

WHY WE LOVE *Widowland*

Dear Reader,

Set in an alternate timeline, *Widowland* explores what the Western world would have looked like if England formed an alliance with Nazi Germany.

This book engages with daily life in that scenario through its protagonist, Rose, an employee whose job is to change the classics of Western literature to “correct” anything that is considered degenerate, subversive, or doesn’t align with the government’s ideals. She is ordered by the government to interview Friedas, the lowest class of women made up of widows and spinsters, who live in the titular Widowland and are suspected of being behind subversive graffiti. As she becomes immersed in the literature and learns more about the Friedas, she starts to question everything about her life, including her relationship with a powerful married German official.

It's frighteningly real, because this is the way life would pan out in a fascist state—there will be people insulated from the horrors of the state by class and caste privilege. Nobody can ultimately escape it, though, and no level of privilege will ultimately protect you from it, no matter how much you may choose to ignore it.

In times of rising fascism across the world at present, this book is an important, timely read—it's important to keep democracy alive, and that's a responsibility that everyone shoulders—as a voter, as a consumer of news, as a citizen.

Ultimately, *Widowland* is a strong feminist story, where we learn the power of literature to fight against tyranny and oppression, especially in the hands of strong women. 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!

Andi Paris, hoopla Digital



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Selected Praise for *Widowland*

"*Fatherland* meets *The Handmaid's Tale* in C.J. Carey's compelling what-might-have-been new novel...*Widowland* is a compulsive, terrifying read." – **Kate Quinn, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Rose Code***

"In *Widowland*, C. J. Carey has written an electrifying, Orwellian dystopia with a thrilling feminist twist...In Carey's expert hands, one can truly believe that literature can change the world." – **Lara Prescott, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Secrets We Kept***

"Tense, thought-provoking, and terrifying, *Widowland* is about a woman's search for truth in a world bent on destroying all traces of it." – **Natalie Jenner, international bestselling author of *The Jane Austen Society***

"This chilling take vividly portrays a world where reality is replaced by fiction and literature is more threatening than the deadliest weapon. A compelling page-turner that feels all too timely." – **Jennifer Coburn, author of *Cradles of the Reich***

"This utterly engrossing exploration of the subversive power of literature—part thriller, part dystopian fiction, part feminist cautionary tale—is a rollicking homage to women who refuse to accept being less. It could not be more timely." – **Meg Waite Clayton, internationally bestselling author of *The Postmistress of Paris***

"A chilling thriller with an alternate-history twist...highly recommended." – ***Library Journal, Starred Review***

"C. J. Carey's novel, *Widowland*, couldn't be more chilling—or dystopian—given the frightening political landscape confronting women in America and elsewhere. It is an important, and well-written book for our time...Carey astutely articulates, via her characters, her concerns about the fragility of democracy in our own times." – ***New York Journal of Books***

"Scary, pacy and packed with period detail, *Widowland* is a smart, inventive imagining of what might have been." – ***The Daily Mail***

"Don't expect to get much done while you're reading *Widowland*. Let Carey's expert world-building suck you into this terrifying dystopian society while the tense narrative (think: *Brave New World* with a feminist literary twist) will keep you turning pages faster than you can say vive la resistance." – ***Refinery29***