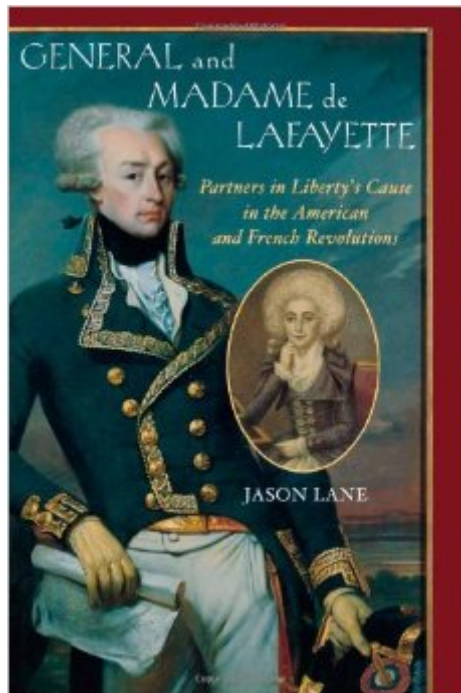


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General And Madame De Lafayette: Partners In Liberty's Cause In The American And French Revolutions



Synopsis

This biography of French liberator Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) reveals not only how the nineteen-year-old bravely ventured to the infant United States to serve in its War of Independence, but also the iconoclast's enormous contribution to the causes of social and economic justice in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Poland. The Marquise (1759-1807), born Adrienne de Noailles, shared the same controversial beliefs as her husband, supporting and defending him wholeheartedly despite ongoing political persecution-including the Marquis's exile in an Austrian dungeon and her own imprisonment (and near-execution) by French radicals. Employing a sweeping, classical feel, and visiting landscapes including the magnificent court at Versailles, the brutal hardship of Valley Forge, and the momentous storming of the Bastille, Lane chronicles and celebrates the couple's passionate yet tumultuous relationship while documenting the birth of America, two French Revolutions, and the Napoleonic era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been studying Lafayette's life since I was a young teenager (I'm 24 now, so it's been 10 years!) and out of all of the books I own and have read about him, I keep coming back to this one as my favorite, by far. It is very nicely balanced: plenty of information, but concisely presented, and Jason Lane filters out a lot of the irrelevant details of Lafayette's life that often distract from the story being told. Lafayette's life is a chaotic rollercoaster with sudden twists and turns, and it's easy to get absolutely LOST during the French Revolution of 1789 because there's SO much going on. But Lane manages to provide a direct path through all of these events so that you can easily follow

along. And the addition of Adrienne (Laf's wife) is SO critical to the telling of his story. It is really a dual biography about the both of them, and you get a sense that they both are the main characters, working together to achieve their common goals of democracy and justice. The Lafayettes truly are a great love story, set against the backdrop of bloody, traumatic wars. The chapter where she dies, and he writes for pages, and pages.....and pages.... about his sorrow in having lost her... brings me to tears every time! Alongside this love story, Lane shamelessly discusses Lafayette's multiple extramarital affairs - and yet, he congeals the two pictures - the adulterer and the devoted husband - seamlessly into one human being who did not think he was a contradiction to himself. He also describes how Adrienne knew about all these affairs, and her various reactions. Fascinating. Finally, Lane dares go where so few biographers dare go, in that, at times, he tries to psychoanalyze Lafayette and why he was such a peculiar personality.

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