



Benjamin Franklin's Bastard: A Novel

By Sally Cabot

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Benjamin Franklin's Bastard by Sally Cabot is an absorbing and compelling work of literary historical fiction that brings to life a little-known chapter of the American Revolution — the story of Benjamin Franklin and his bastard son, and the women who loved them both.

William Franklin, the son of Benjamin and his favorite mistress, Anne, is raised by Deborah, Benjamin's wife. A steadfast loyalist, he and his father cannot reconcile their wildly disparate views, causing a rift in the bond both thought unbreakable.

Fascinating and heartbreaking, *Benjamin Franklin's Bastard* is a gripping tale of family, love, and war, set against one of America's most fascinating periods of history.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Genial Founding Father and revered statesman Benjamin Franklin was a man of large appetites, and this affecting first novel fictionalizes a little-known story. Anne is a young servant girl in a tavern who is lured into prostitution by a charming young Benjamin Franklin. When she becomes pregnant with their child, he talks her into giving the baby up so that he might have a chance for a respectable life. But Benjamin's wife, asked to raise the bastard child, William, as her own, struggles with suspicions of her husband's infidelity, especially when they lose their own child to smallpox. Forever seeking the affections of his stepmother and the approval of his father, William finally comes into his own but lands on the wrong side of history and becomes locked in a bitter feud with his father over the Revolution. Cabot laces her assured novel with Shakespearean overtones as the characters continually misconstrue one another's motives. From Franklin's intense intellectual curiosity to Anne's stubborn insistence on leading an independent life, this memorable cast makes for spellbinding reading. --Joanne Wilkinson

Review

"This is a superb novel. Don't miss it." (William Martin, New York Times bestselling author of *Cape Cod* and *The Lincoln Letter*)

"Cabot laces her assured novel with Shakespearean overtones as the characters continually misconstrue one another's motives. From Franklin's intense intellectual curiosity to Anne's stubborn insistence on leading an independent life, this memorable cast makes for spellbinding reading." (Booklist)

"[A] poignant take of love, survival, loyalty, and the meaning of family." 4.5 stars–Fantastic (RT Book Reviews)

"An enticing read for history buffs...genuinely heart-wrenching." (Publishers Weekly)

"Unforgettable." (Shelf Awareness)

"[F]or all Franklin's genius, fortune, and increasing stature, he is not spared the trials of women, concerns for children, or the struggles between a father and son with political differences.... [Cabot is] a gifted writer." (Providence Journal)

From the Back Cover

An absorbing and compelling work of literary historical fiction, set in colonial Philadelphia, that brings to life a little-known chapter of the American Revolution—the story of Benjamin Franklin and his bastard son, and the women who loved them

Sixteen-year-old Anne is an uneducated serving girl at the Penny Pot tavern when she first meets the commanding Benjamin Franklin. The time she spends with the brilliant young printer teases her curious mind, and the money he provides keeps her family from starving. But the ambitious Franklin is committed to someone else, a proper but infatuated woman named Deborah Read who becomes his common-law wife. At least Anne has William, her cherished infant son, to remind her of his father and to soften some of life's bleakness.

But growing up a bastard amid the squalor of Eades Alley isn't the life Anne wants for her only son. Acutely aware of the challenges facing them, she makes a heartbreaking sacrifice. She will give up William forever, allowing Benjamin and Deborah Franklin to raise him as their own.

Though she cannot be with him, Anne secretly watches out for her beloved child, daring to be close to him without revealing the truth about herself or his birth, and standing guard as Deborah Franklin struggles to accept her husband's bastard son as her own.

As the years pass, the bustling colonies grow and prosper, offering opportunities for wealth and power for a talented man like William's father. Benjamin's growing fame and connections as a scientist, writer, philosopher, businessman, and political genius open doors for the astute William as well, and eventually King George III appoints Benjamin's bastard son to the new position of Royal Governor of New Jersey. Anne's fortunes also rise. A shrewd woman of many talents, she builds a comfortable life of her own—yet nothing fills her with more joy or pride than her son's success and happiness.

But all that her accomplished son has achieved is threatened when the colonies—led by influential men, including his own father—begin the fight for independence. A steadfast, loyal subject of the British Crown, William cannot accept his father's passionate defense of the patriots' cause, and the enduring bond they share fractures, a heart-wrenching break that will forever haunt them and those they love.

A poignant tale of passion, family, love, and war, *Benjamin Franklin's Bastard* skillfully brings into focus a cast of remarkable characters drawn from real life, and vividly re-creates one of the most remarkable and thrilling periods of history—the birth of the American nation.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marie Aultman:

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Marvin Seto:

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Dan Villanueva:

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