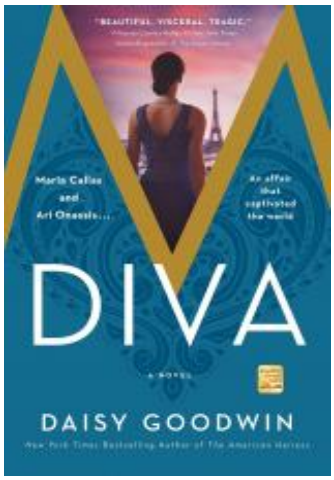
Diva

by Daisy Goodwin



About the Book

***New York Times* bestselling author Daisy Goodwin returns with a story of the scandalous love affair between the most celebrated opera singer of all time and one of the richest men in the world.**

In the glittering and ruthlessly competitive world of opera, Maria Callas was known simply as la divina: the divine one. With her glorious voice, instinctive flair for the dramatic and striking beauty, she was the toast of the grandest opera houses in the world. But her fame was hard-won. Raised in Nazi-occupied Greece by a mother who mercilessly exploited her golden voice, she learned early in life to protect herself from those who would use her for their own ends.

When she met the fabulously rich Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, for the first time in her life, she believed she?d found someone who saw the woman within the legendary soprano. She fell desperately in love. He introduced her to a life of unbelievable luxury, showering her with jewels and sojourns in the most fashionable international watering holes with celebrities like Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

And then suddenly, it was over. The international press announced that Aristotle Onassis would marry the most famous woman in the world, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, leaving Maria to pick up the pieces.

In this remarkable novel, Daisy Goodwin brings to life a woman whose extraordinary talent, unremitting drive and natural chic made her a legend. But it was only in confronting the heartbreak of losing the man she loved that Maria Callas found her true voice and went on to triumph.

Discussion Guide

1. How much does Maria?s relationship with her mother shape her life? Does her desire to win her mother?s approval help turn her into the star she becomes?

2. Is Maria right to cut off all contact with her mother after the scene in the fur shop in Mexico City?

3. Who is the victim in the Callas/Meneghini marriage? Is Maria being exploited by Meneghini for her money, or is she using him to take care of the nuts and bolts of her career?

4. From the beginning of her career, Maria has felt the clock ticking. She knows that with every performance she is spending the capital of her talent. How does that influence her behavior?

5. How much is Maria?s behavior influenced by the opera heroines that she has sung?

6. What makes Maria fall in love with Onassis?

7. Why does she ignore Elsa?s warning that Onassis is interested only in her fame?

8. What makes Maria decide to leave Meneghini for Onassis? Was it the right decision?

9. What do Maria and Onassis have in common besides their nationality?

10. When Princess Grace says that Maria Callas is the only name that will be remembered in a hundred years, is she right?

11. Did Onassis give Maria as much as he took from her?

12. Why does Onassis come back to see Maria after marrying Jackie Kennedy?

13. At the end of the book, do you see Maria as a victim or the heroine of her own story?

Author Bio

Daisy Goodwin is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE AMERICAN HEIRESS, THE FORTUNE HUNTER, VICTORIA and DIVA. She attended Columbia University's film school as a Harkness scholar after earning a degree in history at Cambridge University, and was Chair of the judging panel of the 2010 Orange Prize for Fiction. She is the screenwriter and executive producer of the PBS/Masterpiece drama "Victoria." She lives in London.

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