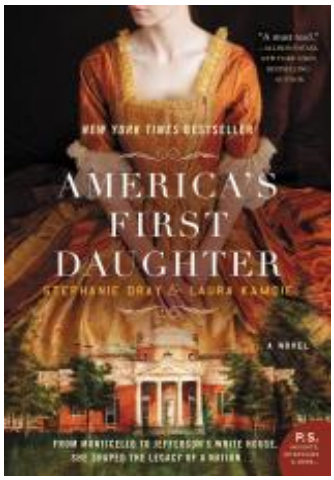
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America's First Daughter

by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie



About the Book

From her earliest days, Patsy Jefferson knows that though her father loves his family dearly, his devotion to his country runs deeper still. As Thomas Jefferson?s oldest daughter, she becomes his helpmate, protector and constant companion in the wake of her mother?s death, traveling with him when he becomes American minister to France.

It is in Paris, at the glittering court and among the first tumultuous days of revolution, that 15-year-old Patsy learns about her father?s troubling liaison with Sally Hemings, a slave girl her own age. Meanwhile, Patsy has fallen in love --- with her father?s protégé William Short, a staunch abolitionist and ambitious diplomat. Torn between love, principles, and the bonds of family, Patsy questions whether she can choose a life as William?s wife and still be a devoted daughter.

Her choice will follow her in the years to come, to Virginia farmland, Monticello, and even the White House. And as scandal, tragedy and poverty threaten her family, Patsy must decide how much she will sacrifice to protect her father's reputation, in the process defining not just his political legacy, but that of the nation he founded.

Discussion Guide

Introduction

In a compelling, richly researched novel that draws from thousands of letters and original sources, bestselling authors Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie tell the fascinating, untold story of Thomas Jefferson?s eldest daughter, Martha ?Patsy? Jefferson Randolph --- a woman who kept the secrets of our most enigmatic founding father and shaped an American legacy.

Questions for Discussion

1. If Thomas Jefferson?s wife hadn?t died, how might he and his daughter have lived different lives? Historically, Jefferson is said to have made a deathbed promise to his wife, and in the novel his daughter makes one as well. How might their lives have differed if they hadn?t made those deathbed promises?

2. As portrayed in the novel and in their letters to each other, how would you describe Jefferson and Patsy?s relationship with each other? Was Jefferson a good father? Did he change as a father over the course of the novel? Was Patsy a good daughter?

3. Does seeing Jefferson through his daughter?s eyes make him more relatable as a Founding Father? How so or why not?

4. The limited choices women had available to them in the Revolutionary era is one theme explored in this book. What were the most important choices Patsy made throughout her life? Do you agree with why she made them? Could or should she have chosen differently?

5. What did you think of Sally?s choice to return to Virginia with Jefferson? Why did she make that decision? What were her alternatives and how viable were they?

6. Another theme explored in this book is sacrifice. What does Patsy sacrifice in her effort to protect her father? What did Jefferson sacrifice? What did Sally sacrifice? What did William Short sacrifice?

7. Why does Patsy think her father needs to be protected? Why does she think she is the only one to do it? In what ways does she protect him? What do you think of Patsy?s effort to protect Jefferson? Would you have done the same thing?

8. How are Patsy?s views on slavery portrayed in this novel? What factors influence her thinking? How do her views differ from her father?s or from William Short?s?

9. Why did Patsy decide to marry Thomas Mann Randolph Jr.? How would you describe their relationship and how did their relationship change over time?

10. Why can?t or won?t Patsy cry? Why does she finally cry in the final scene at Monticello?

11. Do you agree with William that Monticello was ?a set of chains?? Why not or how so? Were you on William?s or Patsy?s side during their fight in the final scene at Monticello?

12. In what ways did Patsy shape her father?s legacy? In what ways did she shape our own? In what ways is she America?s First Daughter?

Author Bio

Stephanie Dray is a *New York Times, Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* bestselling author of historical women?s fiction. Her award-winning work has been translated into eight languages and tops lists for the most anticipated reads of the year. She lives near Maryland with her husband, cats and history books.

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