



The Favored Child

Philippa Gregory

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From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and "queen of royal fiction" (*USA TODAY*) Philippa Gregory comes the thrilling sequel to the *New York Times* bestseller *Wideacre* as the once-great Lacey estate is restored to its former grandeur--though not without cost.

The Wideacre estate is bankrupt. The villagers are living in poverty and formerly stunning hall is a smoke-blackened ruin. But, in the Dower House nearby, two children are being raised in protected innocence.

Equal claimants to the estate, rivals for the love of the village, they are tied by a secret childhood betrothal but forbidden to marry. Only one can be the favored child--only one can inherit the magical understanding between the land and the Lacey family that can make the Sussex village grow green again. Only one can be Beatrice Lacey's true heir. Sensual, gripping, and mystical, *The Favored Child* irresistibly sweeps the reader into a world of secrets, betrayals, and power in this revolutionary period of English history.

The Favored Child Details

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From Reader Review The Favored Child for online ebook

Celia says

Hee-hee. Loved it. So it's "garbage." Big deal. It's really well-written, although maybe not as well as Wideacre, the first in the trilogy (Meridon is next). The story of the Lacey squires of Wideacre continues, and it's just as dark and compelling as it ever was.

This one looks at what became of the incestuous children of Wideacre, and the narrator is Julia, whom we know to be Beatrice and Harry's daughter although she has never been told. She is an intriguing if frustrating main character. I like it that Gregory did not simply rewrite Beatrice of Wideacre. In fact, Celia-bred Julia is very much Beatrice's antitype, mousy and weak, although not distastefully so. Her brother-cousin is interesting, too, although not exactly well-rounded. Wideacre's Beatrice was mad, but, since she was the main character, you followed her along, albeit wincingly. Since Richard is not the protagonist, however, there's a certain remoteness to him that doesn't work all the way for me. In the end he's just nuts, which is not very interesting. I would maybe have liked the story told from his point of view, but Gregory is once again pushing the feminist angle by giving voice to the woman, which is great, I suppose, politically, but maybe not the best choice creatively. I was pretty disappointed with the other returning characters, Celia, John, and Ralph. They hardly seem to matter, especially John, who acts on the fringes of the plot, at best.

The plot itself is adequately horrifying although much more predictable than Wideacre, especially given Julia's premonitions, which she somehow doesn't understand although any idiot (even an idiot who hasn't read Wideacre) can see what they're about. Nevertheless, I liked the ending, although it was abrupt.

Despite these flaws, it's still Gregory at her best, first-person female narrator (her third-person novels are atrocious), English countryside. No one can write more compellingly than her in this genre. You can bet I'm picking up Meridon, the third part, as soon as those other five idiots who placed a hold on the single library copy are done with it. I do think both novels so far would stand alone, however, although of course you add more if you've read both. Given the problem with predictability, I wonder if I'd have liked The Favored Child better had I read it before Wideacre. Yep. Probably. Do that. But read it; so fun.

Brooke says

It's bad.

It's painful to read.

I think Gregory enjoys torturing her characters a little TOO much.

I read pretty well until about page 450 or so, but I just couldn't take it anymore. I skimmed the rest. I HAD to see what happened but I didn't want to actually READ it.

Jessica Halleck says

I loved this. When I wasn't reading it, I was thinking about it. This trilogy owns me hook, line, and sinker.

The Favored Child's main strength *and* its primary weakness is its connection to the first book, Wideacre. It relies on a similar pattern, plotwise, and very much on the legacy of Beatrice Lacey. This combination is at its absolute strongest in the book's second act when Julia Lacey is flourishing, learning to use her Lacey magic to triumphantly be everything that Beatrice should have been. When she breaks, the Beatrice connection all but breaks too, and the climax that we saw coming from the beginning is a bit deflated. Because we've known who the true villain is from the start, we've seen the pattern of Julia being

manipulated, and where the fall of Beatrice was phenomenal to experience from her own point of view in the first book, having the madness manifest in a supporting character who has so obviously been heading that way from birth comes across here as flat.

