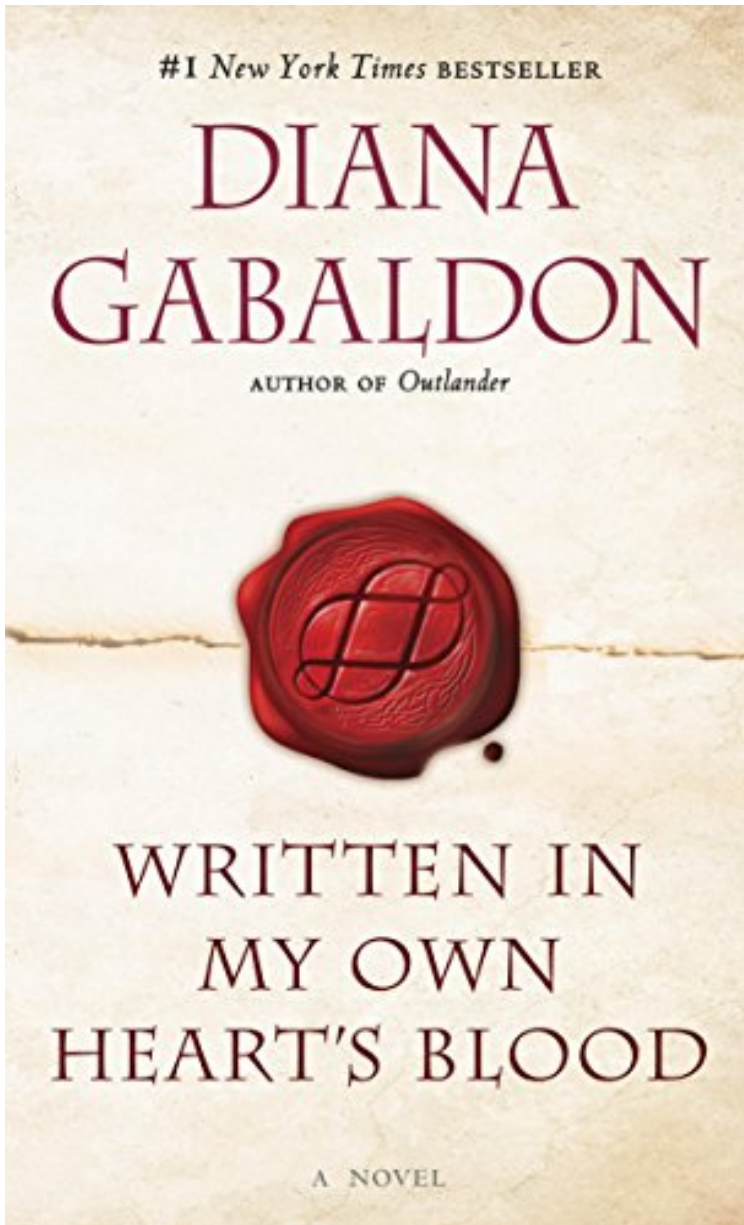


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Written in My Own Heart's Blood: A Novel (Outlander, Book 8)



Par Diana Gabaldon
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY BOOKLISTIn her now classic novel Outlander, Diana Gabaldon told the story of Claire Randall, an English ex-combat nurse who walks through a stone circle in the Scottish Highlands in 1946, and disappears . . . into 1743. The story unfolded from there in seven bestselling novels, and CNN has called

it a grand adventure written on a canvas that probes the heart, weighs the soul and measures the human spirit across [centuries]. Now the story continues in *Written in My Own Hearts Blood*. 1778: France declares war on Great Britain, the British army leaves Philadelphia, and George Washington's troops leave Valley Forge in pursuit. At this moment, Jamie Fraser returns from a presumed watery grave to discover that his best friend has married his wife, his illegitimate son has discovered (to his horror) who his father really is, and his beloved nephew, Ian, wants to marry a Quaker. Meanwhile, Jamie's wife, Claire, and his sister, Jenny, are busy picking up the pieces. The Frasers can only be thankful that their daughter Brianna and her family are safe in twentieth-century Scotland. Or not. In fact, Brianna is searching for her own son, who was kidnapped by a man determined to learn her family's secrets. Her husband, Roger, has ventured into the past in search of the missing boy . . . never suspecting that the object of his quest has not left the present. Now, with Roger out of the way, the kidnapper can focus on his true target: Brianna herself. *Written in My Own Hearts Blood* is the brilliant next chapter in a masterpiece of the imagination unlike any other. Praise for *Written in My Own Hearts Blood* [*Written in My Own Hearts Blood*] features all the passion and swashbuckling that fans of this historical fantasy series have come to expect. People Another breakneck, rip-roaring, oh-so-addictive page-turner from Gabaldon . . . Take a deep breath, jump aboard, and enjoy the ride. Library Journal With her *Outlander* series, Gabaldon . . . successfully [juggles] a sizable and captivating cast of characters; developing thrilling plotlines that borrow equally from adventure, history, and romance; and meticulously integrating a wealth of fascinating period details into the story without slowing down the pace. The result is a sprawling and enthralling saga that is guaranteed to keep readers up long past their bedtimes. Booklist (starred review) From the Hardcover edition. Extrait 1 A Hundredweight of Stones June 16, 1778 The forest between Philadelphia and Valley Forge Ian Murray stood with a stone in his hand, eyeing the ground he'd chosen. A small clearing, out of the way, up among a scatter of great lichened boulders, under the shadow of firs and at the foot of a big red cedar; a place where no casual passerby would go, but not inaccessible. He meant to bring them up here the family. Fergus, to begin with. Maybe just Fergus, by himself. Mam had raised Fergus from the time he was ten, and he'd had no mother before that. Fergus had known Mam longer than Ian had, and loved her as much. Maybe more, he thought, his grief aggravated by guilt. Fergus had stayed with her at Lallybroch, helped to take care of her and the place; he hadn't. He swallowed hard and, walking into the small clear space, set his stone in the middle, then stood back to look. Even as he did so, he found himself shaking his head. No, it had to be two cairns. His mam and Uncle Jamie were brother and sister, and the family could mourn them here together but there were others he might bring, maybe, to remember and pay their respects. And those were the folk who would have known Jamie Fraser and loved him well but wouldn't ken Jenny Murray from a hole in the ground. The image of his mother in a hole in the ground stabbed him like a fork, retreated with the recollection that she wasn't after all in a grave, and stabbed again all the harder for that. He really