



# **I, Eliza Hamilton**

*Susan Holloway Scott*

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## **I, Eliza Hamilton** Susan Holloway Scott

In this beautifully written novel of historical fiction, bestselling author Susan Holloway Scott tells the story of Alexander Hamilton's wife, Eliza—a fascinating, strong-willed heroine in her own right and a key figure in one of the most gripping periods in American history.

“Love is not easy with a man chosen by Fate for greatness . . .”

As the daughter of a respected general, Elizabeth Schuyler is accustomed to socializing with dignitaries and soldiers. But no visitor to her parents' home has affected her so strongly as Alexander Hamilton, a charismatic, ambitious aide to George Washington. They marry quickly, and despite the tumult of the American Revolution, Eliza is confident in her brilliant husband and in her role as his helpmate. But it is in the aftermath of war, as Hamilton becomes one of the country's most important figures, that she truly comes into her own.

In the new capital, Eliza becomes an adored member of society, respected for her fierce devotion to Hamilton as well as her grace. Behind closed doors, she astutely manages their expanding household, and assists her husband with his political writings. Yet some challenges are impossible to prepare for. Through public scandal, betrayal, personal heartbreak, and tragedy, she is tested again and again. In the end, it will be Eliza's indomitable strength that makes her not only Hamilton's most crucial ally in life, but his most loyal advocate after his death, determined to preserve his legacy while pursuing her own extraordinary path through the nation they helped shape together.

## **I, Eliza Hamilton Details**

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# **From Reader Review I, Eliza Hamilton for online ebook**

## **Alexander Hamilton says**

I was fortunate enough to receive an advanced copy of this book and feel compelled to share my thoughts on it. Susan Holloway Scott has written an excellent, well-researched book about best of wives and best of women, Eliza Hamilton. In typical biographies (or musicals), Eliza is seen as a peripheral character, but she deserves much more recognition than is normally given to her and Scott has done just that. Normally, I am not one to read historical fiction, but this one pulled me in from the very first page. It is obvious that Scott admires the real life Alexander and Elizabeth, but through her research and understanding, she gives a new perspective on two now well-known people.

Susan Holloway Scott set out on an ambitious project to give the reader an insight into the mind and motives behind two beloved people, but in particular, Eliza. Written in first person from Eliza's perspective, it allows the reader to experience the joy, longing, and sorrow that Eliza felt throughout her life. This is not always an easy task as there are few letters written by Eliza; however, Scott certainly accomplishes this. Somehow through Scott's writing, she manages to include snippets from Alexander's letters seamlessly into dialogue and still retains an 18th century feel through the entire book which makes it a true joy to read.

As Scott is an author of other popular works of historical fiction, I can think of no one better to write this book. Though it should not be taken as historical fact, I still found it helpful for understanding Alexander and Eliza as real people instead of characters on a path of historical inevitability. My normal stoic heart felt joy and sorrow with Eliza even though I knew what would come to pass and that truly takes skill. I can't remember the last time I've cried from reading or watching something, but I admit that a few tears were shed for Eliza.

For anyone interested in Alexander and Eliza, this is an excellent book to provide a new perspective and breathe life into this fated couple who celebrated together, suffered together, and loved each other deeply.

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## **Linda says**

What a wonderful read. You don't have to be a "Hamilton " fan to enjoy this book. This telling of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton's marriage to the charismatic Alexander Hamilton grabbed me from the first sentence to the last. But this is so much more than a love story. The story of the early years of the American republic is also here with both its triumphs and flaws, and I enjoyed seeing a different and more human side to people like George Washington. But it is Eliza herself who steals the spotlight from her famous husband and comes to life here as a strong and admirable real woman. A special book I won't soon forget.

Thank you to the publisher for letting me read this early in exchange for a fair review.