That being said: with minimal exceptions, Julia's role as a victim of abuse is handled very well. The personal, moral, and societal pressures that feed her guilt and cause her to bury herself beyond rescue make complete sense and I challenge anyone who whines about what a doormat she is to endure manipulation and trauma of that calibre and have the wherewithal to recognize it rationally and the strength, unsupported, to stop it before it spirals out of control. (view spoiler)

The exceptions have to do with a couple incidents where horrific things happened and...Julia just immediately moves on with her life. No uneasiness or residual horror is described. Just on to May Day! (Otherwise, all emotional and reactionary bases were covered as far as I'm concerned.)

The letter-cum-epilogue felt like (view spoiler)

Regardless of my qualms, I'm a fan of this series. It's written gorgeously and is twisted in all the right places. There are even moments of intelligent social commentary and well-handled psychology.

I look forward to book three and giving some of Gregory's other historical fiction a second chance.

Sherry says

2nd in the trilogy. Doesn't quite grab you like the first one. Seems like the brother is one of those pups that should have been drowned at birth.

Waiting to see what he does to screw up the protatagonists impending marriage.

Well, Richard is just completely insane, isn't he. And, as for Julia, I just kept screaming, "tell somebody, just tell somebody." Frustrating book to read.

Samantha Trillium ? says

This book took a bit for me to get into at first. The first book in this trilogy (Wideacre), was just so intense that I actually had to read a couple of other books in between before I was ready to continue on.

I should also add, that seeing as this is book two, if you have not read book one, you probably shouldn't read on, as it will spoil the ending of Wideacre.

I was so upset at the ending of Wideacre, when Beatrice died. Aside from her gross love affairs with her idiot brother, I really loved Beatrice as a character, and even started rooting for her near the end when it was obvious that she was not going to survive the riot attack. I thought that no other Lacey would ever compare to her, and that is why the second book took me a while to warm too... my favourite character was gone.

But as the story progressed, and it became clear that Julia was indeed the "favored child" I became interested once again.

So this story is all about Julia and Richard, the illegitimate bastard children of Beatrice and Harry Lacey. They do not know that they are brother and sister, and are brought up by Celia Lacey as cousins. During

childhood Julia is a sweet and caring child, whose main ambition in life is to earn smiles from her mama. Richard on the other hand, shows disturbing signs of being cruel and sadistic person. He bullies his cousin Julia, and enjoys being able to smile and charm anyone he wants.

As these two grow up, it becomes clear who the favored child is. Julia begins to have dreams of Beatrice, (sometimes even becoming Beatrice herself) and has the same tenderness and need to be on the land of Wideacre. Richard, surprisingly, does not inherit anything from Beatrice. Some might argue his capacity for evil came from her, but I would not agree. Beatrice would NEVER abuse an animal, let alone kill one in the most painful way possible. Animals loved Beatrice. Animals fear Richard. He does not inherit her ability to ride. He is truly rotten to the core; what I had always pictured an incestuous child to be. Julia inherits all of Beatrice's good traits; none of her evil ones. In that, she is the Beatrice Beatrice should have grown up to be. She earns the respect of the Acre village, and earns the knowledge to bring the land to life.

An interesting character that I did not see coming back into the story was Ralph Megson, Beatrice's lover/killer. I really don't know how I feel about this guy. He is portrayed as a savior and a good person, but let us not forget that it was he who killed Beatrice's beloved father in the very first few pages of the first book. He was the catalyst that brought Beatrice into making the choices she made. Ralph also murdered Beatrice. He then comes back into this second book and befriends Julia, and tries to erase the line between the Quality, and the poor. So I have mixed feelings about this guy. I wonder if he is going to make an appearance in the final book.

So the final moments in the book were pretty intense. Richards confessions to all his evil deeds in childhood were never a mystery to the reader, but it definitely felt good to hear them voiced to Julia because she was a bit naive in everything Richard. Julia definitely made me angry on several occasions for being too stupid and gullible to realize that Richard was to blame. Especially the way she let him ruin her in the Summertime house. And how she allowed him to come between her and James. Holy crap that made me angry!!!