couldn't bear the vision of them drowning, maybe clinging to each other, struggling to keep a dhia! he said violently, and dropped the stone, turning back at once to find more. He'd seen people drown. Tears ran down his face with the sweat of the summer day; he didn't mind it, only stopping now and then to wipe his nose on his sleeve. He'd tied a rolled kerchief round his head to keep the hair and the stinging sweat out of his eyes; it was sopping before he'd added more than twenty stones to each of the cairns. He and his brothers had built a fine cairn for their father before he died, at the head of the carved stone that bore his name all his names, in spite of the expense in the burying ground at Lallybroch. And then later, at the funeral, members of the family, followed by the tenants and then the servants, had come one by one to add a stone each to the weight of remembrance. Fergus, then. Or... no, what was he thinking? Auntie Claire must be the first he brought here. She wasn't Scots herself, but she knew fine what a cairn was and would maybe be comforted a bit to see Uncle Jamie's. Aye, right. Auntie Claire, then Fergus. Uncle Jamie was Fergus's foster father; he had a right. And then maybe Marsali and the children. But maybe Germain was old enough to come with Fergus? He was ten, near enough to being a man to understand, to be treated like a man. And Uncle Jamie was his grandsire; it was proper. He stepped back again and wiped his face, breathing heavily. Bugs whined and buzzed past his ears and hovered over him, wanting his blood, but he'd stripped to a loin cloth and rubbed himself with bear grease and mint in the Mohawk way; they didn't touch him. Look over them, O spirit of red cedar, he said softly in Mohawk, gazing up into the fragrant branches of the tree. Guard their souls and keep their presence here, fresh as thy branches. He crossed himself and bent to dig about in the soft leaf mold. A few more rocks, he thought. In case they might be scattered by some passing animal. Scattered like his thoughts, which roamed restless to and fro among the faces of his family, the folk of the Ridge God, might he ever go back there? Brianna. Oh, Jesus, Brianna... He bit his lip and tasted salt, licked it away and moved on,

foraging. She was safe with Roger Mac and the weans. But, Jesus, he could have used her advice even more, Roger Macs. Who was left for him to ask, if he needed help in taking care of them all? Thought of Rachel came to him, and the tightness in his chest eased a little. Aye, if he had Rachel... She was younger than him, nay more than nineteen, and, being a Quaker, had very strange notions of how things should be, but if he had her, hed have solid rock under his feet. He hoped he would have her, but there were still things he must say to her, and the thought of that conversation made the tightness in his chest come back. The picture of his cousin Brianna came back, too, and lingered in his mind: tall, long-nosed and strong-boned as her father... and with it rose the image of his other cousin, Brees half brother. Holy God, William. And what ought he to do about William? He doubted the man kent the truth, kent that he was Jamie Frasers son was it Ians responsibility to tell him so? To bring him here and explain what hed lost? He must have groaned at the thought, for his dog, Rollo, lifted his massive head and looked at him in concern. No, I dinna ken that, either, Ian told him. Let it bide, aye? Rollo laid his head back on his paws, shivered his shaggy hide against the flies, and relaxed in boneless peace. Ian worked awhile longer and let the thoughts drain away with his sweat and his tears. He finally stopped when the sinking sun touched the tops of his cairns, feeling tired but more at peace. The cairns rose knee-high, side by side, small but solid. He stood still for a bit, not thinking anymore, just listening to the fussing of wee birds in the grass and the breathing of the wind among the trees. Then he sighed deeply, squatted, and touched one of the cairns. Tha gaol agam oirbh, a Mhthair, he said softly. My love is upon you, Mother. Closed his eyes and laid a scuffed hand on the other heap of stones. The dirt ground into his skin made his fingers feel strange, as though he could maybe reach straight through the earth and touch what he needed. He stayed still, breathing, then opened his eyes. Help me wi this, Uncle Jamie, he said. I dinna think I can manage, alone. 