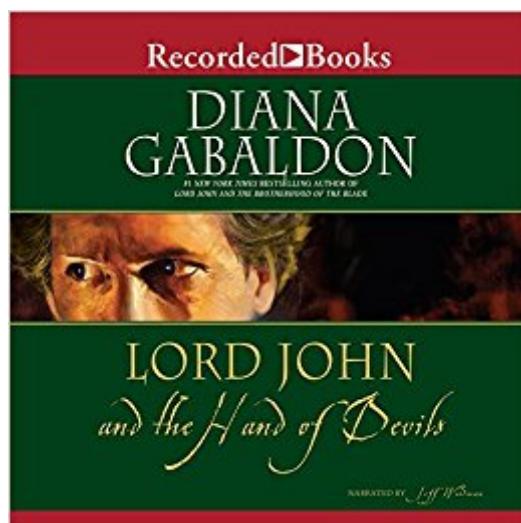


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Lord John & The Hand Of Devils (Recorded Books Unabridged)



Synopsis

Diana Gabaldon, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the celebrated Outlander series, delivers three mesmerizing tales of war, intrigue, and espionage that feature one of her most popular characters: Lord John Grey. In Lord John and the Hellfire Club, Lord John glimpses a stranger in the doorway of a gentleman's club-and is stirred by a desperate entreaty to meet with him in private. It is an impulse that will lead Lord John into a maze of political treachery and a dangerous, debauched underground society. In Lord John and the Succubus, English soldiers fighting in Prussia are rattled by a lethal creature that appears at night. Called to investigate, Lord John soon realizes that among the spirits that haunt men, none frighten more than the specters conjured by the heart. In Lord John and the Haunted Soldier, Lord John is thrust into the baffling case of an exploding battlefield cannon that ultimately forces him to confront his own ghosts-and the shattering prospect that a traitor is among the ranks of His Majesty's armed forces.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The indefatigable Gabaldon, who has made the British 18th century her own, offers a trio of novellas about Lord John Grey, whose minor role in the Outlander novels (concerning Jacobite Jamie Fraser and including A Breath of Snow and Ashes) has become a major fictional spinoff (Lord John and the Brotherhood of the Blade, etc.). The three mystery-adventure novellas of this volume span 1756 to 1758, in settings packed with dark secrets-and therefore dangers-for the soldier-hero with secrets of his own. The first novella finds Lord John swearing vengeance in

London for a murdered government official, leading him to a deconsecrated abbey where members of the political elite indulge their basest desires. The second pits Lord John against a succubus that plagues his Prussian encampment, and combines humor with military strategy and supernatural myth. The third, most complex narrative finds Lord John investigating the cause of a cannon explosion in the English countryside that results in a fellow officer's death. Gabaldon brings an effusive joy to her fiction that proves infectious even for readers unfamiliar with her work or the period. A foreword and introductory notes add background on the book's evolution. (Nov.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Riveting... Gabaldon has a storyteller's voice." "Diana Gabaldon is a born storyteller... The pages practically turn themselves."

I enjoy the Lord John books and stories, because I like Lord John! He's a likeable fellow with a dangerous way of life. Not that one precludes the other, but in the 18th Century Sodomites, as they were called, faced a death sentence if found out. Lord John Grey is an urbane, attractive, adaptive and quick-witted man who happens to be what we call "Gay" in the 18th century. These 3 stories may not please all, but they are worth reading because they add to the body of knowledge about Lord John. They don't need to be read to enjoy the larger (in every sense!) Gabaldon books, but they do form part of the body of work and have their own value. That said, I think I liked "Lord John and the Succubus" best for the character development of some of the Other characters in the story, and shows us the cleverness of Lord John in a ... well, clever way! Highly recommended!

Of course Lord John is not as exciting as the main Outlander characters, and in the main books to me he seems a rather flat character, convenient for providing Jamie and Claire with access to money, supplies, and to keep us informed of the life of Willie. But these stories, set between the years of the separation between Jaime and Claire, make John a much more interesting and complicated character. There is a small mystery in each of them and a larger mystery that flows through all the Lord John stories so far, which is worth the read. They can be read alone (and in any order according to Gabaldon) but the greatly enrich the main storyline in the Big Enormous Books. As an entire collection, they contribute a lot to understanding the historical background for all the characters and they add new ones of interest to the larger series as well.