All in all though, very good book. I think I may have even enjoyed it more than the first one. This one in particular reminded me very slightly of the Gemma Doyle series, especially when Julia went to have her season in Bath, and was fighting with her premonitions and Sight. Love all these characters, whether they are naive and gullible, or vile and evil. The plots are plausible and believable and that is really important to me.

Jan says

Wow, what is this...a trilogy about incest? At least one of the characters was a reluctant participant for this second book in the trilogy. This family has more bad karma than Oedipus. All the aristocratic decadence makes you want to cheer for the French Revolution and the guillotine. Whopping story, though, in a pervy kind of way.

Karla says

OMG, I just overwrote my review for this one with ANOTHER review. *headdesk headdesk headdesk* Fuck it, I'm not rewriting it. So Review 2.0 will just be a series of incoherent ramblings written against the deadline of my laptop battery cacking on me.

* OMG, the gloomz & doomz in this one got me down, but not as much if I hadn't previously read The Girl

From Storyville where the heroine also made all kinds of decisions that screwed her life six ways from Sunday, AND *The Women of Eden* which had a main character who was also an insane, manipulative, control freak that brought down misery on everyone around him. *The Favored Child* had BOTH of these types of characters, and so my Rage-O-Meter was at a full tilt boogie for most of the book. Could a book be any more emotional, rage-inducing, and a rocket ride? If so, I think I need a couple years off before I'd be mentally able to process it.

* Even though Julia Lacey ranks right up there as the doormattiest of doormatty heroines, I couldn't really hate her since she was raised to be a doormat by those who had it entirely within their power to make her strong and prepared to face whatever problems she might encounter due to her birth. Rather than take a sledgehammer to Julia, I wanted to throttle Celia and John instead. They despised anything that reminded them of Beatrice, even the good traits that Julia inherited from her mother. They could have also prevented any incest from Julia and Richard taking place, but it was their refusal to dwell on it - or at least admit it openly - that let things snowball. Celia's delusion that she didn't know reminded me so much of someone I read talking about the abuse in their childhood and that "My mother didn't know that she knew." So Celia's self-delusion, while indeed knowing, really had the ring of truth to it.

* I totally feel Phillipa Gregory has cast-iron nads for making her characters so miserable for the long haul. So many authors come across as being so attached and partial to their characters that they can't stand to see them miserable or upset for more than a few pages. So the story ends up seeming like a series of little bumps and tidy resolutions. But Gregory - and Marilyn Harris - throw the reader in the car and take them through a long and winding ride through a scaryass forest with grasping ghoulies pawing at the windows and made you glad to reach the other end alive and grateful that it was just fiction.

* The last page doesn't fill me with hope that the final book in the trilogy will be a light-hearted chucklefest, so my solution for the parasitic symbiosis that is **The Lacey Family ruling Wideacre and Acre Village**:

Sarah Mac says

Wow. It's been nearly a month since I finished this & I still don't know where to begin. *scratches head* A synopsis is useless for this particular book. Everything that takes place is somehow born of the twisted happenings in *Wideacre*, whether directly or indirectly...so there's little point in attempting a summary.

Beatrice Lacey was an unreliable narrator of the finest sort -- a complete psycho in some ways, but startlingly insightful in others. Despite her failings, I really liked her (I'm not sure what that says about me -- probably nothing good :P). But the narrator of *The Favored Child* is Beatrice's daughter, Julia -- the eldest Lacey spawn from Book 1 -- and she's *nothing* like her mother. She inherits traditional Lacey insights re: the land & the prosperity of Acre village, but so far as human behavior is concerned, she's blind as a bat. Nowhere is her blindness more evident than regarding "cousin" Richard Macandrew -- another Lacey spawn, who is actually her half-brother.