2 Dirty Bastard William Ransom, Ninth Earl of Ellesmere, Viscount Ashness, Baron Derwent, shoved his way through the crowds on Market Street, oblivious to the complaints of those rebounding from his impact. He didnt know where he was going, or what he might do when he got there. All he knew was that hed burst if he stood still. His head throbbed like an inflamed boil. Everything throbbed. His hand hed probably broken something, but he didnt care. His heart, pounding and sore inside his chest. His foot, for Gods sake what, had he kicked something? He lashed out viciously at a loose cobblestone and sent it rocketing through a crowd of geese, who set up a huge cackle and lunged at him, hissing and beating at his shins with their wings. Feathers and goose shit flew wide, and the crowd scattered in all directions. Bastard! shrieked the goose-girl, and struck at him with her crook, catching him a shrewd thump on the ear. Devil take you, dreckiger Bastard! This sentiment was echoed by a number of other angry voices, and he veered into an alley, pursued by shouts and honks of agitation. He rubbed his throbbing ear, lurching into buildings as he passed, oblivious to everything but the one word throbbing ever louder in his head. Bastard. Bastard! he said out loud, and shouted, Bastard, bastard, bastard! at the top of his lungs, hammering at the brick wall next to him with a clenched fist. Whos a bastard? said a curious voice behind him. He swung round to see a young woman looking at him with some interest. Her eyes moved slowly down his frame, taking note of the heaving chest, the bloodstains on the facings of his uniform coat, and the green smears of goose shit on his breeches. Her gaze reached his silver-buckled shoes and returned to his face with more interest. I am, he said, hoarse and bitter. Oh, really? She left the shelter of the doorway in which shed been lingering and came across the alley to stand right in front of him. She was tall and slim and had a very fine pair of high young breasts which were clearly visible under the thin muslin of her shift, because, while she had a silk petticoat, she wore no stays. No cap, either her hair fell loose over her shoulders. A whore. Im partial to bastards myself, she said, and touched him lightly on the arm. What kind of bastard are you? A wicked one? An evil one? A sorry one, he said, and scowled when she laughed. She saw the scowl but didnt pull back. Come in, she said, and took his hand. You look as though you could do with a drink. He saw her glance at his knuckles, burst and bleeding, and she caught her lower lip behind small white teeth. She didnt seem afraid, though, and he found himself drawn, unprotesting, into the shadowed doorway after her. What did it matter? he thought, with a sudden savage weariness. What did anything matter? 3 In Which the Women, As Usual, Pick Up the Pieces Number 17 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia The residence of Lord and Lady John Grey William had left the house like a thunderclap, and the place looked as though it had been struck by lightning. I certainly felt like the survivor of a massive electrical storm, hairs and nerve endings all standing up straight on end, waving in agitation. Jenny Murray had entered the house on the heels of Williams departure, and while the sight of her was a lesser shock than any of the others so far, it still left me speechless. I goggled at my erstwhile sister-in-law though, come to think, she still was my sister-in-law... because Jamie was alive. Alive. Hed been in my arms not ten minutes before, and the memory

