



Homegoing

Michelle Markey Butler

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In this ambitious epic, a disgraced former princess turned scholar is one of the few people in the Three Lands who can read. So when an impossible ship from a land that does not exist delivers a set of missives written in an ink no one has ever seen to a land that is, by and large, illiterate, Doctora Bann is called in to help. The message: return to the traditions within a year or face the wrath of Saradena. The only problem—no one's ever heard of Saradena or knows what traditions the message refers to. While some of the kingdoms prepare for war, Doctora Bann begins a frantic search of the few known manuscripts, looking for some mention of Saradena, some hint to save them. But all is not well on the home front either, as threats of rebellion surface.

Butler has crafted a highly imaginative world, at once unique but with strong hints of the medieval. Doctora Bann's efforts to teach herself Old Valenian will be relatable to anyone who's struggled to learn a dead language. Reading and literacy form the heart of the book. Intriguingly, it seems as if literacy was much more common in the past, a theme sure to be explored in the book's sequel. Though the book doesn't precisely end on a cliffhanger, readers will certainly eagerly anticipate the next chapter.

ALLYCE AMIDON (Spring 2015)

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