In contrast to Beatrice, Julia Lacey is intended as a positive figure. She doesn't conspire to murder & destroy for personal reasons, nor does she willingly enter into an incestuous relationship with her sibling. But peripheral characters from Book 1 have been burned by Beatrice & her dominating awfulness, & they ruthlessly stomp the smallest signs of willfull behavior (i.e., "Beatrice's witchery") within Julia's veins. The result? An unrepentant doormat of a heroine -- a woman who has no concept of what an abusive relationship is, a woman with absurd expectations of love, a woman who is nowhere nearly strong enough to renew Acre

& still defeat her disgusting brother Richard. One or the other...maybe. But definitely not both. The most irksome aspect of *The Favored Child* is Julia's indoctrination into & acceptance of the abusive relationship with Richard -- she believes that indoctrination is a woman's duty, & she accepts Richard's domination as the natural course of their roles, even when his touch (eventually) disgusts her & she begins to realize the full extent of his psychosis. Her voice is a peek into Battered Woman Syndrome, & it's extremely uncomfortable; I wanted to pitch the book across the room on several occasions.

...But if Julia makes your teeth grind, that's nothing compared to Richard Macandrew.

If anyone in literary dickhead history deserves to have his face beaten to a pulp, that guy is Richard. He's an unbelievably disturbing & disgusting individual. Whereas Beatrice had the self-awareness to recognize limits to her perversion -- her respectful treatment of animals, for example, as compared to whipping her brother -- Richard has none of that awareness. Instead we have a manipulative, abusive, paranoid psychopath who thinks rape, murder, & destruction are his by right of age, sex, & social position. His ultimate demise is a given -- survival of the fittest among the animal kingdom that is Wideacre -- but I can't say it was nearly gruesome enough.

In the long term, this book is worth the read. The descriptions are lovely & the story comes through with an elegant, vivid narration. Julia's ultimate growth into a mature woman is worth the journey -- but be warned of a frustrating ride. If nothing else, it's a necessary step in the Lacey saga -- that dreaded middle installment of a trilogy, the phase where everything is broken in order to be rebuilt, like *The Two Towers* or *The Empire Strikes Back*. Certainly it sets the table for a riveting conclusion in *Meridon*. I can only hope my namesake Sarah Lacey gets more positive closure than Julia. *eyebrow*

Paula says

The Favored Child. It was the 2nd book in a trilogy. I have since read the 1st book- Widacre and the 3rd- Meridon. Ok...so the 1st and 2nd books were very annoying because you just HATE everyone in it. They basically make the same mistakes over and over proving that they are all idiots....who love incest apparently...anyway, the 3rd book was a little better b/c it was different than the first two and actually came to a resolution that wasn't totally idiotic as previous generations....plus no incest, thank goodness. Maybe it was just that the trilogy was ending that made it better. I don't think that I would recommend these books to anyone. They are stressful to read. Unless you enjoy yelling at the books you read, skip these 3.

Anna says

Let's get this train wreck of a read started.

Years after the riot that led to the downfall of the Laceys, Wideacre, and Acre, the squires Richard and Julia slowly follow the footsteps their parents made. If you haven't read the first one, then you may want to remember Richard and Julia are incestual spawns of Beatrice and Lacey. Oh and they are betrothed to each other. We follow Julia's perspective on how she learns to love the land like Beatrice once did before going S&M on her brother. And shit gets weird in the second half. I think the first book had the same problem too where we just follow the protagonist's growth and eventually their demise.

This book is terrible. I got so uncomfortable sometimes because I have siblings and I don't love them as

much as these characters do. I would sell my siblings for a plastic cup. Bidding starts at \$0.50. At least they didn't go all S&M. Lot's of rich people problems though.

Like it takes a few weeks to get marriage documents arranged for a dowry and allowance. I wonder how much I am worth. Still I would get impatient and probably would've done twenty people by then (jk). Speaking of being unchaste, I loved how social issues were brought to light. Of course in these times being a virgin meant everything for a woman but a guy had to do the bidness til wedding night. 500 years later and nothing has really changed.

Sometimes I felt like this because they talked about how Wideacre was awesome and beautiful and I needs to keep the precious!

Everyone remembers how psychotic and strong-willed Beatrice was right? Well Julia is the complete opposite. She wasn't too worthless but her naive nature and good heart cost her dearly. If she wanted to get away from Richard, who is insane and I wished they nicknamed him Dick in the book for LOLs, she could've made it happen. Richard was insane. Well I can't blame him since he in the spawn of brother and sister.

