



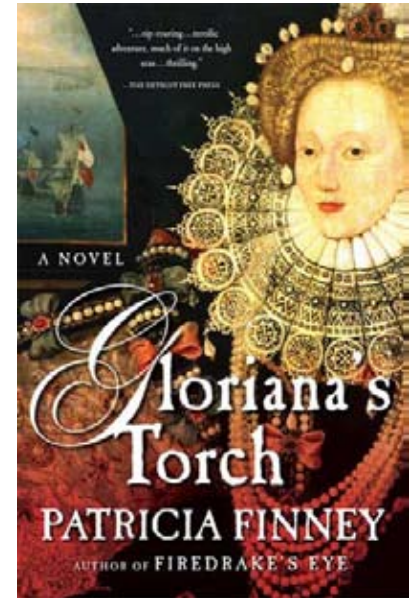
# Reading Group Gold

## Gloriana's Torch

by Patricia Finney

### Introduction to *Gloriana's Torch*

The year is 1587. The Spanish are preparing to launch the Armada against the English and Queen Elizabeth. Ex-soldier David Becket, now responsible for the Queen's Ordnance discovers that large quantities of gunpowder are going astray. Can someone in the heart of the English government be selling it to the Spanish? Unaccountably he is plagued by vivid dreams of England invaded, an alternative story where the Armada is victorious. Patricia Finney's brilliant reworking of the Armada legend is an imaginative tour de force. Thrilling, intricate, and inspiring, this is a tale of courage, of love, and, ultimately, redemption.



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### Reading Group Guide Questions

1. If you met him, what would you notice first about Robert Carey, and about courtiers like him?
2. What were Lord Burghley's motivations in selling cannons to the enemy? Why was this not necessarily treachery?
3. Discuss the politics of the Elizabethan court. If the Spanish had been defeated in London, how would Elizabeth's marriage have changed English history?
4. Discuss the use of the supernatural in *Gloriana's Torch*. Do the various gods express the personalities of their faithful? To what extent do they influence the action?
5. What were the strategic arguments for concentrating on the "Miracle of Beauty" to the extent of ignoring opportunities to attack the English fleet? Would you have supported the Spanish plan?
6. Why did Philip of Spain wish to invade England?
7. Is there a link between religious conviction and virtue in *Gloriana's Torch*? Discuss the relationship between the "good" characters and their gods.
8. Communication over long distances is difficult in *Gloriana's Torch*. How well do the various characters overcome this difficulty?



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9. If you were casting the film of *Gloriana's Torch*, who would you pick to play the leading characters?
10. Discuss the respective strengths and weaknesses of Spanish and English leadership in *Gloriana's Torch*. Which side was better prepared for the conflict?

## About the Author

Patricia Finney attended Oxford, where she read history. Her first novel, *A Shadow of Gulls*, won the prestigious David Higham award. *Gloriana's Torch* is her fifth novel. She lives in England.