

[PDF] Book Of Ages: The Life And Opinions Of Jane Franklin

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Books Details:

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Description:

From *Starred Review* Award-winning historian, Harvard professor, and New Yorker staff writer Lepore, whose *The Mansion of Happiness* (2012) was a Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction finalist, was intrigued to learn that Benjamin Franklin and his youngest sister, Jane, were so close they were called Benny and Jenny. Renowned, world-traveling brother and obscure, homebound sister exchanged loving, newsy, bantering letters for more than 60 years. Most of his were preserved, while three decades' worth of hers disappeared. This near-erasure, along with the gender bias that determined the vast differences in the siblings' education, opportunities, and experiences, become as much a focus in this zestfully rigorous portrait as Jane herself. The most poignant artifact Lepore unearthed was Jane's handmade "Book of Ages," recording the birth of her 12 children and,

excruciatingly, the eventual deaths of all but one of them. In spite of the tragedies she endured, Jane's surviving letters are "gabby, frank, and vexed," the correspondence of a smart, witty, hardworking woman who "loved best books about ideas," reveled in gossip, expressed "impolite" opinions on religion and politics, and shared piquant observations of the struggle for American independence. By restoring Jane so vividly to the historical record, Lepore also provides a fresh, personal perspective on Benjamin. And so extraordinarily demanding was her research, even the appendixes in Lepore's vibrantly enlightening biography are dramatic. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Lepore's stature grows with each book, and this first telling of a remarkable American story, supported by a national tour and generous print run, is destined for an even greater readership. --Donna Seaman

Review "This book is an important, inspiring portrait of a determined and faith-filled woman who just happened to be the sister of a big shot. It will be enjoyed by all." -*Library Journal* (starred review)

"By restoring Jane so vividly to the historical record, Lepore provides a fresh, personal perspective on Benjamin. And so extraordinarily demanding was her research, even the appendixes in Lepore's vibrantly enlightening biography are dramatic....Lepore's stature grows with each book, and this first telling of a remarkable American story, supported by a national tour and generous print run, is destined for an even greater readership." -Donna Seaman, *Booklist* (starred review)

"New Yorker writer Lepore masterfully formulates the story of Benjamin Franklin's youngest sister, who will be virtually unknown to many readers, using only a few of her letters and a small archive of births and deaths....Jane Franklin was an amazing woman who raised her children and grandchildren while still having the time to read and think for herself. We can only see into her mind because her correspondent was famous and because a vastly talented biographer reassembled her for us." -*Kirkus* (starred review)

"This is a brilliant and delightful book! By weaving together the tales of Benjamin Franklin and his beloved little sister, Jill Lepore creates a richly-textured tapestry of life in early America. Deeply researched and passionately written, it brings us inside a poignant relationship between two lovable people who seemed so different but were also so connected. I devoured this book and will treasure it." -Walter Isaacson, author of *Steve Jobs*

"Book of Ages is an ardently told life story, brimming with love and loss against a background of political strife and war. Jill Lepore opens a smeared casement on the life of Jane, Benjamin Franklin's gifted sister, confidante and life-long correspondent. While Benjamin was able to forge a path to greatness from his obscure beginnings, Jane, trapped by gender, starved of education, was not. The contrast between the two destinies is by turns captivating, enraging and profoundly moving. As Lepore sheds light on this one, unsung life, she brilliantly illuminates an entire era." -Geraldine Brooks, author of *March*

"From scraps and whispers, Jill Lepore has resurrected Ben Franklin's youngest sister, the only relative who could truthfully say, "Every line from him was a pleasure." The subject is tailor-made for Lepore, as artful a writer as she is exact a scholar. She delivers two marvels at once: An authentic 18th century female voice, cheerful, inquisitive, and saucy, as well as an intimate portrait of Jane Franklin's revered brother himself." -Stacy Schiff, author of *Cleopatra*

"This poetic and powerful diptych takes readers on a fascinating journey. With consummate skill, Lepore moves us beyond the story of a famous brother and his woebegone sister, instead bringing both Benny and Jenny--and the relationship between them--to life. A book to ponder and prose to

savor." -Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, author of *A Midwife's Tale*

"With careful and ingenious research, Jill Lepore uncovers the surprising life of the obscure sister to a very famous man. This eloquent book reveals two remarkable siblings and their intertwined and revolutionary lives." -Alan Taylor, author of *The Civil War of 1812*

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