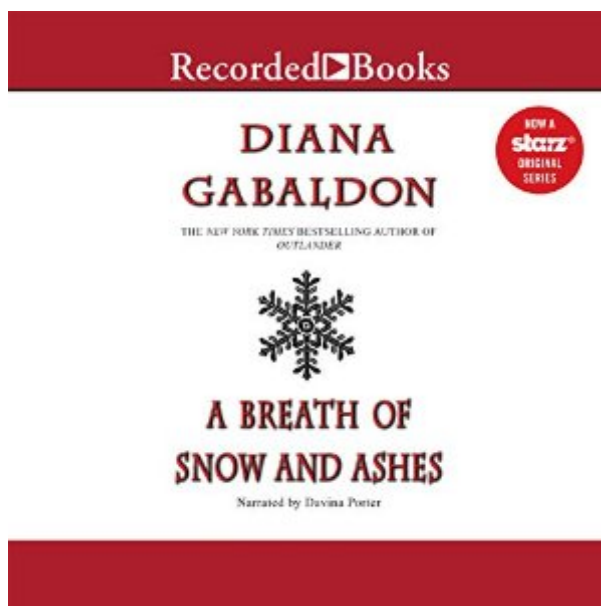


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A Breath Of Snow And Ashes: Outlander, Book 6



Synopsis

A worldwide sensation with more than 12 million copies in print, Diana Gabaldon's Outlander series has produced #1 best-selling novels and earned a fiercely devoted fan base. Another spellbinding entry in the series, *A Breath of Snow and Ashes* continues the saga of 18th-century Scotsman Jamie Fraser and his 20th-century, time-traveling wife, Claire. The year is 1772, and the rift between Britain and its American colonies has put a frightening word into the minds of all concerned: revolution. In the backwoods of North Carolina, violence has already reared its ugly head, as cabins have been burned to the ground. To preserve the colony for King George III, the governor pleads with Jamie to bring the people together and restore peace. But Jamie has the privilege, although some might call it a burden, of knowing that war cannot be avoided. Claire has told him that the colonies will unite and rebel, and the result will be independence, with all British loyalists either dead or exiled. And there is an additional problem. Claire has discovered a newspaper clipping from 1776 that tells of Jamie's death. With its epic scope, historical details, and sweeping romance, *A Breath of Snow and Ashes* is everything Gabaldon's fans love and more.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 57 hours and 46 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: April 27, 2011

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B004Y42QEG

Best Sellers Rank: #12 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Romance > Historical #18 in Books > Romance > Time Travel #26 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction

Customer Reviews

Bodice-ripper romance? Check. Historical fiction with oodles of period detail? Double-check.

Time-traveling fantasy? You bet. *A BREATH OF SNOW AND ASHES* (actually, all six volumes in Diana Gabaldon's Outlander series) combines most of the genres I love, which means I couldn't put it down --- and at a hefty 992 pages, that's saying a lot. While immersed, I felt I was never far from

Fraser's Ridge, the North Carolina homestead where Jamie Fraser, an exiled Scotsman, and his wife Claire, doctor and displaced 20th-century person, make their home. There are two other refugees from the contemporary world in the community: the Frasers' daughter Brianna (conceived in the 18th century, born in the 20th), and her husband Roger --- plus assorted saints, ruffians, eccentrics, rogues, floozies and fanatics. Gabaldon's conceit, for those new to the books, is that certain individuals are able to pass from one century to another by means of ancient circles of standing stones. In *OUTLANDER*, the first volume, Claire time-travels quite by accident while vacationing in the Highlands; from 1946 she is hurtled back some 200 years, when the Jacobites, Scottish supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie, were fighting to oust the English and reestablish their own king. She meets and marries Jamie, but after the rebels are crushed at Culloden in 1745 and he is condemned to death, she returns to modern life (and her bemused 20th-century husband) to save her unborn child. Sounds pretty crazy, but Gabaldon makes it plausible because her research is so meticulous and her characters so sympathetic: heroic, yet attractively flawed. You get to know the central quartet --- Jamie, Claire, Brianna and Roger --- especially well, since they take turns narrating the book.

Diana Gabaldon is a very talented writer. When she's "on" her prose has a freshness and intensity that can take your breath away. Her plots can be fascinating and page-turning. At their best, her stories give the reader an exhilarating mix of historical fiction, fantasy and romance. Unfortunately, this sixth installment in her *Outlander* series, which began 15 years ago with the marvelous book of the same name, is a tedious and disjointed mishmash of a read. Some reviewers here have bemoaned the lack of strong editing on this book and I wholeheartedly add my voice to theirs. Gabaldon writes like she's getting paid by the word. Descriptions go on forever, irrelevant tertiary characters receive way too much attention and time, and too many of the main story lines from the previous books are barely advanced. In addition, Gabaldon recycles plot elements, such as the violent rape of main characters, that are becoming close to preposterous. The story of the saga's hero and heroine--the 18th century Scottish laird Jamie Fraser and his 20th century time-traveling wife Claire--which is the reason Gabaldon's fans buy these books, is told in only small snippets throughout this 900+ page whale. Pages and pages are spent describing, in minute detail, physician Claire's medical practices and her daughter Brianna's attempt to bring plumbing to the family's frontier home, yet way too little effort is put into showing the reader the emotional landscape and psychological progression of the characters, something Gabaldon excelled at in the earliest of the series' books. The first two books in the *Outlander* saga, *Outlander* and *Dragonfly In Amber* were

pure magic. The next two, *Voyager* and *Drums of Autumn*, were highly readable for fans of the first books.

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