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## **Isabella says**

After the unparalleled success of the smash hit musical “Hamilton”, the renewed interest in this founding father has inspired several other works of fiction, this novel being one of them. With the now better studied Founding Father having been particularly vocal in his lifetime, even on very intimate details of his private life when circumstances forced him, the most interesting feature of this book is to try to give voice to the woman who shared more than half his life and was responsible for the preservation of his writings and legacy, but left very little of herself known.

Let me first praise Susan Holloway Scott for the extended research that she has put into this book, the general historical accuracy she has consistently pursued throughout the novel and the respect she has shown to the historical figures portrayed in her novel: Eliza Hamilton’s and her husband’s lives were remarkable and documented enough without adding unnecessary flights of fantasy. The author’s poetic licences, like the suggestion that the Reynolds’ affair had been orchestrated by Hamilton’s political enemies from the start rather than being the all too lucky endeavour of a couple of swindlers with unexpectedly far-reaching repercussions, can be forgiven.

The prologue shows Eliza shortly after her husband’s funeral thinking back of her Alexander and the story unfolds as a long flashback narrated in first person, with some exchanges of their youth seen with hindsight as an omen of Hamilton’s flaws and future tragedies looming in the distance. The novel is extensive in terms of length and strives to depict the whole quarter of a century that Eliza and Alexander shared together, with a good share of love and happiness to balance out the most grievous moments in their life. Eliza’s presence and voice is a constant balm of steady affection and sense in the life of her more restless and ambitious husband, who nonetheless at some point did step back from a public office he cared about out of love for her after the loss of their unborn child in late November 1794. This gesture, among others, more than words proves Eliza’s love and devotion for her Alexander was requited and deserved despite the undoubtedly despicable blemish of Hamilton’s one-year affair to briefly marr their almost 25 years marriage.

I enjoyed this novel enormously and literally could not put it down, but I can understand it may not be everybody’s cup of tea. First person narration is not to everybody’s taste even if this is less felt in the first half of the novel where a more detailed account of the first one and a half year of the Hamiltons’ courtship and marriage is delivered through several fictional episodes and a lot of dialogues. However, it makes for an almost one sided diary-like report in the second half where the author’s attempt to encompass almost 23 years of hectic political life, growing family and personal turmoil and tragedies is squeezed in the same amount of pages as their first encounter and first months of marriage. The non Hamilton or historical fiction fan might not feel at complete ease with this uneven approach even if the writing style is always pleasant and smooth, but even I felt somewhat frustrated at how e.g. the Reynolds Pamphlet aftermath was dismissed in a few pages with a very speedy forgiveness on Eliza’s part – these are the moments when the historical fiction writers should express themselves in filling the gaps between the known parts and depict in more detail the psychological devastation and following very probably slow reconciliation process that such episode must have brought for Eliza but also for Hamilton.

All in all, this novel is a very good work deserving a 4.2 stars that I rounded up to 5/5 because of Ms Scott’s sense, delicacy and respect in tackling the life of two real, albeit deceased, human beings and delivering a generally accurate historical fiction, a feature that seems to be rare considering other works, even on the same subject, that I have read, both fiction and alas so called non-fiction... How can I conclude if not with Congratulations!

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## **Amy Leigh says**

I love historical fiction, especially in the early days of the USA. I enjoyed this novel very much and highly recommend it!

This is the story of Alexander Hamilton's wife Eliza. A fictional (but believable) story told from her point of view. The author wrote with much charm how Eliza meets and is captivated by a young Alexander Hamilton. They have a hurried wedding due to the time period, on the cusp of the American Revolution. Eliza is Alexander's best friend and due to her infectious personality- she quickly rises in stature and social standing. Something that will benefit her greatly. She outwardly gracefully handles the duties of being "The Lady of the House" but inside she is fighting to stay strong. She has many hats to wear though as the wife of Alexander Hamilton and not all are easy or will give her the credit she is due. This book shows just how vital women were for the birth of America and hers is just one story of many.

Free copy given by publisher and NetGalley for a fair & honest review.

