



The American Lady

Petra Durst-Benning , Samuel Willcocks (Translator)

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Tempestuous and beautiful Wanda Miles, daughter of Ruth and Stephen Miles (or so she thinks), aspires to more than the life of a debutante, but the trouble is she doesn't know precisely what she wants. Then her aunt Marie, the family's renowned glassblower, arrives from Lauscha, Germany, and Wanda decides that learning about her ancestry may hold the key to her future. When Marie accidentally reveals a long-held secret about Wanda's parents, Wanda goes to Lauscha to unravel the truth.

While Marie finds herself increasingly swept up in New York City's bohemian social scene—catching the eye of a handsome young Italian in the process—Wanda explores a past she never knew in the village of her mother's youth—and begins to build a life that she never expected.

A sweeping tale that takes readers from the small town of Lauscha to the skyscrapers of New York and the sun-kissed coast of Italy, *The American Lady* is a tribute to the enduring power of family and what we'll do in the name of love.

The American Lady Details

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From Reader Review The American Lady for online ebook

Susan says

The first book in the series follows 3 sisters who must learn the glass-blowing business to survive after the death of their father. Part I transported me to another world. I waited for Part II to be published and ordered it as soon as I could. Perhaps my memory of the first book expanded as I waited, or perhaps the setting in the United States was just not as interesting -- but I felt a little let down. The new characters failed to engage me and at times I felt like I had to plow through the plot. Nevertheless, I'll probably read Part III when it is available.

Maryellen says

I'm a sucker for multi-book series and I've really enjoyed books 1 and 2 of the Glassblower Trilogy. In fact, I was anxiously watching for the 2nd book to come out and I wasn't disappointed. This book continues to follow the family of female glassblowers from Germany. It picks up several years later with the Mannheim family well established and younger sister Marie finding herself creatively burned out from years of designing and blowing the delicate glass ornaments that have kept her family for many years. She decides to take a long overdue vacation to New York to visit her sister Ruth and hopefully, break her "artists block". She arrives in NYC and is overwhelmed by the all the sights, not to mention the accumulated wealth enjoyed by Ruth, her husband Steven and their teenage daughter Wanda. The book switches back and forth in narrating the story of Marie and Wanda, following their adventures and growth as independent women, enjoying the jazz age in NYC and beyond. The author's writing and the translation from German is smooth and easy. This book stands alone as a complete story, but I find the reading is a richer experience for having read the first book. There's romance, intrigue, friendship and family woven into a light and pleasant tale, perfect for reading in front of a cozy fire.

Jool says

Petra Durst-Benning writes the most historical fiction novels I have read. This entire series, The Glassblower, is amazing. I highly recommend this author.

Fran says

Both the Glassblower and the American Lady were mediocre books. They just missed the Mark of being truly interesting. I enjoy generational books, especially of simply people who struggle through life to become something. That is what held my interest in these books. The Steinmann sisters (Johanna, Ruth and Marie) struggle to build their father's glassblowing business after he dies (book 1). In book two we see Johanna married and carrying on with the business, Ruth builds a well to do life in America with her husband Steven Miles, the love of her life and her daughter Wanda. And Marie finds love and tragedy with her Beautiful Italian. This book is mainly about Wanda who grows into a beautiful woman and wants to go back to Germany to find her roots. There she finds that she has glassblowing in her veins. And so the story goes. As I

said with the first book, it holds your interest but it definitely is not a show stopper! And yes, I will read the last book in the trilogy because I do want to see where this family story ends.

Marianna says

Wow! I'm pretty much speechless. I loved *The Glassblower* and could not wait to read the second installment in this Trilogy and, to me, this book exceeded every expectation.

I like to play a game when I read a book... I try to guess why the book is named the way it is. There is always a reason why each author gives the name that he/she does. This book, for the life of me, when I first started reading it, eluded me - after all, the story is about German sisters, what does an American Lady have to do with it? It took me a minute to realize that it's named *The American Lady* because of Wanda. She becomes our primary main character. She grows and blossoms into a young woman almost in front of your eyes. She becomes responsible and experiences much tragedy on her journey. She falls in love.

The other primary character is Marie - the youngest of the three Steinmann sisters. Her journey in this book is just unbelievable and at times extremely heartbreaking. I loved her the best in the first book because of her artist flare and desire to just pursue her artistic dreams. In this book, I felt that not enough of her art was included in a way that I wanted to see it. Specifically, I wanted to see her, not only evolve as an artist (which she did), but also become known for her amazing artistic abilities (which, unfortunately, she did not). My one complaint - I wanted more of Marie....

The story mostly weaved back and forth between Wanda's and Marie's perspective, giving the reader insight into each one of their lives.

This book represents the journey of life to me. It's not about continuing the story of the Steinmann sisters. It's about the ever present change, growth, and continuation of life. The sisters grew up, they had kids, their kids are growing up and experiencing life, and so on. The story sucked me into their lives and their experiences and their feelings. I did not want to put the book down.

