

Dear Reader,

Over the past year, hoopla readers have shown a growing appetite for historical fiction. We, along with these fellow readers, seem to be drawn back again and again into the past in the many excellent books in this genre that have released in the past few years. *The Gown* is one of these that truly swept us away, and that we are thrilled to now fully dig into with hoopla book club.

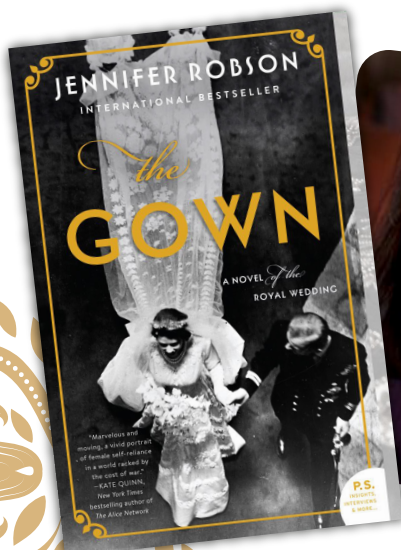
For me, one of the reasons good historical fiction is so enticing is that it can deliver these impressions of history as intimate scenes between friends, lovers, or coworkers that can make us feel like we are slipping through the textbooks into a full-color, full-blooded world. Jennifer Robson is a master of constructing just these types of stories and, in *The Gown*, it is clear she has done her research. She shows us the reality of postwar Britain in the details of the strict rationing program on everything from tea to soap, the jitterbug and foxtrots playing in the dance halls, the elbow-length gloves for special occasions, the nightly news on the radio, and so on, to give us a glimpse of life in London in the late 1940s.

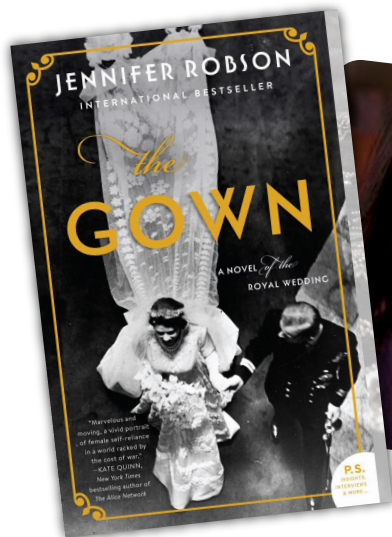
Of course, the meat of this book is in her characters, and Robson has created two memorable ones in Miriam Dassin and Ann Hughes. Here, Robson shows us two resilient women who, as embroiderers for a famous designer, are involved in one of the biggest events of the era: the wedding of Queen Elizabeth. Yet, it is their personal stories that lure us the most, as we learn of the traumas and obstacles they face together and alone, and the secrets they keep. *The Gown* becomes a story, in part, of how we choose to carry our pain, and what can happen when we let people in. Ann and Miriam are two women who bring beauty into the world despite the hideous things they have experienced, and it is their friendship, full of vulnerability and empathy, that gives them the strength to do what needs to be done. Add to this dynamic the perspective of Heather, who appears 50 years in the future as Ann's granddaughter trying to unravel the mysterious clues her Nan left behind of her life's story, and this is a truly addictive read.

We found *The Gown* to be a deeply felt novel of friendship that, in the end, is powerfully uplifting. We hope you will read along with us and let us know what you think @hoopladigital and engage with fellow readers using #hooplabookclub.

Happy reading!

-Tara Carberry, hoopla digital





About the Author

Jennifer Robson is the *USA Today* and #1 *Toronto Globe & Mail* bestselling author of *The Gown*, *Somewhere in France*, *After the War Is Over*, and *Moonlight Over Paris*. She holds a doctorate in British economic and social history from Saint Antony's College, University of Oxford, and is the daughter of acclaimed historian Stuart Robson. Jennifer lives in Toronto with her husband and young children.

Selected Praise

"...marvelous and moving, a vivid portrait of female self-reliance in a world racked by the cost of war."

—**Kate Quinn, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Alice Network***

"For fans of *The Crown*, looking for history served up as intimate drama, and those seeking another angle on royal lives, *The Gown* seems likely to dazzle and delight."

—***Washington Post***

"The beautiful gown and the excitement surrounding its creation come to life through [narrator] Calin's exceptional performance."

—***AudioFile Magazine*, Earphones Award Winner**

"...an unforgettable story of friendship, hardship and hope. Robson has managed to craft a story that is personal and universal, timely and timeless. *The Gown* soars!"

—**Pam Jenoff, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Orphan's Tale***

"...a satisfying multigenerational epic linked by the intricate embroidery used on Princess Elizabeth's wedding gown. Robson's meticulous attention to historical details...is a wonderful complement to the memorable stories of Ann and Milly, making for a winning, heartwarming tale."

—***Publishers Weekly* (starred review)**

"Robson deftly weaves issues of class, trauma, romance, and female friendship with satisfying details of Ann and Miriam's craft."

—***Booklist* (starred review)**