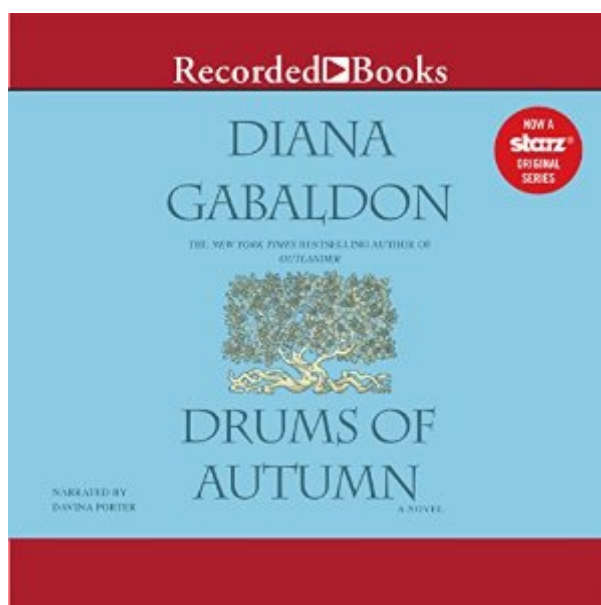


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Drums Of Autumn



Synopsis

In this breathtaking novel "rich in history and adventure" The New York Times bestselling author Diana Gabaldon continues the story of Claire Randall and Jamie Fraser that began with the now-classic novel *Outlander* and continued in *Dragonfly in Amber* and *Voyager*. Once again spanning continents and centuries, Diana Gabaldon has created a work of sheer passion and brilliance.... It began at an ancient Scottish stone circle. There, a doorway, open to a select few, leads into the past "or the grave. Dr. Claire Randall survived the extraordinary passage, not once but twice. Her first trip swept her into the arms of Jamie Fraser, an eighteenth-century Scot whose love for her became a legend "a tale of tragic passion that ended with her return to the present to bear his child. Her second journey, two decades later, brought them together again in the American colonies. But Claire had left someone behind in the twentieth century "their daughter, Brianna.... Now Brianna has made a disturbing discovery that sends her to the circle of stones and a terrifying leap into the unknown. In search of her mother and the father she has never met, she is risking her own future to try to change history ... and to save their lives. But as Brianna plunges into an uncharted wilderness, a heartbreaking encounter may strand her forever in the past ... or root her in the place she should be, where her heart and soul belong.... --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After approx. 3600 pages of Gabaldon's books I am still yearning for more. *Drums of Autumn* is yet

another fantastic addition to this series. This book is just as pleasing as the previous three, rich with imagery, historically interesting, along with the comfortable presence of Claire and Jamie that I have grown quite fond of throughout this series. Gabaldon continues to keep the story interesting by introducing new characters and saying good-bye to some, creating new drama, but also bringing back and reminding us of some characters from the previous books. This leaves you wanting more, knowing there is more to be told about all of these characters and how their lives will weave into the web of Jamie and Claire's. The pace is a bit slower in this book (but by no means boring), this helped me slow down a bit, enjoy the language(s), revel in the imagery and prepare myself for the break I am now forced to take waiting for the next installment of Jamie and Claire, Brianna and Roger. I am left feeling "what will I read now?" I highly recommend all of the books in this series to everyone. Gabaldon is a wonderful writer!

Ostensibly, "Drums of Autumn" is about reunions with fathers. Gabaldon, however, seems to meander about quite a bit before she remembers her theme. Although I didn't do an exact count, I agree with the reviewer who commented that the first 500 pages are terrible. "Drums" begins with Jamie and Claire attending the execution of one of Jamie's fellow inmates. Jamie and Claire, plus entourage, are heading to a Scottish settlement in Wilmington, North Carolina, where his aunt owns a plantation. The first half of the book mostly involves the mishaps on their journey north, life at the aunt's plantation, Jamie's debate over whether to strike out on his own or accept his aunt's generous offer, an adventure-filled trip to the wilderness, and ultimately, getting settled in a home in the new world. While I don't want to suggest that all these events are mundane--this is Jamie and Claire Fraser we're talking about, after all--the events are very episodic. Gabaldon lacks any kind of overriding theme to organize the plot. In "Outlander," we had Claire's ultimate decision about whether to return to her 20th century life. In "Dragonfly in Amber," we had their attempt to prevent Culloden. In "Voyager," we first had Claire's search for records of what happened to Jamie, and later the search and rescue of Jamie's nephew Ian. Also missing in "Drums" is a good villain. With the deaths of Jack Randall and Geillis Duncan, Gabaldon has to create a new bad guy or two. She does introduce her villains fairly early on--only their true malevolence does not become apparent until much later. In other words, unlike the way the threat of Jack Randall loomed in "Outlander," the threat of these villains seems to disappear when they initially disappear from the plot. About halfway through "Drums," the Frasers' daughter, Brianna, who remains in the 20th century, discovers something about her parents' fate and decides to travel to the past to warn them. Her boyfriend, Roger Wakefield, follows her. Once Brianna and Roger wind up in the past, the plot tends to liven