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## **Deborah says**

Because I work for a bookseller, I don't like to leave public reviews like this (every book we sell is supposed to be great), but of all the galleys I picked up at BookExpo last month, this one has been my absolute favorite. Sure, I wanted to like it because it's HAMILTON, duh, but it's so much better than a bandwagon-book. It's insanely, insanely good. Elizabeth Hamilton here is a real-life woman. She's definitely a woman of her times in her beliefs and actions. She's proud and happy being a supportive wife and devoted mother, because that's what she was raised to do, and she's good at it. She loves her brilliant, handsome husband dearly, sometimes even desperately, but the author makes Elizabeth's devotion understandable. It isn't sappy. These two really were soul-mates. You see every one of Alexander Hamilton's flaws (and he has plenty, including the biggie that I won't mention here in case it's still a spoiler to some people) and yet it's easy to see why Elizabeth cares so much for him even. Unlike some of the other Hamilton-inspired novels out there, Elizabeth's life here during the revolution and afterwards seems sweat-and-dirt real, with kids spitting up on fancy clothes and her having to scrimp to make ends meet when her husband spends beyond their means. The author doesn't info-dump, but I did learn things I never knew about the past, like colonial birth control (there wasn't any) and George Washington's major temper-tantrums. You know how it's going to end, but it still made me cry. Seriously recommended!

\*\*\*Thanks to Kensington Books for the early galley\*\*\*

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## **nikkia neil says**

Thanks Edelweiss for this ARC.

Eliza's love, faith, and genuineness shines thru this novel. She's unforgettable as a narrator, and you'll think of the birth of the country differentially forever.

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## **Susan Peterson says**

I, Eliza Hamilton is an in-depth look into the romance and marriage of Eliza and Alexander Hamilton. Historical fiction at its finest, personalizing the people, the events, at the birth of our nation. The details and the language are representative of colonial America, told with passion and revealing the layers of the Hamilton's relationship. This book should appeal to all readers of historical fiction, especially those with an interest in American history. The time frame of the book serves as an interesting background in this beautifully written story. I received a copy of this book from the author, and I'm reviewing this novel on behalf of "A Novel Bee." All opinions are my own.

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## **Adeline says**

Oh hell yes. I am BEYOND ready.

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## **Deanne Patterson says**

An absolutely brilliantly written historical fiction novel! This was very hard to put down! I was unaware of the life's story of Eliza Hamilton before I read this. She has to have been one of the strongest women in history mentally. She was so ahead of her time. Author, Susan Holloway obviously meticulously researched every detail from the time period, to clothing styles, military and political moves to housing and child care. This book leaves me feeling as if I spent years getting to know this family as it started out with Elizabeth as a 17 year old and gives details of their life together and the separations they had to endure over the years. This book was highly anticipated by me and it did not disappoint at all. Word heavy, I delighted in all the detail this book provided me about a historical family I didn't know too much about. Amazingly, after Alexander's death Eliza went on to live til she was 97 years old which was another half century. She had a long life that spanned from the colonial era to the eve of the Civil War, dying in 1854. She died as the last remaining widow of a Founding Father. I can't give this book enough stars, absolutely magnificent!!!! Historical fans this is one you can not miss!

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Thank you to NetGalley and Kensington Books for a review copy in exchange for my honest review.

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## **Marialyce says**

Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton was a woman who was so in love with her husband. She fell in love with Alexander Hamilton almost at first sight of him during his visit to the Schuyler home. Eliza was no stranger to the dictates of socializing with the many well known people of the day. Her father was a General and her parents were much involved in Eliza's life as well as that of her siblings. Hamilton was an up and coming aide to George Washington. Alexander was brave, charismatic, handsome, and brilliant. He captures her heart and he is very much in love with her. They carry that love and devotion for almost twenty five married years through all the sorrows and joys of our early American nation.

Eliza and Hamilton go on to having seven children, losing their eldest son to a duel shortly before Hamilton's ill fated duel with Aaron Burr. They move to many places but always maintain strong ties with her family

especially her sister, Angelica.