I don't want to read the final book because two generations of incest is enough for everyone. But apparently not for me.

Mimi Wolske says

Fascinating, gripping, sexual, sensuous, grim, incestuous, a little mysterious, horrifying, unrelenting despair (and by comparison, I think Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbeyvilles got off light)—if these adjectives don't discourage you away from this love-it-or-hate-it book, you're in for a real ride.

Philippa Gregory's "The Favored Child" was written so expertly it did not depend too heavily on "Wideacre" (the first book of her trilogy) ... I know this because I did not read the first book, but I don't recommend doing the same—back story is so very important.

So, here's the setup from book two.

Beatrice MacAndrew and Harry Lacey are brother and sister from the chalky village in Sussex; Beatrice married Dr. John MacAndrew and Harry married Celia Havering. The villagers came after Beatrice (who went crazy and ruined the viillage), but it's The Culler, Ralph Megson, who killed her so the angry villagers burned Wideacre Hall; John Lacey died (from a weak hear); John MacAndrew left for India; that left Celia Lacey to raise the two children, Julia Lacey and her cousin Richard MacAndrew, and to protect them from a family secret—they're sibbling/cousins.

BUT, we know Gregory...she's a master a putting a spin on crazy yams and a master of despair and lonely...and in The Favored Child, she kept thinking up all kinds of horrible things that could happen to Julia and Richard and throwing them into the plot. And, like most of Gregory's novels, this one was looooooong (614 pages) and fulllll of detail. Julia's misery just goes on and on and on and Gregory really had me anxious for the end. I don't care how long it was, it was well written...but, there were a few points (like psychotherapists) and some words that seemed decidedly out of place, And while Gregory's characters are colorful, I found them entirely transparent; the minute she introduces one, you know exactly how they are

going to figure in the story. And, I had to remind myself this is an historical novel and consider the time and how women were seen and treated because I really wanted to whomp Julia (and her mother) up side of the head so many, many, many times for being such a wimp.

How in the world could Celia live with these kids 24/7 and not feel what way the wind was blowing? She was in such complete denial that I sat here thinking hello...get a clue. Because we learn right away that little Richard doesn't like being in second place, so while he makes Julia miserable with his bullying, telling his cousin not to put herself forward because it's unwomanly and who does she think she is anyway, he's winning the heart of the cook and pulling the wool over his Mama-Aunt Celia's eyes. And I wanted to pull every hair out of Celia's pretty head when she continues being completely oblivious to all the goings on since...she's busy stitching the linens together.

Since Beatrice ruined everything and their house burned down, they're kind of poor and are forced to live in the dower house; but they're not as poor as the people of Acre who don't have money or food or clothing and have their children taken away to work in factories. But, there's always hope; right? And Acre village is waiting for "The Favored Child" of Beatrice's blood to make everything better. BUT... they are joint heirs to the estate, an arrangement that gives Julia as much power as Richard and they are raised as cousins, ignorant of their true heritage (and so is Celia).

Since Richard is Beatrice's child, he would be the obvious choice. However, Richard isn't just a bully to Julia, the villagers hate that guy AND the animals hate him, which if you watch horror movies is a bad, bad sign, and he loves the land, but in a possessive way and yearns to be its sole squire. ALSO, his crimes get more and more outrageous as he matures and the book progresses.

Julia, Beatrice's other child, on the other hand, loves the land and is nice to people and animals, so everyone wants her to be the new squire. Plus, she inherited the Lacey Land Lust and thinks Wideacre is the Bestest Place on Earth. And, Julia has also inherited the sight.

To add another twist (and side story), Richard's dad, Dr. John MacAndrew (name is from page 2, "Beatrice's husband, Dr. John MacAndrew, went away to India..."), returns from India with enough money to get Wideacre out of the hole, build a new house, grow crops, and buy the family nice things again.

Yay! Everything is coming up roses!

No!!!