up, and the direction of the book also begins to make sense. Without revealing certain plot twists, I will note that certain events should create a sense of urgency to get certain issues resolved--and yet Gabaldon does not really leave the reader that worried about the potential outcomes. Gabaldon does manage a few nice little plot twists at the end, so keep going. Suffice to say that Roger has an interesting encounter with an ancestor, and Frank's influence comes into play. Despite my tepid praise for this book, as historical romances go, it's still quite good--just not as good as the first three. One aspect that I appreciate about Gabaldon's books is that she does not overly romanticize the hardships and harsh living conditions of the past. She also deftly avoids overly sentimentalizing certain situations or going for the cliché. For instance, when Brianna meets her real father, at long last, after traveling through time and across the ocean, she first sees him behind a pub, urinating--not in some idealized encounter. I'm crossing my fingers that "The Fiery Cross" is better, but I'm not optimistic.

"Drums Of Autumn" is the fourth book in Diana Gabaldon's extraordinary "Outlander" series. It amazes me that Ms. Gabaldon has been able to continue to delight readers with her consistently good writing, excellent plots, superb characters and meticulous historic research for thousands of pages and four novels. "Drums Of Autumn" most certainly will not disappoint fans of the series. If you have not read the three preceding novels, I strongly urge you to do so before beginning this book. "Drums of Autumn" may be able to stand as a novel in its own right, but I think it would be too confusing to enjoy it thoroughly without having read the historic and personal drama that Ms. Gabaldon details so well in her previous books. To label the "Outlander" series as merely historical romance fiction would be to do it a terrible injustice. This is an epic historical romance, yes...and so much more. The relationship between Claire and Jamie is one of the most caring and intimate I have ever encountered - in fiction or real life. This is a couple who are solidly committed to a life together for better or worse. Theirs is a love that truly transcends the boundaries of time. More than twenty years before this novel begins, Claire Beauchamps Randall, vacationing in post WWII Scotland, stepped through the ancient stone circle known as Craigh na Dun - and was suddenly sucked back in time to 1743 and war-torn Scotland. It was here that she met and married her own true love, highlander James Fraser. Before the tragic battle of Culloden Moor she was forced to return to the 20th century to protect herself and her unborn daughter, abandoning Jamie in the process. Two decades later Claire made the journey back through the stones to reunite with James in the 18th century, leaving their grown daughter, Brianna, behind. James and Claire both agreed that there was no possibility to build a life for themselves in Scotland. The clans had been forced to

disband, the people were starving and living in abject poverty, most of the men were dead, crippled, imprisoned and or jobless as a result of the doomed Jacobite uprising. The Frasers along with a few friends and James' nephew, Ian, cross the Atlantic and make their way to North Carolina where Jamie's aunt has a plantation. At the same parallel time, 20th century Brianna and her beloved Scottish boyfriend Roger discover some terrifying information about Claire's and Jamie's fate. Brianna is determined to reach her parents somehow and warn them of coming events, hoping to change the future. The inevitability of these events and the frustration and inability to change the future continue to be strong themes. This is a phenomenal novel! Ms. Gabaldon details frontier life in beautiful 18th century North Carolina so clearly and accurately that one literally feels swept back in time. Claire and James have grown tremendously as characters, as have the love and intimacy between them. I have never experienced a couple as unique as these two in modern fiction. New characters are introduced, as well as a marvelously vile villain, and in typical Gabaldon style, these new folks are portrayed with realism, complexity and humor as are many of the old favorites. This is also Brianna's story. She finally meets her father in "Drums Of Autumn" and becomes a woman with a woman's responsibilities. The books in this series are among my favorites novels, not just because the plots are so fascinating that I am unable to stop reading once I begin...although this is true. The characters are so palpably real that the reader actually bonds with them, at least with Jamie and Claire, in a way that is most unusual and very moving. We follow their lives and observe them as they grow as human beings, experience joy, suffer, and just interact with each other on a day to day basis, as well as in the midst of high adventure. We watch as they make history and as history tears away at them. I cannot recommend this book and series highly enough. JANA

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