IMHO, Diana Gabaldon cannot write a bad story. That said, I've liked some of the books in the Outlander series better than others. The same is true in this combined series of three novellas. Of the three I liked the third one, Lord John and the Haunted Soldier, the best because it touches briefly and indirectly on the deeply poignant feelings that Lord John has for Jamie Fraser. It also highlights several admirable aspects of LJ's character in a story that is a very good and entertaining read. For me, Lord John is the absolute best of the Outlander secondary characters and I will read any story involving him. He absolutely touches my heart.

The book contains 3 short stories about Lord John, two of which were published previously. The first, "Lord John and the Hellfire Club," previously appeared under the title, "Hellfire," in the anthology "Past Poisons" (Headline, 1998). It's the shortest at about 37 pages. In the chronology of Lord John books, it comes first (before "Lord John and the Private Matter"). "Hellfire" takes place in 1756, shortly after Lord John's return from Ardsuir (the prison that held Jamie Fraser in "Voyager"). It deals with the murder of a young man invited to meet with the secretive Hellfire Club. No one knows much about it. But John receives a sobering induction, is framed for murder, and saved by Harry Quarry (his predecessor at Ardsuir) all in the space of about 8 pages - a major feat for Gabaldon. The second story, "Lord John and the Succubus," is clever. It previously appeared under the same title in the anthology, "Legends II: New Short Novels by the Modern Masters of Fantasy." In the chronology of Lord John titles, it falls between "Private Matter" and "Brotherhood of the Blade." The story takes place during 1756 and 1757, when England was at war against France and Austria. While serving as a major in the English army, Lord John investigates rumors and deaths attributed to succubi. I can't speak to the story's cleverness without giving it away, but suffice it to say that the "devils" in this story are quite human and the hand controlling them quite present today and since the beginning of time. The third, "Lord John and the Haunted Soldier," is an original publication. In the chronology, it comes after "Brotherhood of the Blade." It takes place in 1758. Lord John has recently returned from the battlefield to respond to an inquest about a cannon that blew up under his command, killing several soldiers. The intrigue involves investigating the cause of the explosion. Lord John struggles with feelings of guilt and memory lapses (In the midst of a crisis, who can say what really happened?). Consequently, a request that he investigate the disappearance of a local young woman comes as a welcome distraction. Little does he know how the two - the disappearance and the explosion - relate. Of the 3 stories, I enjoyed Succubus the most. I like Gabaldon's writing style and her imagination, so I'll read anything she writes. But Succubus is a cut above the other 2 stories. If you haven't read it, it alone is worth the price of the book. For Jamie

Fraser fans, you'll find references to him in all the stories. But he is most apparent in the "Haunted Soldier." For others, you might find this collection easier to follow, if you read the other 2 Lord John novels as well as the first 3 Outlander books. Gabaldon is truly a gifted storyteller in that she can retell episodes from earlier works from the viewpoint of another character. It's quite well done and I'm amazed that she does this without planning for it.

Lord John and the Hand of Devils: A Novel  I have been following this series from the time I accidentally picked up the first book The Outlander. Lord John is a character in the books, who with Claire loves Jamie without question. He has his particular interests but somehow is able to blend in well despite the times he lives in. I think he would be very happy living in our century and very successful. This book covers his story during 1756 to 1758 with 3 different stories about his activities during that time period. (prior to the war of independence in 1776) I like historial novels with a good story to tell history with because it makes more sense of what happened during that time. Diane Gabaldon certainly does her research to make more to the point. I am glad she gives us details of Lord John so we can understand where he fits in the whole story of the series. His stories are usually quick reading compared to the Outlander books and do fill in the time waiting for the next one in the series.

This collection of 3 novellas gives us an insight into Lord John Grey. Poor John not only has the obligations of being a military man. But then he gets sucked into a constant role of private investigator. To top it all off, John is lonely! He struggles with his sexuality. Underground sex clubs, a lingering look, a spark in a quick glimpse...what is a man to do? I feel that John wants to just find the sole mate who understands and loves him for who he is. That person just so happens to be Jamie Fraser. This is a good collection of short stories. A must for anyone that adores the Outlander series.

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