Eliza was a product of her times. She was perfectly content in her marriage, and in her role as a mother, daughter, and wife. Her devotion to Alexander did not end with his untimely death. She kept his memory and his brilliant works, on behalf of our nation, alive and was active in his stead up until her death in her early nineties.

Ms Scott has presented a wonderful portrait of Eliza. Through her writing we come to know the person Eliza was as well as see what made her continual devotion to Hamilton awe inspiring. Alexander was a complex man always striving to do what was right in his mind. Because of his outspokenness and his prodigious writing, Alexander was able to infuriate many within the new government. Those like Jefferson, Monroe, and Governor Clinton of New York, and of course Aaron Burr, hated Hamilton and did all within their power to bring about his downfall with rumor, innuendo, and scandal. However, Eliza with Hamilton beside her was able to rise above all and continue to be wholly in love with Hamilton. Theirs seemed to be a true love story and with Hamilton's death, Eliza crumbled. She was utterly devastated and for a time let that despair overtake her. However, Eliza was a strong woman and her strength came from the love she always had forever with Hamilton and the love she had for their children. This was a wonderful look into the life of a woman who survived the early days of our country's founding with determination, courage, and most of all a love for her husband that nothing would change.

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### **Beth Dunn says**

Some books are like spending time with old friends. You feel an immediate connection, the time flies by, you feel better for the time you got to spend together, and you're a bit bereft when it's over. I, ELIZA HAMILTON qualifies on all counts.

One thing I love about reading Susan Holloway Scott's historical fiction is that she's a true history fan — she researches the heck out of her work, and it shows. When you know you're in good hands like hers, you can relax and enjoy, without worrying that some jarring anachronism is coming along to pull you out of the story. So you're on extraordinarily solid footing here, which is such a relief. And such a delight! The historical details are exquisite, really. I love the attention that gets paid to the interiors of houses, and the particulars of dress. Scott really knows how to make it all come so alive.

But that's just the foundation. Build on top of that a great story (we already know it's a great story, and here it's told particularly well), told from an often-forgotten character's point of view, peopled with a whole cast of characters you'll know from other tales. I *\*loved\** how Eliza's POV gave us a totally different lens to watch the astonishing events of her day through, and loved watching how she grew and changed as a person over time, while remaining true to who she was and how her society, class, family, and experiences shaped her.

Look, we all know how this story ends. But it's how we *\*get\** there that's so fascinating. And Eliza takes you deep into her world to give her side of the tale. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent in her company. Thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with her whole extended circle, in fact. I suspect I'll be reading this one again, just to hang out with the gang for a few days again.

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## **Dave Wheeler says**

The story of Eliza's life with Alexander Hamilton from her side of the events, as it only covers her life whilst she shared it with him. SO this leaves a lot of Eliza's story untold and hopefully a future part 2 to follow. This is a fascinating take of her life and the unseen life of one of the Founding Fathers of America and the relationship of the Washingtons with the Hamiltons and other relationships that played out in the birth of America. The personal things from Eliza's view shows the heartache and dedication that effected her husband's decisions and the compassion for his wife and children and the hard fought battles and passion he had for his nation. This is a great read and well worth while for anyone that wants to know more about the war and follow on from the war of independence, plus the incredible love story of the Hamiltons, the war fought by those holding the fort can be as compelling as that on the battlefield but without the glory. There is no less passion whether you are Alexander Hamilton, Eliza the bride to be or even the newly wedded bride there will be a story to tell and here is a novel to that fills in so many gaps not reached by many other history books.

I have been given a free copy of this book from NetGalley in return for a honest review.

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## **Gwinny says**

I absolutely loved this book! It felt so real that it was like I was sitting with Eliza (or Betsey, as Alexander called her) herself and listening to her tell me the story of her life and of her love for Alexander Hamilton and their children. There was so much detail about the times and history but it was all woven together into the story and never boring. Even though I thought I already knew what would happen, there was still things that surprised me and made me keep reading to find out how Eliza would react or handle things. She was a great character! I was sorry to see this book end, and I know I'll go back and read my favorite parts again.

