

## In Farleigh Field Discussion Questions

by Rhys Bowen

### Author Bio: (from Rhys Bowen's Website)

Rhys Bowen is the New York Times Bestselling Author of the Royal Spyness Series, Molly Murphy Mysteries, and Constable Evans. She has won the Agatha Best Novel Award and has been nominated for the Edgar Best Novel. Rhys's titles have received rave reviews around the globe.



Rhys was born in England and married into a family with historic royal connections. She now divides her time between California and Arizona.

### Characters:

- **Lady Pamela “Pamma” Sutton** – (21) Sutton’s 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter. Works for a “government department.”
- **Ben Cresswell** – Childhood friend of Pamela Sutton and Jeremy Prescott. Has a bad knee. Works for a “government department”. His father is Rev. Cresswell, vicar of All Saints Church.
- **Alfie** – Cockney boy evacuated to Farleigh. Staying with the gamekeeper, Mr. Robbins and his wife.
- **Madame Gigi Armande** – Famous fashion designer in Paris.
- **Herr Dinkslager** – Nazi officer stationed in Paris.
- **Miss Gumble** – Phoebe’s governess. Likes bird watching.
- **Guy Harcourt** – MI5. Ben Cresswell’s coworker and friend.
- **Maxwell Knight** – A British spymaster stationed at Dolphin Square.
- **Jeremy Prescott** – RAF Flyer. Son of Sir William Prescott, a city financier.
- **Colonel Pritchard** – Commanding officer of the West Kent regiment stationed at Farleigh.
- **Trixie Radcliffe** – Debutante working at Bletchley Park. Pamela Sutton’s housemate.
- **Lady Diana “Dido” Sutton** – (19) – Sutton’s 4<sup>th</sup> daughter. Frustrated debutante.
- **Lady Olivia “Livvy” Sutton** – (26) Sutton’s oldest daughter. Husband is soldiering in Bahamas. Has a son, Charles.
- **Lady Margaret “Margot” Sutton** – (23) Sutton’s 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter. Living in Paris. Fashion designer.
- **Lady Phoebe “Feebs” Sutton** – (12) – Sutton’s 5<sup>th</sup> daughter. Very smart and observant. Tomboy.
- **Roderick Sutton** – Earl of Westerham. Owner of Farleigh Place. Married to Lady Esme Sutton. Has 5 daughters: Olivia, Margaret, Pamela, Diana, and Phoebe.
- **Count Gaston de Varennes** – Margot’s lover in Paris. Part of the French resistance.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. Most of the novel is told through the alternating perspectives of Pam and Ben. Occasionally, however, the author shifts to secondary characters. Why might she have done so? How do those shifts add to your understanding of the story?
3. How does the British class system affect the lives of all the characters?
4. How does author Rhys Bowen portray the early 1940s in England — the war effort sagging, the many sacrifices required, and the ever-present fear of German invasion? Is her portrait similar to, or consistent with, other works you've read (or watched) about the era?
5. Talk about Lord Westerham's five daughters, how they differ from one another and how they are similar. Aside from Pamela, is there another sister or two you admire...or whom you particularly disliked? Dido, for instance? Margot?
6. Discuss Jeremy. How does his character contrast with Ben's? Was Jeremy true to life or was his character distorted? Have you ever known someone like him? Were you surprised with how his story ended?
7. What about Margot's story – how engaged were you with her plight in France?
8. How much had you known before reading this novel about the work, especially of women code-breakers, at Bletchley Park? Have you watched the BBC series?
9. The New British Broadcasting Corporation was the Nazi version of the BBC. Why do you think the common person in England would listen to it? What is its appeal?
10. Talk about the rumor of the Ring, the Nazi sympathizers within the upper ranks of society. Why do you think the upper echelons of society were attracted to the idea?
11. Ben is in a “government position”, and is sent to Dolphin Street to work for Mr. Knight. But it is all very “hush, hush”. With all the secrecy surrounding Knight and all the people who are in “government positions”, how would you know who to trust?
12. Talk about the way Pamela and Ben are forced to maneuver around the secrets they carry but cannot share. If you worked for “the government”, would you be able to keep the secret from your family and friends?
13. Were you surprised by the identity of the traitor(s) and assassination plot? Was that plot well-developed? Were you caught up in the suspense?
14. The impact of war is different for every character in this book. Discuss.
15. This book is billed as a thriller/mystery? Which is more important to you: the thriller aspect, mystery aspect, or the recreation of a time and place? In all, does this book deliver the goods in terms of mystery and suspense?
16. Pamela and Ben: do you think there is hope for a future together for them?
17. Were you satisfied with the ending of the story? Why or why not?
18. Bowen has written a number of other novels. Will you read any of them?

## References:

- Book Movement - <https://www.bookmovement.com/bookDetailView/50715/In-Farleigh-Field-Rhys-Bowen/1>
- Rhys Bowen - <http://rhysbowen.com/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/b/rhys-bowen/>
- Lit Lovers – <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/10994-in-farleigh-field-bowen?start=3>
- Novelist – <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=dc817828-508b-4c2e-88bb-342fa212ab07%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#UI=10552391&db=neh>

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## Rhys Bowen Books

### Constable Evan Evans

1. Evans Above (1997)
2. Evan Help Us (1998)
3. Evanly Choirs (1999)
4. Evan and Elle (2000)
5. Evan Can Wait (2001)
6. Evans to Betsy (2002)
7. Evan Only Knows (2003)
8. Evan's Gate (2004)
9. Evan Blessed (2005)
10. Evanly Bodies (2006)

### Molly Murphy

- 0.5. The Amersham Rubies (2011)
1. Murphy's Law (2001)
2. Death Of Riley (2002)
3. For the Love of Mike (2001)
4. In Like Flynn (2005)
5. Oh Danny Boy (2006)
6. In Dublin's Fair City (2007)
7. Tell Me, Pretty Maiden (2008)
8. In a Gilded Cage (2009)
9. The Last Illusion (2010)
10. Bless the Bride (2011)
11. Hush Now, Don't You Cry (2012)
- 11.5. The Face in the Mirror (2013)
12. The Family Way (2013)
- 12.5. Through the Window (2014)
13. City of Darkness and Light (2014)
14. The Edge of Dreams (2015)
15. Away in a Manger (2015)
16. Time of Fog and Fire (2016)
17. The Ghost of Christmas Past (2017)

### Royal Spyness

1. Her Royal Spyness (2007)
2. A Royal Pain (2008)
3. Royal Flush (2009)
4. Royal Blood (2010)
5. Naughty In Nice (2011)
- 5.5. Masked Ball at Broxley Manor (2012)
6. The Twelve Clues of Christmas (2012)
7. Heirs and Graces (2013)
8. Queen of Hearts (2012)
9. Malice at the Palace (2015)
10. Crowned and Dangerous (2016)
11. On Her Majesty's Frightfully Secret Service (2017)
12. Four Funerals and Maybe a Wedding (2018)
13. Love and Death Among the Cheetahs (2019)
- A Royal Threesome (omnibus) (2014)

## Red Dragon Academy (with CM Broyles)

### 1. Dreamwalker (2014)

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#### If you liked In Farleigh Field, try...

- Alibi Club – Francine Mathews
- The Girl from Venice – Martin Cruz Smith
- Game of Spies – John Altman
- City of Gold – Len Deighton
- A Single Spy – William Christie