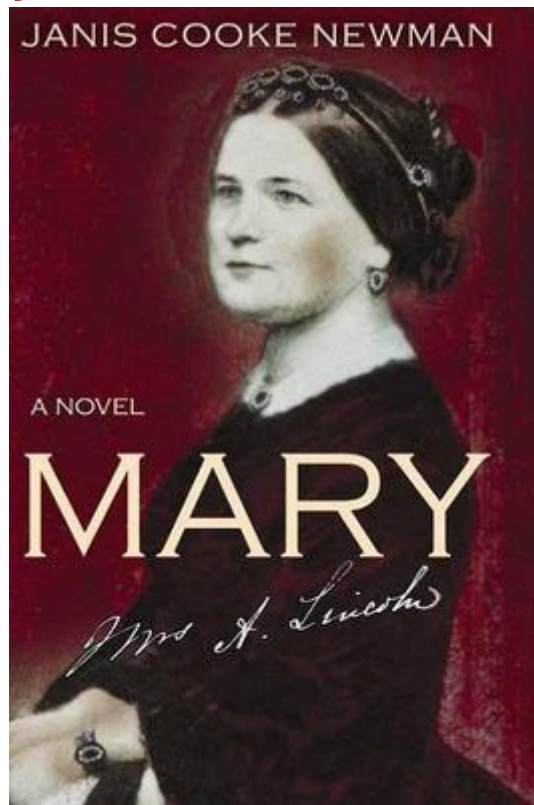


## Mary - Janis Cooke Newman



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An engrossing novel about Mary Todd Lincoln—one of history's most misunderstood and enigmatic women. Writing from Bellevue asylum—where the shrieks of the other inmates keep her awake at night—a famous widow can finally share the story of her life in her own words. From her tempestuous childhood in a slaveholding Southern family through the opium-clouded years after her husband's death, we are let into the inner, intimate world of this brave and fascinating woman. Intelligent and unconventional—and, some thought, mad—she held spiritualist séances in the White House, ran her family into debt with compulsive shopping, negotiated with conniving politicians, and raised her young sons in the nation's capital during the bloodiest war this country has ever known. She was also a political strategist, a comfort to wounded soldiers, a supporter of emancipation, the first to be called First Lady, and a wife and mother who survived the loss of three children and the assassination of her beloved husband. Interwoven with her memories of the past, she describes life in the asylum, where the treatment for lunacy is bland food, cold baths, and near-lethal doses of chloral hydrate. It is here where we meet her friends, the anorectic Minnie Judd, who is starving herself to win the affection of her beautiful husband; and Myra Bradwell, the

suffragist lawyer who helps Mary win her freedom. A dramatic tale filled with passion and depression, poverty and ridicule, infidelity and redemption, this is the unforgettable story of Mary Todd Lincoln. About the Author Janis Cooke Newman is the author of the memoir *The Russian Word for Snow*, published in the United States, Germany, and Australia. Her travel writing has appeared in publications such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Salon*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Dallas Morning News*. She lives in Northern California, where she teaches writing classes at the renowned independent bookstore Book Passage. *Mary* is her first novel. From the Author I like to say that Mary's story found me. Or maybe it was Mary herself who found me. She did believe in ghosts, after all. A few years back, on a visit to Washington, D.C., I took my eight-year-old son to Ford's Theater and the boardinghouse where Lincoln was carried after he was shot. Crowded into the little back bedroom where Lincoln died, we listened as the guide explained that as it became clear that Lincoln was dying, Mary threw herself onto the bed and began sobbing. Hearing the sound, the secretary of war, Edward Stanton, came in and commanded, "Get that woman out of here!" As soon as the guide said the words, I felt as if I'd been punched in the chest, and I was overwhelmed with indignation. How dare he? I almost asked the poor man. How dare he throw her out while her husband is dying? After that, I became obsessed with Mary Lincoln (her spirit at work?). Not only did I have to know more about this woman who had been both a president's wife and a declared lunatic, but I also had to know what she'd thought and felt every step of the way. It seemed that the only means of finding out (short of trying to call up Mary's spirit in séance) was to write her story. It was important to me that this book be as historically accurate as possible, both in re-creating the extra-ordinary events of Mary's life and in describing the world in which she lived. To keep myself grounded in the period, the whole time I was writing *Mary*-a three-year process-I read only books that had been written in the 1800s or were about the period. To capture Mary's unique voice-which was intelligent, dramatic, and often sharply humorous-I bought a collection of more than six hundred of her letters and read a few every day before I started writing. Author: Newman, Janis Cooke Publisher: M P Publishing Ltd. Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: *Mary* Pages: 00000 (Encrypted EPUB) On Sale: 2006-09-08 SKU-13/ISBN: 9781596929227 Category: Fiction : General

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