John hires Ralph Megson (readers of Wideacre will recognize him as Beatrice's gypsy lover) as the property manager and is totally clueless that he was The Culler from the last book..the one who brought Beatrice to her doom. Ralph tells Julia who he is and she's all oh, no, but doesn't tell anyone because the villagers really like him and she's not the one who rocks any boat. And we, the reader, like him because he really not a bad guy for a murdering Beatrice...right? He has a feeling about Julia and when she gets The Sight and saves the village, he's 100% in her corner. Unfortunately, Julia's family is not cool with her new-found talent and they send her off to Bath a doctor who brainwashes her but she still manages to find a nice normal life with friends and a man who loves her and who she loves....

BUT, don't all good things come to an end? Well, when she and her mother return to Wideacre, the shit hits the fan. Because they learn they're both Beatrice's children, the products of her long incestuous affair with her brother. Don't secrets like this always rear their ugly heads at some point — just not soon enough...

This story is NOT for the weak of heart... let me say to anyone who hasn't read this book, be prepared to feel pretty miserable as you read the last chapters of this book— poor Julia's life is so burdened with tragedy, abuse, and misfortune that you can't help but feel affected.

CLUE: read those adjectives at the beginning of this review again...carefully.

Annette Summerfield says

What a horrible book that I couldn't put down.

A little past the middle of the book I was getting frustrated and did start to skim through it to see what was going to happen.

It was just too difficult to read what Richard was doing.

I wanted to reach into the book and strangle him. He needed to be dumped into a deep, dark dungeon and suffer for the rest of his life.

Death was too good for him.

As for Julia...Ralph tried to make her see the light.

When she didn't tell John and her mom what Richard had done to her, I could have screamed.

When she never realized how sick Richard was I wanted to sit her down and have a good talking to her.

This is a tragic love story. Why or why could not Philippa Gregory give Julia a good ending and have her and James reunited.

I hate to read the 3rd book, but I will.

This isn't my typical read but I've seemed to get involved in it anyways.

It's a horrible book with a lot of incest and cruelty, no happy ever after but it sure puts a reader through a roller coaster of feelings and kept me reading.

I think I kept reading hoping Julia would find some happiness....Philippa Gregory wasn't on the same thought line as me though.

Katherine says

"The favored child. The favored child. She always was the favored child."

Setting: Middlehurst, West Sussex, England; the late eighteenth century

Coverly Love?: I don't like it as well as the first cover, but it's still pretty, so overall yes.

Plot: It's been 11 years since Beatrice Lacey has ruined her beloved Wideacre. She leaves behind her daughter and son, Julia and Richard, to carry on the family name and run Wideacre. raised by their loving "Mama-Aunt" Celia, they are raised in the lands ruins while they learn the ways of the land. But the villagers are whispering; one of them is the favored child. Only one of them can feel the land and be connected by it. And over those tumultuous years, Richard and Julia will struggle for power over the control of Wideacre. Yet they do not know of their past, of their mother's past.

Well, this wasn't nearly as crazy as the first book (I don't know whether to be glad over that or not), but it was still nevertheless crazy. Beatrice passed down the crazy genes to her children, that's for sure. The plot was very fast moving and with lots of drama. Old characters reappear, and the themes of revenge, redemption and greed run rampant. Nevertheless, this book had me hopelessly engrossed, and I was helpless as I turned the pages to find out what would happen next.

Characters: Julia Lacey is widely regarded by the villagers as the favored child; the one who is destined to take over Wideacre. Julia was absolutely nothing like her mother, thank God. But she was also a very weak-willed character, forgiving her cousin/brother's sins way too easily and putting the blame on herself to much of the time. I wanted to shake her and tell her to get away, he was bat-shit psycho. The one admiration I have to her is for saving her daughter from a life of madness, which have her some sort of redemption,

Richard... oh my goodness, he was messed up. He was just like/if not worse than his mommy dearest. He stopped at nothing to stay in power with Wideacre, from murder to incest (yet again). He earns no sympathy at all, and he's truly a monster.

Pros: Philippa Gregory sure knows how to spin a great tale, and she never fails to engross the reader in her sordid character's lives.

Cons: I did not like Julia's weakness and passiveness as a character. She was not nearly as strong as Beatrice, and I was hoping that she would have a stronger and bolder personality.

