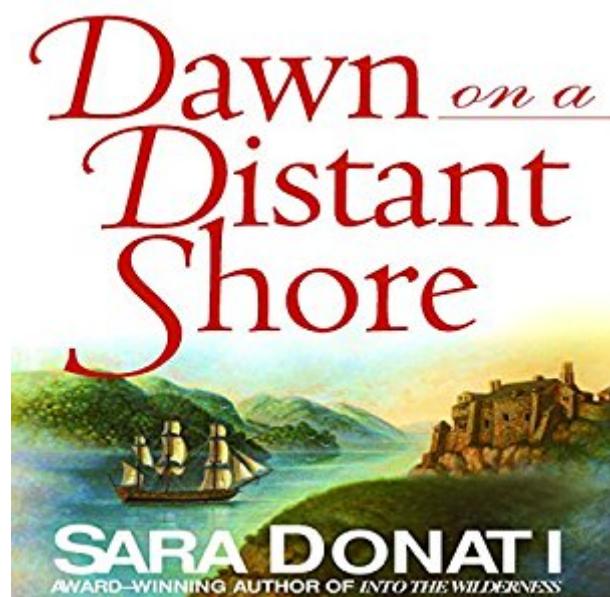


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Dawn On A Distant Shore



Synopsis

In an icy, untamed world of pristine beauty, a husband and wife are torn apart by fate but reunited forever by a love that can't be broken....An unforgettable love comes alive in this masterful epic of passion, treachery, and adventure....Award-winning author Sara Donati's debut novel, *Into the Wilderness*, was hailed as "one of those rare stories that let you breathe the air of another time" (Diana Gabaldon). Now, in an eloquent blend of fact and fiction, Donati re-creates her beloved characters from *Into the Wilderness* in an enthralling new tale of romance and adventure. Elizabeth and Nathaniel Bonner have settled into their life together at the edge of the New-York wilderness in the winter of 1794. But soon after Elizabeth gives birth to healthy twins, Nathaniel learns that his father has been arrested in British Canada. Forced to leave Hidden Wolf Mountain to help his father in Montreal, Nathaniel himself is imprisoned and in danger of being hanged as a spy. In a desperate bid to save her husband, Elizabeth bundles her infants and sets out through the snowy wilderness and across treacherous waterways on the dangerous trek to Canada. But she soon discovers that freeing her husband will take every ounce of her courage and inventiveness â " and will threaten her with the loss of what she loves most: her children. Torn apart, the Bonners must embark on yet another perilous voyage, this time all the way across the ocean to the heart of Scotland, where a destiny they could never have imagined awaits them.... --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are new to this series, read this review - then go buy *INTO THE WILDERNESS* and read it

first. Some series stories can be read out of sequence, but this is not one of them. DAWN ON A DISTANT SHORE assumes the reader already has some background knowledge about the main characters, and wastes little time bringing newcomers up to speed on their history. Instead, the tale plunges headfirst into the action and intrigue, and you'll miss out on some enjoyment if you have to play guess and catch-up with the events that precede it. The Bonners of New York State, in early post-revolutionary America, trade the wildness of the New World for the jaded Old, as they are forced into a trans-Atlantic chase to Scotland orchestrated by Nathaniel's distant older cousin, the Earl of Carryck. The Earl, a shadow figure about whom we learn only from others' perceptions for almost two-thirds of the book, is desperate to induce one of the male Bonners to stand as his heir, and thus help him avoid forfeiture of his ancestral lands. Although it is Hawkeye, the eldest in the Bonner line, whom he originally covets (yes, new readers, this is the same LAST OF THE MOHICANS Hawkeye), any male Bonner will do - which, of course, means that Nathaniel and his baby son, Daniel, are also at risk. In WILDERNESS, fresh characters populated a virgin land, with all its beauty, sharp edges, and savage nature. In DAWN, almost a third of the story is spent at sea, and the dangers are more human than natural. Sara Donati's sequel to INTO THE WILDERNESS is a different sort of book, and it is hard to avoid comparisons. However, DAWN stands on its own as a complex story about family and political relationships. I admire the inventive mind of the author, whom I forgive (just kidding) for making me wait six months longer than I'd hoped, to read this book. What a devious plot! The various characters are unfolding their personalities layer by layer; this time, Nathaniel's and Elizabeth's relationship is somewhat taken for granted and less in the forefront, while Hannah, Curiosity, and Hawkeye receive more attention. Several new characters, including one nice surprise, make their appearances (to be fleshed out later, I hope). Too many times to count, I found myself rereading certain passages in order to make sure I had all the relationships straight. In that respect, the story parallels WILDERNESS, where the reader has to thread a path through the intricacies of kinships that blend English, Mohawk, and American blood. To me, this book felt like a transitional work - a necessary middle story to elaborate on background, context, and personalities, and to introduce new faces while pruning away others whose time had come. Readers of WILDERNESS will notice that Dr. Todd, a very central character in the foundation story, is absent from this one, as is most of the Mohawk portion of the Bonner family. I missed these characters, and I also missed the excitement, newness, and panorama of the New World and the fledgling nation setting that WILDERNESS gave us. DAWN is still a five-star book, for me, but like many of the other readers, and the Bonners themselves, I now want to go back to Paradise and Lake in the Clouds. Ms. Donati, I hope you'll take us back there next time!

I loved into the Wilderness and could not wait to read this sequel. I could have done without this book. I do not think anything would be lost by skipping this one. Other than young Jennet, the new recurring characters introduced were named but not developed until later in the series. The sea voyages were too long and drawn out. The end was disappointing. By the time we were presented with the real reason the Earl of Carryck had an entire family (including 2 infants), that it was a let down. There were too many side trips that added little or nothing to the story except more pages to get through. One of my most favorite characters died, and, aside from the aforementioned Jennet, none of the Scottish characters were likeable enough or developed enough for me to care about their situation. The cameo by Robert Burns was pretty good, but I would rather have met some members of wee Iona's Fraser clan or maybe some of Cora's relatives. Cora Munro is probably my all time favorite American literary heroine. I was sorry to find that she had died before Nathaniel and Elizabeth's story started, but it turned out I have not missed her as much as I thought I would. Her spirit and intelligence have been kept alive through the memories of her family. It would have been interesting, though, for Hannah, who has so much pride in her Mohawk family, to meet some of Granny Cora's Scottish kinsmen. Here was a missed opportunity for her to learn about a few generations of her Scottish(white) ancestors, to learn about Cora was like as a young girl. What might have happened if an off-handed remark or off-color joke were made at Cora's expense within the hearing of the Bonners? Would Hawkeye or Robbie would have gotten to the lout(s) first? A missed opportunity to enrich the Bonner family dynamic for generations to come. However, this was not explored. Neither were the characters of Luke, wee Iona or even the earl. Even Giselle's character was lacking for me. I know the person she was during this story was not a nice woman, but I was not clear whether I was supposed to feel sympathy for her or not? At times the narration seemed to say she had always been like this. At other times it seemed to indicate that she was not this bad before her relationship with Nathaniel. Muddy underdeveloped characters. Too much attention paid to less important plot lines and not enough paid to the main one to make me able to sympathize with a man who was supposedly at his core a good man. It looks like this is the only less than great book in the series, though. I am glad I went on to Lake in the Clouds and Fire Along the Sky.

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