of his touch flickered through me like lightning in a bottle. I was dimly aware that I was smiling like a loon, despite massive destruction, horrific scenes, Williams distress if you could call an explosion like that distress Jamies danger, and a faint wonder as to what either Jenny or Mrs. Figg, Lord Johns cook and housekeeper, might be about to say. Mrs. Figg was smoothly spherical, gleamingly black, and inclined to glide silently up behind one like a menacing ball bearing. Whats this? she barked, manifesting herself suddenly behind Jenny. Holy Mother of God! Jenny whirled, eyes round and hand pressed to her chest. Who in Gods name are you? This is Mrs. Figg, I said, feeling a surreal urge to laugh, despite or maybe because of recent events. Lord John Greys cook. And, Mrs. Figg, this is Mrs. Murray. My, um... my... Your good-sister, Jenny said firmly. She raised one black eyebrow. If yell have me still? Her look was straight and open, and the urge to laugh changed abruptly into an equally strong urge to burst into tears. Of all the unlikely sources of succor I could have imagined... I took a deep breath and put out my hand. Ill have you. We hadnt parted on good terms in Scotland, but I had loved her very much, once, and wasnt about to pass up any opportunity to mend things. Her small firm fingers wove through mine, squeezed hard, and, as simply as that, it was done.

No need for apologies or spoken forgiveness. Shed never had to wear the mask that Jamie did. What she thought and felt was there in her eyes, those slanted blue cat eyes she shared with her brother. She knew the truth now of what I was, and she knew I loved and always had loved her brother with all my heart and soul despite the minor complications of my being presently married to someone else. She heaved a sigh, eyes closing for an instant, then opened them and smiled at me, mouth trembling only a little. Well, fine and dandy, said Mrs. Figg shortly. She narrowed her eyes and rotated smoothly on her axis, taking in the panorama of destruction. The railing at the top of the stair had been ripped off, and cracked banisters, dented walls, and bloody smudges marked the path of Williams descent. Shattered crystals from the chandelier littered the floor, glinting festively in the light that poured through the open front door, the door itself cracked through and hanging drunkenly from one hinge. Merde on toast, Mrs. Figg murmured. She turned abruptly to me, her small black-currant eyes still narrowed. Wheres his lordship? Ah, I said. This was going to be rather sticky, I saw. While deeply disapproving of most people, Mrs. Figg was devoted to John. She wasnt going to be at all pleased to hear that hed been abducted by For that matter, wheres my brother? Jenny inquired, glancing round as though expecting Jamie to appear suddenly out from under the settee. Oh, I said. Hmm. Well... Possibly worse than sticky. Because... And wheres my Sweet William? Mrs. Figg demanded, sniffing the air. Hes been here; I smell that stinky cologne he puts on his linen. She nudged a dislodged chunk of plaster disapprovingly with the toe of her shoe. I took another long, deep breath and a tight grip on what remained of my sanity. Mrs. Figg, I said, perhaps you would be so kind as to make us all a cup of tea? We sat in the parlor, while Mrs. Figg came and went to the cookhouse, keeping an eye on her terrapin stew. You dont want to scorch turtle, no, you dont, she said severely to us, setting down the teapot in its padded yellow cozy on her return. Not with so much sherry as his lordship likes in it. Almost a full bottle terrible waste of good liquor, that would be. My insides turned over promptly. Turtle soup with a lot of sherry had certain strong and private associations for me, these being connected with Jamie, feverish delirium, and the way in which a heaving ship assists sexual intercourse. Contemplation of which would not assist the impending discussion in the slightest. I rubbed a finger between my brows, in hopes of dispelling the buzzing cloud of confusion gathering there. The air in the house still felt electric. Speaking of sherry, I said, or any other sort of strong spirits you might have convenient, Mrs. Figg... She looked thoughtfully at