Love Triangle?: Yes; Richard vs. Julia vs. James, a kindly suitor. Richard quashes this romance like a bug.

Insta-Love?: Nope!

A Little Romance?: Richard and Julia fall in love as children (but they don't realize they are brother and sister). She later falls in love with James, but Richard the psychopath doesn't like this one bit, so he effectively puts and end to it.

Conclusion: I'm almost afraid to find out what the heck is going to happen next, but I will find out nonetheless. I would strongly recommend this series for it's drama and action.

Read This!: Wideacre and Meridon by Philippa Gregory, the other two books in this series. And for your crazy family fix, read Flowers in the Attic by V.C. Andrews.

J says

Philippa Gregory is an incredible author, she knows how to make a 'page-turner' and I have enjoyed many of her books. This book has been my least favorite of all the books I have read of hers, because, the protagonist- Julia Lacey- is such a complete wuss that she allows her entire world to crumble and become ruined until finally at the very last moment does she stand up for herself. This really is a case of too little too late. She has been protecting her cousin/brother Richard for her whole life, she never tells her mother the truth and thus there is a huge void and lack of true family intimacy in the house. Richard rules Julia completely their entire life. As Julia is 'sweet' and generous with her naive love, she never tells on her brother when he behaves terribly, abuses her physically. She could have stopped things earlier on...when he starts hurting her physically or manipulating her family or verbally assaulting her. He keeps testing his limits with her, and she like a naive idiot keeps falling for his 'charm.' He doesn't seem very charming to me. Well in a surprise to no one, as he has tested how far she will let him push it his whole life and learns that she will protect him no matter the cost to herself or others, he rapes her violently, breaking her wrist. Then to hide his perversion (oh yea, they are brother and sister), he kills her best friend...and the adults acting as their parents. Julia has the perfect opportunity so many times to tell her loving acting mother and father the truth about Richard...but she doesn't. She gets pregnant and is in denial that this is the result of her rape. The last 200 pages of the book are filled with vivid descriptions of her 'loneliness' with her swooning and sighing to herself all the while that she is so lonely. Yeah, it must be really lonely when you allow yourself to be bullied into marrying the most

evil person you know and then he kills all your loved ones...and completely isolates you from the one man who actually loves you. Oh yeah, she had even more opportunity before the rape to tell her parents how her brother/cousin was sabotaging her engagement to a wonderful man. She even goes farther and participates and elaborates in protecting her brother/cousin through lies when she ruins the reputation of the man she loves-James. I don't feel sorry for her because she has multiple opportunities to stop this terrible progression, but each time she chooses not to and then acts all pitiful when she receives the consequence of her actions. Overall, a very frustrating read... if she was weak for most of the book but then found her spine and made things right, that would be okay and welcome. But by the time she finds her backbone, Richard has ruined her life irreversibly...and she just sits idly by and lets him do it. This is a perfect quote, in my mind she is just as guilty as he is. The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing She is so weak and spineless that she would rather live in denial and be pathetically upset when something bad happens than face the truth. She has a gift, a true sight of the future and she refuses to use it to save her loved ones from impending and absolute ruin or death. She is pathetic, lame and weak...she deserves what she gets because she never stands up for herself or has any iota of self-preservation...but at the same time, she doesn't truly care about her 'loved ones' because she lies to them all the time and allows them to be destroyed by Richard. While saying this, please do not think I believe Julia deserved to be raped...she did not. However, she had the skills to prevent the situation escalating and she choose not to repeatedly. In some ways, I think Julia is a less like-able heroine than Beatrice. Beatrice was evil and she was doing evil things to Acre. While Beatrice was evil, there was no one who had the potential to stop her. Harry was a pathetic excuse for a human-being (in the first book). Here, Julia has all the potential to do great things for Wideacre and Acre...but she chooses blindness and denial... she chooses death for her loved ones and people because she is too weak and afraid to face the truth about Richard.

