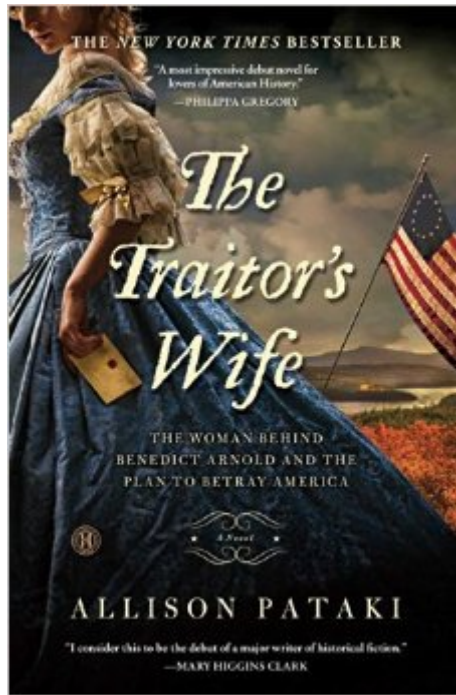


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The Traitor's Wife: A Novel



Synopsis

A riveting historical novel about Peggy Shippen Arnold, the cunning wife of Benedict Arnold and mastermind behind America's most infamous act of treason...> Everyone knows Benedict Arnold "the Revolutionary War general who betrayed America and fled to the British" as history's most notorious turncoat. Many know Arnold's co-conspirator, Major John André, who was apprehended with Arnold's documents in his boots and hanged at the orders of General George Washington. But few know of the integral third character in the plot: a charming young woman who not only contributed to the betrayal but orchestrated it. Socialite Peggy Shippen is half Benedict Arnold's age when she seduces the war hero during his stint as military commander of Philadelphia. Blinded by his young bride's beauty and wit, Arnold does not realize that she harbors a secret: loyalty to the British. Nor does he know that she hides a past romance with the handsome British spy John André. Peggy watches as her husband, crippled from battle wounds and in debt from years of service to the colonies, grows ever more disillusioned with his hero, Washington, and the American cause. Together with her former love and her disaffected husband, Peggy hatches the plot to deliver West Point to the British and, in exchange, win fame and fortune for herself and Arnold. Told from the perspective of Peggy's maid, whose faith in the new nation inspires her to intervene in her mistress's affairs even when it could cost her everything, > brings these infamous figures to life, illuminating the sordid details and the love triangle that nearly destroyed the American fight for freedom.

Book Information

Paperback: 496 pages

Publisher: Howard Books (February 11, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476738602

ISBN-13: 978-1476738604

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.2 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (995 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Allison Pataki's debut novel, *The Traitor's Wife*, demonstrates both a wonderful and uniquely accurate portrayal of a pivotal moment in American history, along with very well-honed writing skills. As a student of American Studies vs. American History, she is in a wonderful position to write authoritatively about what it was actually like during a critical period of our nation's history. It is written in color, not black and white. Her use of a fictitious maid gives the reader unfettered and wonderful access to Peggy Shippen (Arnold's wife) who was once John Andre's lover. Andre, in this love triangle, critical in American history, schemed with Arnold to create an event that would have radically altered, if not ended, the US Revolution. Peggy's role was hardly minor - in fact it, in large part, precipitated the treason by her much older husband. Ms. Patacki's ability to bring Peggy into this story (a back-story long ignored) and bring the reader into a fascinating story is nothing short of brilliant. Her desire, as a writer, to find critical historical periods and write from the viewpoint of a woman, hardly commonplace, is a real skill. We should all look forward to more great reads from this young and incredibly talented author. *A Traitor's Wife* is a very fun and interesting read. Get a copy; read it, you will not be disappointed.

This book was an excellent historical fiction, filled with the facts. The author, Allison Pataki, does an excellent job of engaging her audience. She turns an otherwise somewhat dry history lesson into a page-turner of a novel. My only regret is that I can't share it with my children because of the graphic sex scenes. I think the book would have been even better without the sex scene in the bath tub. As a home schooling mom of four, I can guarantee there is a huge market for historical fiction sans R rated material. I would urge Ms. Pataki make available an edited version for a younger audience. It's so important to teach our children the history of our country. Historical novels are an excellent way to engage a younger reader.

Hearing of good reviews for this book, our book discussion group chose it for our next month's discussion. After a few pages in, I feared we had been misled yet trudged through it anyway. What a waste of time and money! There is nothing worth discussing in this book. It is like a cheap drugstore romance novel with appalling attempts to pull in historical figures. George Washington would be rolling over in his grave at his depiction. Two other members of our group that started reading it, have chimed in via email and concur with my conclusion. We'll be picking a different book!

This story deserved to be told by a much better writer than Allison Pataki. It is about a very important moment in American history, and all the elements of a very fine drama were there for the

taking. In the hands of a better writer, this would have been a stunning, suspenseful novel because the plot is already in place. All that would be needed are well-developed characters and enough historical research to bring the period to life. But instead this book is part bodice ripper, part soap opera, and part juvenile fiction. It's a clumsy freshman attempt that isn't even well-edited (don't publishers hire editors anymore?). As an English professor, I was terribly annoyed by the constant grammatical mistakes. And the anachronisms were just as bad. Sometimes the characters speak in a faux 18th century style and sometimes as if they lived today. And they had access to foods and other things that I'm pretty sure 18th century colonists did not have. Worst of all, the author invents a character, Peggy Shippen Arnold's maid, Clara Bell, to build the story around. But it's completely unbelievable that Arnold and his wife would have done all their plotting about spying for the British in front of Mrs. Arnold's maid--that the maid would just happen to have been in the room every time they were discussing their plans and would have known every detail of the whole intrigue, yet the Arnolds would have been blithely unconcerned about this fact. Despite the maid's serious moral concerns about the treachery her employers are engaged in, she actually helps the supposedly stupid Benedict Arnold understand how to use the spy code that John Andre has sent to Arnold. Here's the lesson I learned: don't believe the blurbs on the back cover. Read a little before you spend even a dime on any piece of trash like this "novel."

I saw the overall rating on this book and had heard good things about it. I was anticipating a good piece of historical fiction. What I got was a beach read. A good beach read but it had only the history in it that was essential to the novel. It is a shallow portrayal at best. Peggy Shippen Arnold is portrayed as a scheming self centered witch with a capital 'B' and Benedict ARnold as a besotted fool. The underlying story of her maid is much more interesting. I had agreed to read it as a potential book for my book club. I will not be recommending it.

Great page turner, history is brought to life in a very real way in this novel. The plot line flawlessly weaves together Shippan and Arnold's story, while gracefully and thoroughly developing its characters, the players in our nation's history. I'm fascinated by the woman behind the man factor in history, and thus loved that Pataki wrote this novel to illuminate Peggy Shippan's role in Arnold's decision making. Pataki's a fabulous writer, can't wait for more from her.

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