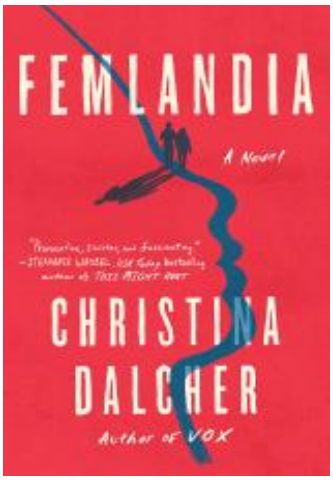
Femlandia

by Christina Dalcher



About the Book

A chilling look into an alternate near future where a woman and her daughter seek refuge in a women-only colony, only to find that the safe haven they were hoping for is the most dangerous place they could be.

Miranda Reynolds always thought she would rather die than live in Femlandia. But that was before the country sank into total economic collapse and her husband walked out in the harshest, most permanent way, leaving her and her 16-year-old daughter with nothing. The streets are full of looting, robbing and killing, and Miranda and Emma no longer have much choice --- either starve and risk getting murdered, or find safety. And so they set off to Femlandia, the women-only colony Miranda's mother, Win Somers, established decades ago.

Although Win is no longer in the spotlight, her protégé Jen Jones has taken Femlandia to new heights: The off-grid colonies are secluded, self-sufficient and thriving --- and Emma is instantly enchanted by this idea of a safe haven. But something is not right. There are no men allowed in the colony, but babies are being born --- and they're all girls. Miranda discovers just how the all-women community is capable of enduring, and it leads her to question how far her mother went to create this perfect, thriving, horrifying society.

Discussion Guide

1. One of the quotes in the front matter is ?All movements go too far.? Do you think the concept of feminism embraced by Win Somers is an example of this? What other movements --- either historic or contemporary --- do you perceive as ?going too far??

2. Suppose Femlandia were Manlandia (in other words, an all-male community that used women as breeders). How would this change affect your reaction to the book?

3. At one point, Miranda recalls her mother, Win, insisting that ?anything a man can do, a woman can do equally well.? Win considers men and women to be equal, but at the same time, she believes that ?Men lie; women tell true tales. Men [screw] things up; women mend the broken bits. Men fight; women keep peace.? Do you think Win contradicts herself, or is there a way to explain her worldview?

4. If you were a librarian, which shelf would you put FEMLANDIA on? Thriller? Women?s fiction? Science fiction? Horror? Or something else?

5. FEMLANDIA can be read as a near-future dystopia. What are the elements of a dystopian story? Is there one element in particular that seems dominant in the genre?

6. There?s quite a bit of violence in the book, and this violence occurs in different contexts. Are there situations where extreme violence is justified?

7. Win Somers and Jen Jones, the leaders of Femlandia, suffered various forms of abuse when they were younger. How does knowing their backgrounds affect the reader? Do Win and Jen deserve sympathy?

8. Both FEMLANDIA and VOX examine parent-child relationships. Specifically, we see that children do not always mirror their parents (and sometimes, this is a good thing!). Are these rifts always caused by outside forces, or does the parent play a role in the breakdown of a relationship? Also, how vulnerable are younger people to trends and influences that are in opposition to their upbringing?

9. If you were in Miranda, Sal and Nell?s position, what would you have done with Win and Jen at the end? Would you have let them stay? Do you think they?re redeemable?

10. After reading the epilogue, what do you think will happen to Femlandia? With the economy somewhat recovered, will the colony fizzle out? Will it continue as a self-sufficient community with both women and men? Or will it return to all-female, as its founder meant it to be?

Author Bio

Christina Dalcher earned her doctorate in theoretical linguistics from Georgetown University. She specializes in the phonetics of sound change in Italian and British dialects and has taught at several universities.

Her short stories and flash fiction appear in more than one hundred journals worldwide. Recognition includes the Bath Flash Award short list, nominations for the Pushcart Prize, and multiple other awards. She lives in Norfolk, Virginia, with her husband.

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