex, fade-to-blacks, sensual tension with little or no action, rape, gay sex, and more).

The best part? You get all of this in just 118 pages. You can tear through this book and begin putting it into practice in as little as a day. It truly doesn't get much better than that.

Nicole Karlson says

This was fascinating! It's like a behind the scenes look into the way DG writes some of my very favorite scenes I've ever read. It's a peek into her head and into her craft. She is a master storyteller and I'm in awe of the beautiful webs she weaves as she tells her stories. Her sex scenes are so perfectly done and now I know why. This was SO MUCH FUN TO READ! Not only did I get to reread so many of the very best scenes in the books, I got insider information as to what made them so excellent for me to experience! I'll go back to this book anytime I need a Jamie and Claire fix. It also has an amazing list of all of the sex scenes in all of the books and beautiful artwork by the super talented Silvia Giachetti. I would highly recommend this to all of my author friends. To all of my friends currently reading the OL series for the first time, DO NOT read this until you've read all 8 books because it contains major spoilers. I loved this book!

SheLove2Read says

I've always been enamored of DG's ability to write a scene that is both sensual and erotic without resorting to unnecessary graphic language (although she does use graphic description). She is a master at setting up a scene and tells us here how she does that by using sense and touch in addition to dialog. I think if you are an author or aspire to someday call yourself one, this is a very good book to add to your library.

Teresa says

I partly read this because, if she writes it, I'll read it. But I find the behind-the-scenes fascinating, and Diana always manages to make it interesting and fun. I think there are a lot of writers who could truly benefit from this book. And, as a big Outlander fan, I enjoyed reliving moments through her examples.

Angela Oliver says

Diana Gabaldon writes excellent sex scenes, and here's a few tips on how she does it. Very insightful, confirming some of what I already knew (emotions over actions) but also offering a few tips and tricks that I didn't. It's been a long time since I wrote such a scene, but I'm sure with the assistance of this book, they'll be better than they once were.

I also love how it is called "How I Write..." not "How to Write..." basically saying, that she's sharing her knowledge, but also understanding that there are other techniques to write scenes of intimacy.

And the extracts were a nice touch - until we got into the "Nasty Sex" chapter, that was a tad bit painful - I have missed Claire and Jamie Fraser.

Barbara (The Bibliophage) says

I think I was about twelve when I read my first sex scene. So, that means it's been forty years of these scenes. I'm not an especially analytical reader in this situation, other than the occasional, "Ewwww" or "Mmmmm." I just let the moment take me, so to speak.

Diana Gabaldon teaches this content at writer's workshops and this is definitely an analytical approach. It's fascinating to see how a writer builds a sex scene in layers of underpainting and then painting the scene with words. If I was a writer, I'd use some of her suggestions for any scene particularly one with sensual or evocative details.

She covers all kinds of scenes from suggestion but no specifics to quite specific, including non consensual sex and rape (trigger warning). She also discusses what it was like for her to shift from writing the heterosexual scenes of Jamie and Claire Fraser to the homosexual scenes of Lord John Grey and his partners.

Having heard her speak in December, I see the humor and particular speech patterns she uses. And, by the way, I've never heard anyone talk faster than she does!

This was a fun book to balance some of the serious reading in my life, and life itself. 3 stars simply because it was primarily instructional.

Betty says

Anyone who knows me anything about me at all, knows how much I love Diana Gabaldon's books. If you

know me, and you DON'T know this? Shame on you. Clearly you haven't been paying attention and you need to crawl out from under your rock and *listen*. It's the only way you're going to know these things. But I digress...

The only thing better than reading my favorite author's books, is learning about *how* she writes. So when I saw that *Herself** had written this book, detailing her process in writing about intimate (and not so intimate) moments, naturally I had to read it. (And it didn't hurt that I've always enjoyed reading about the art of writing.)