Reading Corner says

So I haven't actually read the first book, *Wideacre* but it never affected my understanding or enjoyment of this book, although I'll definitely be seeking out the first book after this one. This is a fantastic historical novel which perfectly captures the massive unjust in society at the time between social classes and genders. This theme echoes throughout the whole novel and at times makes you clench your fists at the unfairness in it. I've never read a book that has given me such strong emotions like this one. Every unfair action, or outcome gave me a rush of hatred and every good outcome, gave me a sense of pleasure or content at the long deserved justice. And this happens frequently, especially an overwhelming feeling of annoyance as Philippa Gregory seems to love torturing her characters.

The main character, Julia, is usually a pushover which can become extremely frustrating sometimes but you never hate her as you can clearly comprehend why and I even found myself rooting for her a lot. Richard, well Richard is just a massive twat who for most of it I had a massive desire for someone to just smash his head off a wall, I really hated him, so Philippa Gregory did a great job there.

For me, there was some massive twists which I only kinda saw but I think if you read the first book you would have known. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the sudden reveal and how the plot developed into something much more. I had no idea where the story was going but I thoroughly enjoyed how things ended up.

For me, the start was slow but all the characters were developed brilliantly along with the plot. This was a wonderful historical novel but definitely not for the faint-hearted because of some shocking themes.

Barbara says

This is book 2 in a 3 part trilogy. Wideacre was the original book which started with Beatrice and her brother Harry. The Favored Child picks up with Beatrice's children Julia and Richard. I have read a lot of books but I've never read a book that I hated a character so much. Everytime Richard's name was even mentioned I wanted to slap him.

No spoilers if you have read book 1.

In Book 1, Beatrice makes sure that both her children are joint heirs for Acre. The children don't know it, but they are not really cousins as they thought they were but actually brother and sister as Beatrice and her brother Harry have a sexual relationship that produces both children. Harry does not know this. Beatrice's sister in law raises the children while John (Beatrice's husband) is off in India trying to become wealthy again and pay off the debt of Acre.

As the children grow, Julia has the same love of the land as Beatrice. She's just not evil like her. Richard on the other hand is an evil character who is only out for money has no regard for people or their feelings. I must say, he is the most evil character in a book that I have ever read. Couldn't stand him from the moment his name was mentioned in the book. Richard is always plotting and Julia and Acre are usually at the receiving end of his plans.

A good read but be prepared for some troubling spots in the book. If you liked book 1, you'll enjoy book 2.

Wendy says

Themes continue from Wideacres...

The fun is in the main character's discovery of what you already know from Wideacres.

Axie Barclay says

Picking up where Wideacre left off, The Favored Child loses no momentum as is as amazing as the first installment of Philippa Gregory's Lacey saga.

Julia Lacey, joint heir to the Wideacre estate, tells the story of her family, her aunt Beatrice who ruined Wideacre, and her and her cousin's, Richard, attempts to revitalize the estate again. But things go horribly wrong with the tragic death of a horse and a hawk, which see what the adults should have seen all along.

Love, cruelty, unexpected family legacies, and the unique magic of Wideacre permeate the pages as the specter of the Lacey's incest emerges from an idyllic past. Don't miss this second installment, or the third and final book, Meridon, which concludes the Wideacre series.

Camille says

Well - moving straight from Wildacre to this book, I was less than surprised to find similar themes. Unfortunately, where I somehow couldn't keep myself from liking Beatrice (I know - horrible, right?), I just couldn't seem to get on Julia's side. Right off the bat I was annoyed at her for not standing up for herself to Richard - a theme which continued throughout the entire book. I even put the book down in disgust and didn't come back to it for an entire evening (gasp!) SO frustrated. The only time I really liked her was the few months she spent in the city and met James. While I'm complaining I might as well mention that I wish the foreshadowing of her dream with the baby wouldn't have come up so early. It's not THAT hard to figure out what it's alluding to and basically gives up the entire ending! Oh well. I still read it in a relatively short time - which means I didn't entirely dislike the book. I was just really really really frustrated the whole time.

Steven Walle says

I loved this book. I will give a full review on it later today. Stay tuned my GoodReads friends and family. Enjoy and Be Blessed.
Diamond
