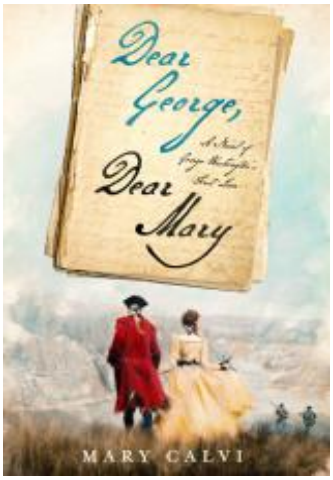
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Dear George, Dear Mary: A Novel of George Washington's First Love

by Mary Calvi



About the Book

A novel about heiress Mary Philipse's relationship with George Washington, based on historical accounts, letters and personal journals by nine-time New York Emmy Award-winning journalist Mary Calvi.

?Love is said to be an involuntary passion, and it is, therefore, contended that it cannot be resisted.? ?George Washington

Did unrequited love spark a flame that ignited a cause that became the American Revolution? Never before has this story about George Washington been told. Crafted from hundreds of letters, witness accounts and journal entries, DEAR GEORGE, DEAR MARY explores George?s relationship with his first love, New York heiress Mary Philipse, the richest belle in Colonial America.

From elegant 18th-century society to bloody battlefields, the novel creates breathtaking scenes and riveting characters. Dramatic portraits of the two main characters unveil a Washington on the precipice of greatness, using the very words he spoke and wrote, and his ravishing love, whose outward beauty and refinement disguise a complex inner struggle.

DEAR GEORGE, DEAR MARY reveals why George Washington had such bitter resentment toward the Brits, established nearly two decades before the American Revolution, and it unveils details of a deception long hidden from the world that led Mary Philipse to be named a traitor, condemned to death and left with nothing. While that may sound like the end, ultimately both Mary and George achieve what they always wanted.

Discussion Guide

1. A novel built on historical fact has to maintain accuracy to a previous era while reading smoothly to a modern reader.

What sorts of decisions do you think the author made to ensure she was serving her audience?

2. Based on the knowledge you now have about George Washington?s relationship with Mary Philipse, what do you think his marriage to Martha Custis was like?

3. Mary Calvi speculates in DEAR GEORGE, DEAR MARY that unrequited love might have sparked aflame that ignited a cause that became the American Revolution. Do you agree that the young George Washington?s personal life may have affected his relationship with --- and opinion of --- the British?

4. Philipse Manor is still standing and operates as a New York State historic sitein Yonkers, New York. Bottles from patent medicines and spices as well as shards of bone china and rougher stoneware plates and cups are on display at the site. What do you imagine daily life was like in Philipse Manor during Mary?s time?

5. The main topic in Mary Calvi?s novel is the relationship between George Washington and Mary Philipse, but Mary?s relationships with other women inform the book as well. Which one was most vivid to you, and why?

6. Part of the intensity of the action in DEAR GEORGE, DEAR MARY is heightened because communications in the mid-eighteenth century were so very different from communications in our time. What events do you think were dictated by the communications --- or lack of communications --- between the principals in the novel?

7. What did you think about George Washington as a soldier? A lover? Did this book change your view of him as president?

8. Why do you think Mary was branded a traitor? Do you think any part of her behavior or attitude was traitorous?

9. The author uses Washington?s hand-written copy of ?Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation,? which had been circulating for at least a hundred years before Washington copied it out, as a leitmotif. What did you deduce about Washington and his life from Calvi?s use of these rules throughout her novel?

Author Bio

Mary Calvi is a 12-time New York Emmy award-winning journalist and national anchor. Her in-depth research for her debut book, DEAR GEORGE, DEAR MARY: A Novel of George Washington's First Love, is the basis of a Smithsonian Channel documentary. Calvi lives in Yonkers, New York.

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