It was a very interesting read, pointing out the subtleties of scenes that I never really noticed before Diana specifically pointed them out. If you've ever read an article (or a book) that gives writing advice, one point is constantly being stressed: **Show, don't tell.** It's not something you necessarily watch for as you read, but when the opposite is done (telling, not showing), you're absolutely going to notice it. Too much tell and very little show is the best way to ruin a potentially good book. (And I'm sure we've all read them at one time or another.) My favorite books have all been written by people who not only knew to do it, but knew how to do it well.

I'm guessing the majority of people who immediately purchased this book were likely *Outlander* fans, but you don't have to be a fan of *Outlander* to read this book. It's a useful tool for anyone wanting to improve their writing skills. There's even a few laughs to be had here and there. The only thing I was momentarily taken aback by was the artwork that's sprinkled in here and there... I wasn't expecting that at all, so the first one was a little shocking to see. (Kudos to the artist, though... they're very talented.)

It was a nice diversion from the wait for book nine, *Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone*, to be finished and available, albeit far too brief. Now I'm not-so-patiently waiting for Diana to make the wonderful announcement that book nine is finished... but I've been a fan long enough to know there will likely be at least two more years of waiting. *Sigh*.

* "*Herself*" is a term of affection and respect bestowed on Diana by her fans.

Annathea says

To by?a ca?kiem ciekawa ma?a ksi??ka. Ale nie dowiedzia?am si? z niej niczego nowego (poza mo?e kilkoma nowymi okre?leniami), za to upewni?am si?, ?e na pewno nie przeczytam *Outlandera*. Co ciekawe, jedyn? scen? kt?ra mi si? podoba?a (literacko i fabularnie) pochodzi?a z serii o Lordzie Johnie.

Elle says

I loathed *Outlander*. I still get that glassy, far-away stare of one who's survived a World War when someone mentions it. But I'm running a fever at the moment and not thinking coherently, so when I saw this book pop up on Overdrive's front page, I thought, hey, this should be interesting. Sex scenes are one aspect of writing I haven't really read much about. I don't often find myself writing this kind of stuff, but never hurts to learn, right?

Well, 3% of this "book" consists of a list of synonyms for "penis." One of the suggestions is "Bob Dole."

I could go on, and rant about how one of her examples of how to write a "non-sex sex scene" involves her hero pinning down his own daughter and telling her he could rape her if he wanted (I mean, how *else* do you teach children their own limitations?) but, I dunno, I feel like "Bob Dole" says enough.

Jill says

If she writes it, I will read.

Donna says

A book about how she writes an integral part of her books? Brilliant. Beyond that ... DG's words are crafted so expertly that I'm beginning to think she's not human. They invoke more emotion than I could have ever thought possible. You FEEL and THINK and EXPERIENCE everything her characters do. She is able to transport you to another time and place with such ease.

Her sex scenes are the epitome of sex scenes. Some are very explicit in their content and others are more implicit but you know exactly what is going on and she makes you feel exactly what her characters do. It's magic; I really don't know how she does it but I am gladly under her spell.

Emma Sea says

I was reading this in a cafe on my laptop and I was entirely unprepared for the pencil drawing of a couple engaging in cunnilingus at 19%, but not as unprepared as the stranger next to me.

4.5 stars

Michelle [Helen Geek] says

07/03/2016 -- What RachelW said; <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Nope ..

RachelW (BamaGal) says

Seriously? This is straight from the JRWard files of 'if I doodle on toilet paper, my fans will snap it up'.

Kara Jorgensen says

Incredibly helpful and detailed.

I have wanted to read a book by DG for a while now because I knew how detailed and atmospheric her books are, and when I saw she had a how-to for writing sex scenes, I was all over it. "I Give You My Body" is a fantastic guide for creating atmosphere, emotion, and of course choreography for those sensual moments. The book provides a how-to along with the reasons why these techniques work for writing these scenes. DG deconstructs her own scenes to show the reader exactly how the techniques can be applied and the effect on the reader.

Overall, it's a great guide that's worth the value. This isn't for beginner writers, so don't complain when DG expects you to know how to apply her info without spoon-feeding you.
