

**JAMES, Phyllis Dorothy (1920-2014)**, England

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### **The Children of Men (1981)**

Dt Im Land der leeren Häuser (1992), ÜB: Christa Seibicke

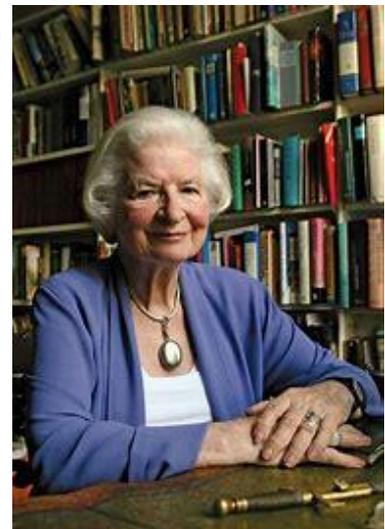
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Nach fünfundzwanzigjähriger weltweiter Unfruchtbarkeit bekommt eine Frau mit einer verkrüppelten Hand von einem Mann, der in seiner Jugend an Epilepsie litt, ein Kind, auf dem die neue Hoffnung der Menschen ruht.

Zur Autorin (Wiki 17.2.25):

„**Phyllis Dorothy James White, Baroness James of Holland Park** (3 August 1920 – 27 November 2014), known professionally as **P. D. James**, was an English novelist and life peer. Her rise to fame came with her series of detective novels featuring the police commander and poet, Adam Dalgliesh.

James was born in Oxford, the daughter of Sidney Victor James, a tax inspector, and his wife, Dorothy Mary James. She was educated at the British School in Ludlow and Cambridge High School for Girls. Her mother was committed to a mental hospital when James was in her mid-teens.



She had to leave school at the age of sixteen to work to take care of her younger siblings, sister Monica, and brother Edward, because her family did not have much money and her father did not believe in higher education for girls. She worked in a tax office in Ely for three years and later found a job as an assistant stage manager for the Festival Theatre in Cambridge. She married Ernest Connor Bantry White (called "Connor"), an army doctor, on 8 August 1941. They had two daughters, Clare and Jane.

White returned from the Second World War mentally ill and was institutionalised. With her daughters being mostly cared for by Connor's parents, James studied hospital administration, and from 1949 to 1968 worked for a hospital board in London. She began writing in the mid-1950s, using her maiden name ("My genes are James genes").

Her first novel, *Cover Her Face*, featuring the investigator and poet Adam Dalgliesh of New Scotland Yard, was published in 1962. Dalgliesh's last name comes from a teacher of English at Cambridge High School and his first name is that of Miss Dalgliesh's father. Many of James's mystery novels take place against the backdrop of UK bureaucracies, such as the criminal justice system and the National Health Service, in which she worked for decades starting in the 1940s. Two years after the publication

of *Cover Her Face*, James's husband died on 5 August 1964. Prior to his death, James had not felt able to change her job: "He [Connor] would periodically discharge himself from hospital, sometimes at very short notice, and I never knew quite what I would have to face when I returned home from the office. It was not a propitious time to look for promotion or for a new job, which would only impose additional strain. But now [after Connor's death] I felt the strong need to look for a change of direction." She applied for the grade of Principal in the Home Civil Service and held positions as a civil servant within several sections of the Home Office, including the criminal section. She worked in government service until her retirement in 1979.

On 7 February 1991, James was created a life peer as **Baroness James of Holland Park**, of Southwold in the County of Suffolk. She sat in the House of Lords as a Conservative. She was an Anglican and a lay patron of the Prayer Book Society. Her 2001 work, *Death in Holy Orders*, displays her familiarity with the inner workings of church hierarchy. Her later novels were often set in a community closed in some way, such as a publishing house, barristers' chambers, a theological college, an island or a private clinic. *Talking About Detective Fiction* was published in 2009. Over her writing career, James also wrote many essays and short stories for periodicals and anthologies, which have yet to be collected. She said in 2011 that *The Private Patient* was the final Dalgliesh novel. However, at the time of her death, she had been planning another Dalgliesh novel, set in Southwold.

As guest editor of BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme in December 2009, James conducted an interview with the Director General of the BBC, Mark Thompson, in which she seemed critical of some of his decisions. Regular *Today* presenter Evan Davis commented that "She shouldn't be guest editing; she should be permanently presenting the programme." In 2008, she was inducted into the International Crime Writing Hall of Fame at the inaugural ITV3 Crime Thriller Awards.

In August 2014, James was one of 200 public figures who were signatories to a letter to *The Guardian* opposing Scottish independence in the run-up to September's referendum on that issue.

James' main home was her house at 58 Holland Park Avenue, in the area from which she took her title; she also owned homes in Oxford and Southwold.

James died from cancer at her home in Oxford on 27 November 2014, aged 94. She is survived by her two daughters, Clare and Jane, five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

During the 1980s and 1990s, many of James's mystery novels were adapted for television by Anglia Television for the ITV network in the UK. These productions have been broadcast in other countries, including the US on the PBS network. Roy Marsden played Adam Dalgliesh. According to James in conversation with Bill Link on 3 May 2001 at the Writer's Guild Theatre, Los Angeles, Marsden "is not my idea of Dalgliesh, but I would be very surprised if he were." The BBC adapted *Death in Holy Orders* in 2003, and *The Murder Room* in 2004, both as one-off dramas starring Martin Shaw as Dalgliesh. In *Dalgliesh* (2021), Bertie Carvel starred as the titular, enigmatic detective-poet. Six episodes, shown as three two-parters, premiered on Acorn

TV on 1 November 2021 in the United States followed by a Channel 5 premiere on 4 November in the United Kingdom. A further six episodes started to air on Channel 5 in April 2023.

Her novel ***The Children of Men*** (1992) was the basis for the feature film *Children of Men* (2006), directed by Alfonso Cuarón and starring Clive Owen, Julianne Moore and Michael Caine. Despite substantial changes from the book, James was reportedly pleased with the adaptation and proud to be associated with the film.

A three-episode adaptation of her novel *Death Comes to Pemberley*, written by Juliette Towhidi, was made into the TV series *Death Comes to Pemberley* by Origin Pictures for BBC One. It was first shown in the UK over three nights from 26 December 2013 as part of the BBC's Christmas schedule and stars Anna Maxwell Martin as Elizabeth, Matthew Rhys as Mr Darcy, Jenna Coleman as Lydia and Matthew Goode as Wickham."

Literatur