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List: The Best of the Best Romance Novels of the Twentieth Century

Title: Outlander

Author: Diana Gabaldon

Ranking in the List: 1

Rating: 4.26

Genres: Classics, Fiction, Dystopia, Fantasy, School, Literature, Science Fiction, Novels, Philosophy

Total Word Count: 504

Key-Words: war, husband, honeymoon, walk, stone, ancient, circle, outlander, Scotland, torn, war, border, clan, time, forces, Claire, intrigue, laird, life, shatter, heart.

Brief Summary:

The year is 1945. Claire Randall, a former combat nurse, is just back from the war and reunited with her husband on a second honeymoon when she walks through a standing stone in one of the ancient circles that dot the British Isles. Suddenly she is a Sassenach—an “outlander”—in a Scotland torn by war and raiding border clans in the year of Our Lord...1743.

Hurled back in time by forces she cannot understand, Claire is catapulted into the intrigues of lairds and spies that may threaten her life and shatter her heart. For here James Fraser, a gallant young Scots warrior, shows her a love so absolute that Claire becomes a woman torn between fidelity and desire—and between two vastly different men in two irreconcilable lives.

About the Author:

Diana Jean Gabaldon Watkins grew up in Flagstaff, Arizona and is of Hispanic and English descent (with a dash of Native American and Sephardic Jew). She has earned three degrees: a

B.S. in Zoology, a M.S. in Marine Biology, and a Ph.D. in Ecology, plus an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Glasgow, for services to Scottish Literature.

Gabaldon was the founding editor of *Science Software Quarterly* in 1984 while employed at the Center for Environmental Studies at Arizona State University. During the mid-1980s, Gabaldon wrote software reviews and technical articles for computer publications, as well as popular-science articles and Disney comics. She was a professor with an expertise in scientific computation at ASU for 12 years before leaving to write full-time.

In 1988, Gabaldon decided to write a novel for "practice, just to learn how", and with no intention to show it to anyone. As a research professor, she decided that a historical novel would be easiest to research and write, but she had no background in history and initially no particular time period in mind. Gabaldon happened to see a rerun episode of the *Doctor Who* science fiction TV series titled "The War Games". One of the Doctor's companions was a Scot from around 1745, a young man about 17 years old named Jamie McCrimmon, who provided the initial inspiration for her main male character, James Fraser, and for her novel's mid-18th century Scotland setting. Gabaldon decided to have "an Englishwoman to play off all these kilted Scotsmen", but her female character "took over the story and began telling it herself, making smart-ass modern remarks about everything.

To explain the character's modern behavior and attitudes, Gabaldon chose to use time travel. Writing the novel at a time "when the World Wide Web didn't exist", she did her research "the old-fashioned way, by herself, through books.