

My Dear Hamilton

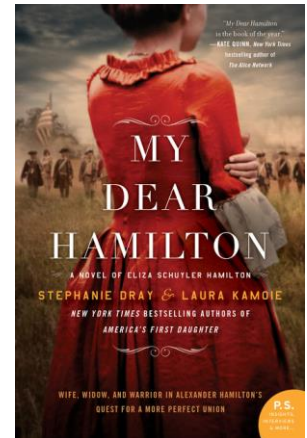
William Morrow Paperbacks

By Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie

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Introduction

From the New York Times bestselling authors of *America's First Daughter* comes the epic story of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton—a revolutionary woman who, like her new nation, struggled to define herself in the wake of war, betrayal, and tragedy. Haunting, moving, and beautifully written, Dray and Kamoie used thousands of letters and original sources to tell Eliza's story as it's never been told before—not just as the wronged wife at the center of a political sex scandal—but also as a founding mother who shaped an American legacy in her own right.



Coming of age on the perilous frontier of revolutionary New York, Elizabeth Schuyler champions the fight for independence. And when she meets Alexander Hamilton, Washington's penniless but passionate aide-de-camp, she's captivated by the young officer's charisma and brilliance. They fall in love, despite Hamilton's bastard birth and the uncertainties of war.

But the union they create—in their marriage and the new nation—is far from perfect. From glittering inaugural balls to bloody street riots, the Hamiltons are at the center of it all—including the political treachery of America's first sex scandal, which forces Eliza to struggle through heartbreak and betrayal to find forgiveness.

When a duel destroys Eliza's hard-won peace, the grieving widow fights her husband's enemies to preserve Alexander's legacy. But long-buried secrets threaten everything Eliza believes about her marriage and her own legacy. Questioning her tireless devotion to the man and country that have broken her heart, she's left with one last battle—to understand the flawed man she married and imperfect union he could never have created without her...

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think of Eliza's declaration that she was *someone* before she met Alexander Hamilton? Why do you think she feels it's important to remember that?
2. A young Eliza wonders how a daughter can make a difference in the revolution. Does she make a difference? In what ways?
3. How does Eliza view herself in the novel and how does that change over the course of her life?

4. Does seeing Alexander Hamilton through his wife's eyes make him more relatable as a Founding Father? How so or why not?
5. Martha Washington tells a newly married Eliza that achieving independence will require the support of women, and one way women can offer that support is by advising their husbands. What did you think of her advice? Does Eliza take it? How and when? How effective is Mrs. Washington's advice?
6. The Schuyler family's motto was *Semper Fidelis*. Always loyal. How does this play out in the book for Eliza?
7. Was Hamilton a good husband? Was Eliza a good wife? How did they change in those roles over the course of a novel?
8. What were the most important choices that Eliza made throughout her life and in her marriage? Do you agree with why she made them? Could or should she have chosen differently?
9. What did you think of the relationship between Eliza, Angelica, and Alexander? What do you make of the open flirtatiousness between Angelica and Alexander? How and why does Eliza's relationship with Angelica evolve over the course of their lives?
10. What did you think of Eliza's reaction to learning about Alexander's infidelity with Maria Reynolds? What did you think of the reconciliation they found after suffering Yellow Fever?
11. How do Eliza's thoughts about slavery evolve? What factors influence her thinking? How do the depictions of slavery in New York differ from or meet your expectations and understandings of American slavery?
12. What did you think of Aaron Burr's characterization in the novel? How do Alexander and Eliza's relationship with him change over time?
13. How much was Alexander to blame for the challenges he faced in his political career and attacks launched by his enemies, and how much was he the victim of others' political machinations?
14. Though Thomas Jefferson is not often on the page, he looms large in the Hamiltons' minds and lives. Why was that?
15. In our portrayal, Eliza believes that "they" murdered her son, Philip, and her husband. Who are *they*? Why does she believe her loved ones were murdered? Do you agree-- why or why not?

16. What did you think of Eliza's reaction to learning about Alexander's possible infidelity with her sister, Angelica, and his intimacy with John Laurens? What did you think of Lafayette's advice to Eliza about it? What does Eliza conclude in her attic trials and why? What does she conclude in her conversation with William in Wisconsin?
17. In what ways is the family story in this book relatable to modern families? To your family?
18. What did you think of the relationship between Eliza and James Monroe? How did it change over time? Why did Monroe represent such a touchstone for Eliza's feelings about Alexander? What did you think of their confrontation in 1825?
19. Eliza argues that the United States is Alexander's country, and that the country itself is the monument to him that she'd been searching for and wanting. What does she mean by this? Do you agree? Why or why not?
20. What did Eliza and her family sacrifice for the sake of the nation?
21. In what ways did Eliza shape Alexander Hamilton's legacy? In what ways did she shape that of the United States itself?