

# THE COUNTRY OF WOMEN

by Jodi Smith

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An epic fable of a war between men and women, THE COUNTRY OF WOMEN is set in the desert regions of China – the only country to have survived an unprecedented man-made cataclysm, which has devastated the earth and left the surviving human beings unable to reproduce.

The story begins before the cataclysm, and chronicles a year in the life of the last pregnant woman, a 17-year-old girl named Chora who has run away her father in order to forge a new life for herself and her unborn baby daughter. As she sets out in search of her long-lost mother she is immediately captured by an army of men, and thus she begins her new life in a brutal world where those women who refuse to live by the laws of men are captured and killed.

In prison she meets the enigmatic, independent Alexandra, an Amazon-like soldier and member of one of the original separatist groups of women. Together they escape and begin the long and dangerous journey to the great women's stronghold of Niya, home to both Alexandra and Chora's mother.

As we follow them we are hurtled into a war to end all wars, into myths and reality, and into the midst of pitched battles between men and women. We witness failed negotiations, the sacking of Niya, and we meet Trieu the persuasive, fearsome and merciless leader of a guerrilla army who leads the women to many victories.

But as the women begin to change their fortune and triumph over the men, conflicts begin to surface within their ranks. Trieu names Chora as her successor over her seven daughters, and thus the women-in-arms, all supposedly united by a common purpose, begin to faction and turn against each other. Nothing, not even the indelible bond between mother and daughter, will remain the same as every human value becomes distorted by the relentless pursuit for power.