me, nodded, and reached for the decanter on the sideboard. Brandy is stronger, she said, and set it in front of me. Jenny looked at me with the same thoughtfulness and, reaching out, poured a good-sized slug of the brandy into my cup, then a similar one into her own. Just in case, she said, raising one brow, and we drank for a few moments. I thought it might take something stronger than brandy-laced tea to deal with the effect of recent events on my nerves laudanum, say, or a large slug of straight Scotch whisky but the tea undeniably helped, hot and aromatic, settling in a soft trickling warmth amidships. So, then. Were fettled, are we? Jenny set down her own cup and looked expectant. Its a start. I took a deep breath and gave her a precis of the mornings events. Jennys eyes were disturbingly like Jamies. She blinked at me once, then twice, and shook her head as though to clear it, accepting what Id just told her. So Jamies gone off wi your Lord John, the British army is after them, the tall lad I met on the stoop wi steam comin out of his ears is Jamies son well, of course he is; a blind man could see that and the towns aboil wi British soldiers. Is that it, then? Hes not exactly my Lord John, I said. But, yes, thats essentially the position. I take it Jamie told you about William, then? Aye, he did. She grinned at me over the rim of her teacup. Im that happy for him. But whats troubling his lad, then? He looked like he wouldna give the road to a bear. What did you say? Mrs. Figgs voice cut in

abruptly. She set down the tray she had just brought in, the silver milk jug and sugar basin rattling like castanets. William is whose son? I took a fortifying gulp of tea. Mrs. Figg did know that I'd been married to and theoretically widowed from one James Fraser. But that was all she knew. Well, I said, and paused to clear my throat. The, um, tall gentleman with the red hair who was just here you saw him? I did. Mrs. Figg eyed me narrowly. Did you get a good look at him? Didn't pay much heed to his face when he came to the door and asked where you were, but I saw his backside pretty plain when he pushed past me and ran up the stairs. Possibly the resemblance is less marked from that angle. I took another mouthful of tea. Um... that gentleman is James Fraser, my... er... my first husband wasn't accurate, and neither was last husband or even, unfortunately, most recent husband. I settled for the simplest alternative. My husband. And, er... Williams father. Mrs. Figg's mouth opened, soundless for an instant. She backed up slowly and sat down on a needlework ottoman with a soft pumph. William know that? she asked, after a moment's contemplation. He does now, I said, with a brief gesture toward the devastation in the stairwell, clearly visible through the door of the parlor where we were sitting. Merde on I mean, Holy Lamb of God preserve us. Mrs. Figg's second husband was a Methodist preacher, and she strove to be a credit to him, but her first had been a French gambler. Her eyes fixed on me like gun sights. You his mother? I choked on my tea. No, I said, wiping my chin with a linen napkin. It isn't quite that complicated. In fact, it was more so, but I wasn't going to explain just how Willie had come about, either to Mrs. Figg or to Jenny. Jamie had to have told Jenny who Williams mother was, but I doubted that he'd told his sister that Williams mother, Geneva Dunsany, had forced him into her bed by threatening Jenny's family. No man of spirit likes to admit that he's been effectively blackmailed by an eighteen-year-old girl. Lord John became Williams legal guardian when Williams grandfather died, and at that point, Lord John also married Lady Isobel Dunsany, Willie's mother's sister. She'd looked after Willie since his mother's death in childbirth, and she and Lord John were essentially Willie's parents since he was quite young. Isobel died when he was eleven or so. Mrs. Figg took this explanation in stride but wasn't about to be distracted from the main point at issue. James Fraser, she said, tapping a couple of broad fingers on her knee and looking