



Plantation Trilogy: Deep Summer, The Handsome Road, and This Side of Glory

Gwen Bristow

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New York Times—bestselling author Gwen Bristow’s spellbinding Plantation Trilogy compiled in a single volume

The Plantation Trilogy is an epic series of historical novels that bring to life the history of Louisiana, from its settlement in the late eighteenth century to the post–World War I era, via the intertwined lives of the members of three families: the Sheramys, the Larnes, and the Upjohns.

Deep Summer is the story of Puritan pioneer Judith Sheramy and adventurer Philip Larne, who marry and strive to build an empire in the Louisiana jungle during the time of the American Revolution.

The Handsome Road tells the story of plantation mistress Ann Sheramy Larne and poor Corrie May Upjohn, who forge an unlikely bond of friendship as they struggle to survive the cataclysms of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

This Side of Glory presents the story of Eleanor Upjohn, a modern young woman in the early twentieth century who marries charming Kester Larne and struggles to save the debt-ridden plantation that her husband’s ancestors founded more than one hundred years ago.

Plantation Trilogy: Deep Summer, The Handsome Road, and This Side of Glory Details

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From Reader Review Plantation Trilogy: Deep Summer, The Handsome Road, and This Side of Glory for online ebook

Jenny says

Happened upon this through Bookbub and was so glad I did. Thoroughly enjoyed it.

Lesia says

The Plantation Trilogy is one of my favorite series. Her writing is so smooth, I got lost and didn't want to stop. I have her books and every now and then read the series again. It's like coming home again.

Daisy says

Love the author beautiful. Book!

Janet says

Plantation Trilogy

Jane says

Read these as a young woman and have re-read them twice since.

Nancy says

The first book of The Plantation Trilogy (Deep Summer, The Handsome Road, and This Side of Glory) was published in 1937, a year after the publication of *Gone With the Wind*. The multi-generational story begins in pre-Revolutionary War Louisiana and finishes after World War I. The author, Gwen Bristow, is particularly interested in the plight of poor whites. I really liked her analysis of cultural and economic conditions in Louisiana.

Werner says

I read this trilogy in an omnibus volume (1970 is a rough, but probably close, guess as to the read date), and

am reviewing it the same way, as a unit. It does, though, consist of three novels, all set in Louisiana, and focusing around one plantation: *Deep Summer* (1937), *The Handsome Road* (1938), and *This Side of Glory* (1940). Although the last novel is actually set in the author's own time, I've classified the trilogy as historical fiction, because she was telling a story that covers mostly historical time, and brings it down to her own day to show the relationship of the past to the present. (Her fellow historical novelist Norah Lofts also not infrequently told centuries-spanning tales carried down to her present.)

Gwen Bristow (1903-1980) was a native Southerner, born in South Carolina, apparently spent most of her life in the South (though she went to college at Columbia Univ.), and set her fiction mostly there, although this is the only part of her work that I've read so far. Like a number of other authors, she got her start in writing as a journalist, in her case for the New Orleans-based *Times-Picayune*, which led to a long residence in Louisiana. *Deep Summer* begins in the late 1700s, when Louisiana was under Spanish rule but Americans were beginning to settle there, and continues into the early 1800s. *The Handsome Road* focuses mainly on the Civil War and Reconstruction. *This Side of Glory* begins in the early 1900s, and carries the story down to the years just after World War I.

Since the 1960s, American historical fiction set in the South has tended to focus entirely on slavery and segregation, with race relations regarded as the only meaningful prism through which to view Southern history. Bristow, however, wrote at a time when the subject matter and authorial concerns could still be more varied. Obviously, race relations, and particularly the pernicious effects of slavery, aren't ignored in a trilogy set on a plantation founded on slave labor. Stephen Douglas' private comment about the institution --"A curse, an unmitigated curse, for the white race as well as for the black!"--could practically serve as an epigraph here, as we see the exploitation (including sexual exploitation) of blacks by their masters, and the kinds of tragic behaviors that the "peculiar institution" directly causes. (The conclusion that it tended to corrupt anything that it touched is pretty much inescapable.) But Bristow's main focus is on the relations between the white planter aristocracy and the poor whites, depicted through the interactions over the decades between the wealthy, intermarried Larne and Sheramy families with the poor white Upjohns. (And no, they aren't "poor white trash," though the aristocrats usually think they are.)

Our major characters here are mostly all white (with the exception of Benjie in *Deep Summer*), and Bristow's protagonists all share her own gender: Judith Sheramy in the first book, Corrie Mae Upjohn in *The Handsome Road*, and Eleanor Upjohn in the last book. The style is Realist, but written with good taste, without explicit sex and without wallowing in bad language. (You will encounter some use of the n-word for blacks, which sadly reflects realistically the way many, and probably most, whites in both North and South actually talked in those times.) Bristow's prose is serviceable, her plotting and storytelling held my interest throughout, and her characterizations are sharp and believable. Most of these characters are not, to be sure, particularly likeable, and I didn't appreciate their behavior in many cases. (The author wasn't going for evoking appreciation, but for making them understandable.) Without engaging in any spoilers, the trilogy's ultimate message is upbeat and optimistic, looking ahead to an era of greater equalitarianism and class reconciliation. (Knowledge of Southern history since 1940 might lead one to view this with less optimism, though.)

Victoria says

Read this some time ago. This trilogy is still in the top ten of books I have read.

Maree says

I really enjoyed this trilogy. I especially enjoy the historical aspect--I loved reading about how people lived and the effects of the wars, etc. on their daily lives. It was long--somewhere near 800 or 900 pages, but I liked it.

Anna says

This is of course three books in one as indicated by the title. If I reviewed each by itself I would give the first book, *Deep Summer*, two stars, the second, *The Handsome Road*, one star and the third, *This Side of Glory*, four stars. The series is very much a product of it's time and most of my difficulty and disturbance with the books is in the treatment of the black people. In the first book the author treats what was essentially rape, given the power dynamics of the situation, as if it were a consensual affair. In the second she repeatedly enforces the idea that "poor white trash" had things much harder than slaves, which while it may have been materially true in a few select situations rather ignores the larger picture. And in the third book blacks are mostly ignored and pushed aside only showing up in the roles of servants or hired help. I liked the history revealed in the books despite this. *Deep Summer* is a story of the beginnings of white civilization in Louisiana plantation country, things I had not learned about before like Moss houses and indigo planting. The second takes place throughout the American Civil war and Reconstruction period. In both of these books I didn't really like the characters much which affected my view of the stories. But in the third book, which takes place during the World War I, I really loved the story of Kester and Eleanor. I liked both of them and wanted very much for them to succeed.

Popsugar 2017: a book that is more than 800 pages.

Dennis says

Books of my childhood. They may not hold up but they're the books that made me, so I honor them. I really loved these books dearly.

Kati says

I really enjoyed these three novels. The first starts in the pre-civil war era and the last ends just after WWI, so you get a glimpse of a good portion of history throughout them, and it is interesting to see how things and people changed throughout that time period.

Mary Spanabel-weber says

This book makes "Gone With the Wind" seems like a fairytale. The realism the author portrayed, the believable characters and the plot made me feel like I had stepped back in time to the 1800's. I was sorry to have the story end.

I read the book 50 years ago. When I reread it years later, I found it very fresh and relevant.

Mary says

Loved it!

Denise Frances Brown says

LOVED. Deep Summer took my heart, The Handsome Road has even more in depth characters. Hard to say which book was my favorite, I recommend to anyone who loves Southern Historical Fiction
