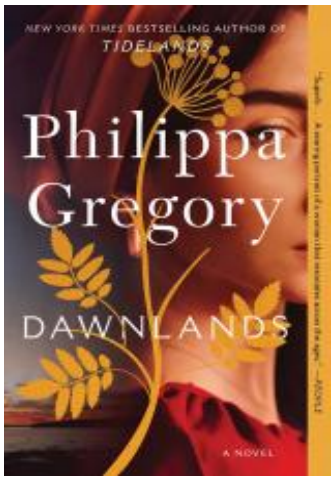
Dawnlands

by Philippa Gregory



About the Book

The ?superb? (*People*) *Fairmile* series from #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Philippa Gregory continues as the fiercely independent Alinor and her family find themselves entangled in palace intrigue and political upheaval in 17th-century England.

It is 1685, and England is on the brink of a renewed civil war. King Charles II has died without an heir, and his brother, James, is to take the throne. But the people are bitterly divided, and many do not welcome the new king or his young queen. Ned Ferryman cannot persuade his sister, Alinor, that he is right to return from America with his Pokanoket servant, Rowan, to join the rebel army. Instead, Alinor and her daughter, Alys, have been coaxed by the manipulative Livia to save the queen from the coming siege. The rewards are life-changing: the family could return to their beloved Tidelands, and Alinor could rule where she was once lower than a servant.

Alinor?s son is determined to stay clear of the war, but in order to keep his own secrets in the past, Livia traps him in a plan to create an imposter Prince of Wales --- a surrogate baby to the queen.

From the last battle in the desolate Somerset Levels to the hidden caves on the slave island of Barbados, this third volume of an epic story follows a family from one end of the empire to another, to find a new dawn in a world that is opening up before them with greater rewards and dangers than ever before.

Discussion Guide

1. The novel begins with Livia?s being summoned to court. How does this event --- and centering the beginning on her perspective --- set up the rest of the novel?

2. Early on, James tells Livia, ?I do admire how your devotion increases with the fashion.? What does this say about her

character?

3. While discussing how Foulmire might have changed, Alinor tells Alys, ?Someone will have made up stories about us...as if we were never real at all.? What does this novel say about the power of stories?

4. Alinor tells Matthew that Livia and James Avery are ?poor in heart.? How do Alinor?s and Alys? relationships with James and Livia, respectively, affect the novel? Do you find redemption for these characters by the end?

5. Rowan tells Ned, ?You saved my life --- it is yours.? At various points in the story, they each feel an enormous debt to the other. How does this drive the story? Do you think that Ned and Rowan are obligated to repay this debt? Why do you think Rowan uses Ned?s name in Barbados?

6. What does the discovery of the garden in Barbados mean to Rowan? How does she take back her own agency and build community in this novel?

7. Alinor tells James, ?You can?t bring back time by wishing.? What do you think these characters might change about their lives if given the opportunity to go back?

8. What do you make of the story the charcoal burner tells Gabrielle and Mia about the mermaid and the priest? Does this fairy tale tell a truth about the real events? What does it mean that both Alinor and James die on Midsummer Eve?

9. As Queen Mary Beatrice promises to shower Livia with a post, pension and jewels, Livia says, ?I?ll try to be happy.? Consider the relationship between Livia and Mary Beatrice, especially given Livia?s relationship with Alys in the previous book. Do you think that Livia is purely mercenary, or does she have some true affection for the queen?

10. When Ned finds Rowan, she says of Johnnie (and Ned, too, by association), ?But I don?t need his help. I?m free.? How does this theme of freedom run through the novel? What does freedom look like for each of these characters?

11. Alys says, ?There is no profit in equality.? How does the book prove or disprove this theory? Do you agree with her?

12. What role does succession --- both royal and nonroyal --- play in this novel? What kind of inheritances, both monetary and spiritual, do the characters receive?

13. At the end of the novel, Livia returns, announcing that their home is called Fairmile. What does this renaming of the Priory signal?

14. Why do you think the author chose to title the book DAWNLANDS?

Author Bio

Dr. Philippa Gregory is an internationally renowned historian and novelist. She holds a PhD in 18th-century literature at the University of Edinburgh and is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Universities of Sussex and Cardiff,

an honorary research fellow at Birkbeck University of London and she was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to literature and to charity. Her novels have been adapted for stage and screen, and in 2023 she published her groundbreaking history book, NORMAL WOMEN: 900 Years of Making History, which also was released as a podcast, a teen edition and a series for young children.

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