accusingly at Jenny. How comes he not to be dead? News was he drowned. She cut her eyes at me. I thought his lordship was like to throw himself in the harbor, too, when he heard it. I closed my own eyes with a sudden shudder, the salt-cold horror of that news washing over me in a wave of memory. Even with Jamie's touch still joyful on my skin and the knowledge of him glowing in my heart, I relived the crushing pain of hearing that he was dead. Well, I can enlighten ye on that point, at least. I opened my eyes to see Jenny drop a lump of sugar into her fresh tea and nod at Mrs. Figg. We were to take passage on a ship called Euterpe my brother and myself out o' Brest. But the blackhearted thief of a captain sailed without us. Much good it did him, she added, frowning. Much good, indeed. The Euterpe had sunk in a storm in the Atlantic, lost with all hands. As I and John Grey had been told. Jamie found us another ship, but it landed us in Virginia, and we'd to make our way up the coast, partly by wagon, partly by packet boat, keepin' out of the way of the soldiers. Those wee needles ye gave Jamie against the seasickness work a marvel, she added, turning approvingly to me. He showed me how to put them in for him. But when we came to Philadelphia yesterday, she went on, returning to her tale, we stole into the city by night, like a pair o' thieves, and made our way to Fergus's printshop. Lord, I thought my heart would stop a dozen times! She smiled at the memory, and I was struck by the change in her. The shadow of sorrow still lay on her face, and she was thin and worn by travel, but the terrible strain of her husband's long dying had lifted. There was color in her cheeks again and a brightness in her eyes that I had not seen since I had first known her thirty years before. She had found her peace, I thought, and felt a thankfulness that eased my own soul.... so Jamie taps on the door at the back, and there's no answer, though we can see the light of a fire comin' through the shutters. He knocks again, makin' a wee tune of it. She rapped her knuckles lightly on the table, bump-ba-da-bump-ba-da-bump-bump-bump, and my heart turned over, recognizing the theme from The Lone Ranger, which Brianna had taught him. And after a moment, Jenny went on, a woman's voice calls out fierce, Whos there? And Jamie says in the Gidhlig, It is your father, my daughter, and a cold, wet, and hungry man he is, too. For it was rainin' hammer handles and pitchforks, and we were both soaked to the skin. She rocked back a little, enjoying the telling. The door opens then, just a crack, and there's Marsali wi a horse pistol in her hand, and her two wee lasses behind her, fierce as archangels, each with a billet of wood, ready to crack a thief across his shins. They see the firelight shine on Jamie's face then, and all three of them let out skellochs like to wake the dead and fall upon him and drag him inside and all talkin' at once and greetin', askin' was he a ghost and why was he not drowned, and that was the first we learned that the Euterpe had sunk. She crossed herself. God rest them, poor souls, she said, shaking her head. I crossed myself, too,

and saw Mrs.Figg look sideways at me; she hadnt realized I was a Papist.Ive come in, too, of course, Jenny went on, but everyones talkin at once and rushin to and fro in search of dry clothes and hot drinks and Im just lookin about the place, for Ive never been inside a printshop before, and the smell of the ink and the paper and lead is a wonder to me, and, sudden-like, theres a tug at my skirt and this sweet-faced wee mannie says to me, And who are you, madame? Would you like some cider?Henri-Christian, I murmured, smiling at the thought of Marsalis youngest, and Jenny nodded.Why, Im your grannie Janet, son, says I, and his eyes go round, and he lets out a shriek and grabs me round the legs and gives me such a hug as to make me lose my balance and fall down on the settle. Ive a bruise on my bum the size of your hand, she added out of the corner of her mouth to me.I felt a small knot of tension that I hadnt realized was