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## **Bethany Swafford says**

Eliza first encounters the charismatic Alexander Hamilton in the home of her parents, who are fighting for the liberty of the country. In the midst of the American Revolution, she chooses to marry her love and from then on, her love is tested again and again.

From the start, Eliza leaps off the page as a woman of her times. She is proud to support her husband and raise her children, because that was what she was raised to do. She was an excellent hostess, and knew what it was to be a soldier's daughter and a soldier's wife. The author does a phenomenal job in showing what her life was like, with her being concerned about making ends meet and keeping her family well and together. Eliza is not portrayed as perfect, she makes mistakes just as anyone else does.

The pace of the book is just as it should be, not too fast nor slow enough to bore a reader. The attention to detail, without dumping the reader with too much information at one time, is perfect. I learned a great deal about the time period that I didn't know before, which I always appreciate when I pick up a book based on a historical figure.

For readers of historical fiction, this a must read.

I received an ARC from Net Galley for reviewing purposes.

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## Patti says

There are a few rather strict prerequisites I have in place with respect to reading historical fiction, especially historical romance. First (and it goes without saying), I must have a genuine affinity for the period in which it is set. Second, I have to be deeply interested in the characters at the center of the story. Third, I have to feel as if the facts have been meticulously researched. And of course, it must be compellingly written. There's also the fact that I am, admittedly, a bit of a voyeur when it comes to reading about the lives of people who once actually existed and whom I greatly admire, so I want details – real ones, and plenty of them – and they must have much more than just a ring of truth.

The era of our nation's founding is my favorite historical period, and there is no historical figure whose life story fascinates me more than Alexander Hamilton. And since discovering the stunning musical "Hamilton" (and the Ron Chernow biography which inspired it) I have been most curious about his wife Eliza – or his "Betsey," as he called her. I have enjoyed getting to know her by reading the letters Alexander wrote to her (and to their children) throughout their life together – they give such intimate insight into their remarkable relationship. When I first heard, then, about Susan Holloway Scott's "I, Eliza Hamilton," I was understandably more than a little intrigued.

I was very fortunate to have received an advance copy of the book, and I was not in the least disappointed. Told in the first person by Eliza herself, the story has been deeply researched and is richly detailed, without sounding like an academic biographical study. There is a cinematic quality to the writing, especially the dialogue, which makes it easy to visualize the unfolding events of that dynamic time during which a new nation was being fashioned, with no guarantees it would survive its earliest years. Eliza's narrative speaks directly to us readers, as if we were sitting with her, listening to her tell us the story of her life with her most brilliant of geniuses, whose best qualities – his directness, his honesty, his generosity – could also be some of his most problematic and troubling. The dialogue is never stilted, yet manages to somehow convey the voice of some of Alexander's original letters to her. Their deep love for each other is depicted with great sensitivity, from their breathless young courtship through the times of their later trials. There is an authentic eighteenth-century tone throughout the telling which makes it a pleasure to read (even out loud, as I sometimes found myself doing).

"I, Eliza Hamilton" is the story of a marriage, of a remarkably strong relationship between two very different people who seem to have been fated for one another. Alexander's brilliance and genius are never downplayed, yet his flaws are unflinchingly depicted as well. Eliza is a strong woman, very supportive of her husband, but with a mind of her own, never fawning. Their marriage survives extreme challenges, only to end in a tragedy which is the stuff of American legend.

The author obviously cares very much for her characters, and has presented their story in a most sympathetic, readable manner. There were many joyous moments during which I found myself smiling or laughing out loud, and there were also a number of absolutely heartbreaking moments, during which (I'm not ashamed to say) I shed copious tears, even though I knew what was coming. In short, Susan Holloway Scott's "I, Eliza Hamilton" met and exceeded all my rather rigid requirements for good historical fiction. I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the beginnings of our American identity, and in the story of the man who did so much to forge that identity, and, more importantly, of the woman who supported him in so many ways.

