

To the students at Atlantic Cape Community College:

First of all, I just want to tell you how happy I am that you selected **The Last Days of Dogtown** as your college-wide book. It's a terrific honor to be included in a list that began with **The Color of Water** and continued with **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night**. (I thoroughly enjoyed both of them.)

My novel is set in a small town in rural Massachusetts in the 1820s and 30s. It tells the story of a handful of people who lived there before the place was deserted forever. The characters are an eccentric bunch: widows, orphans, free Africans, single women. All of them are people who either chose or were forced to live outside of society's rules. Their relationships with one another – and with the dogs who live in the wild – are the heart and soul of the book.

I hope you enjoy meeting this bunch of characters who are loosely based on sketchy and unreliable historical records. The descriptions and plot and relationships, however, come from my own imagination.

I love the idea of getting a whole community to read one book – to foster a common conversation among different groups of people. I hope that my novel will spark some interesting discussions both inside and outside of the classroom.

I look forward to hearing what you think of **The Last Days of Dogtown**. Please be in touch.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anita".

Anita Diamant
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