there relax. Jenny did of course know that Henri-Christian had been born a dwarfbut knowing and seeing are sometimes different things. Clearly they hadnt been, for Jenny.Mrs.Figg had been following this account with interest, but maintained her reserve. At mention of the printshop, though, this reserve hardened a bit.These folkMarsali is your daughter, then, maam? I could tell what she was thinking. The entire town of Philadelphia knew that Jamie was a Rebeland, by extension, so was I. It was the threat of my imminent arrest that had caused John to insist upon my marrying him in the wake of the tumult following Jamies presumed death. The mention of printing in British-occupied Philadelphia was bound to raise questions as to just what was being printed, and by whom.No, her husband is my brothers adopted son, Jenny explained. But I raised Fergus from a wee lad myself, so hes my foster son, as well, by the Highland way of reckoning.Mrs.Figg blinked. She had been gamely trying to keep the cast of characters in some sort of order to this point, but now gave it up with a shake of her head that made the pink ribbons on her cap wave like antennae.Well, where the devilI mean, where on earth has your brother gone with his lordship? she demanded. To this printshop, you think?Jenny and I exchanged glances.I doubt it, I said. More likely hes gone outside the city, using Johner, his lordship, I meanas a hostage to get past the pickets, if necessary. Probably hell let him go as soon as theyre far enough away for safety.Mrs.Figg made a deep humming noise of disapproval.And maybe hell make for Valley Forge and turn him over to the Rebels instead.Oh, I shouldna think so, Jenny said soothingly. What would they want with him, after all?Mrs.Figg blinked again, taken aback at the notion that anyone might not value his lordship to the same degree that she did, but after a moments lip-pursing allowed as this might be so.He wasnt in his uniform, was he, maam? she asked me, brow furrowed. I shook my head. John didnt hold an active commission. He was a diplomat, though technically still lieutenant colonel of his brothers regiment, and therefore wore his uniform for purposes of ceremony or intimidation, but he was officially retired from the army, not a combatant, and in plain clothes he would be taken as citizen rather than soldierthus of no particular interest to General Washingtons troops at Valley Forge.I didnt think Jamie was headed for Valley Forge in any case. I knew, with absolute certainty, that he would come back. Here. For me.The thought bloomed low in my belly and spread upward in a wave of warmth that made me bury my nose in my teacup to hide the resulting flush.Alive. I caressed the word, cradling it in the center of my heart. Jamie was alive. Glad as I was to see Jennyand gladder still to see her extend an olive branch in my direction I really wanted to go up to my room, close the door, and lean against the wall with my eyes shut tight, reliving the seconds after hed entered the room, when hed taken me in his arms and pressed me to the wall, kissing me, the simple, solid, warm fact of his presence so overwhelming that I might have collapsed onto the floor without that walls support.Alive, I repeated silently to myself. Hes alive.Nothing else mattered. Though I did wonder briefly what hed done with John.Revue de presse[Written in My Own Hearts Blood] features all the passion and swashbuckling that fans of this historical fantasy series have come to expect.People Another breakneck, rip-roaring, oh-so-addictive page-turner from Gabaldon . . . Take a deep breath, jump aboard, and enjoy the ride.Library JournalWith her Outlander series, [Diana] Gabaldon . . . successfully [juggles] a sizable and captivating cast of characters; developing thrilling plotlines that borrow equally from adventure, history, and romance; and meticulously integrating a wealth of fascinating period details into the story without slowing down the pace. The result is a sprawling and enthralling saga that is guaranteed to keep readers up long past their bedtimes.Booklist (starred review)