By the end of the book, I was a mess - shedding so many tears that I could barely see the pages as I read them. Ms. Petra Durst-Benning pushed me into her book's story and wrote it with such skill that I became a character in her book and I just couldn't help but feel the happiness, sadness, fear that her characters experienced. Bravo for another wonderful novel... I can't wait to read the third and final installment in *The Glassblower Trilogy*.

I received this book as an ARC from NetGally.com in exchange for an honest review

Sojourner says

After reading *The Glassblower*, the first book in the *Glassblower* trilogy, I was not sure if the second book *The American Lady* would live up to my expectations, bringing sheer joy and pure pleasure as did the first book. It was a bit nerve-racking as I browsed through the first few pages but *The American Lady* by Petra Durst-Benning, and rendered into English by Samuel Willcocks, is as beautiful, if not better, than *The Glassblower*.

The American Lady is consistent with The Glassblower, and author Petra Durst-Benning sharply focused on the glassblower Marie, the youngest of the Steinmann, and her rich, spoiled niece, Wanda. Marie, the glass artist, is in a creative crisis. It seems she has run out of ideas, and she has no more pleasure and joy in her work. She is stuck in a jam and is looking for a way out of the creative hole she has found herself in. When her sister Ruth, who lives in New York with her husband and daughter invited her, she deems it a good opportunity to escape from her boring life.

What Marie actually hoped to find in New York was an inspiration but it eluded her. Together with niece Wanda and Pandora, a creepy dance teacher, Marie discovers the true, the real New York. During one of their outings Marie meets Franco, an aristocrat from Italy, who is taking care of the business affairs of his father in New York. There is romance in the air, so is family secret and intrigue. When Marie innocently lets out a family secret, Wanda is determined to get to the bottom of it.

Petra Durst-Benning writes particularly well in this book, so vivid and fluid, that one's imagination is excited while reading, allowing the reader to live through the story. As the main protagonist in the story, Marie's character and presence can be felt all throughout the book. The author spins a truly enjoyable story, without being too outlandish. Superbly imagined, and beautifully translated, The American Lady will transport you from the serene environs of Lauscha, Germany to the social scene of New York, and then even to life in Italy. The detailed and rich descriptions of the different way of life in America, Germany and Italy is both magnificent and well-researched.

Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says

4.5 Stars

The American Lady is a good sequel to The Glassblower. But be prepared to have a hankey close by at the end. I'll admit I didn't see it coming though there were clues here and there.

Marie Steinmann is bored and hasn't created a new sketch for her family's glassblowing shop. At 38, she fears that she's all out of ideas. In New York, Wanda Miles is also having trouble finding her way in the world. She doesn't want to be a young wealthy socialite. She wants to make her own path in the world, just like the three Steinmann girls did 20 years ago. She even cuts her beautiful long hair! Remember this is 1910. Not many "respectable" ladies are wearing their hair short, yet.

When she learns that her Aunt Marie is coming from Lauscha, Germany, Wanda is less than thrilled. That is until Marie gets there. Marie is nothing like Wanda's mother, Ruth. Marie takes in the sights of NYC like a youngster. She enjoys Wanda's company and Wanda's artsy friends. She begins going out with Wanda and her friends and meets a handsome young Italian Count, who seems too good to be true. (A clue there, Marie.) Soon Marie leaves NYC with 2 of Wanda's friends and Franco. Could Marie really leave her family business?

With Marie off in France and Italy, Wanda Miles is in Lauscha, Germany helping her her family. But which one: the Steinmann's or the Heimer's? Marie let slip that her father is not Steven Miles.

Petra Durst-Benning writes beautifully. She captures both women's emotions so well. And the ending broke my heart. I can't wait to read The Paradise of Glass to see how Petra Durst-Benning finishes The Glassblower Trilogy!

Melodie says

Installment #2 in the Glassblower trilogy has the focus on Wanda the daughter of Ruth one of three sisters and Marie the middle sister. Wanda, headstrong and spoiled has grown up wanting for nothing. Predictably she rebels against everything, and lands herself in fix after fix. Marie having come to New York to visit (picture country mouse visits city mouse) and becomes involved in a torrid love affair.

Eventually having tired of the New York scene Wanda and Marie journey abroad, Wanda on an attempt to discover her roots and Marie to marry her Italian lover.

I really struggled with this book. All three of the sisters continued to get on my last nerve with their individual selfishness and petty squabbles. Just when I was done (about halfway through) there was actually an uptick in actual drama in the plot and I was able to finish the book.

I won't be finishing the trilogy. I've had enough of the sisters.

Jennifer says

The second book in The Glassblower trilogy, I found *The American Lady* to be surprisingly, well, surprising in the adventures of the Steinmann sisters and their family members. The plot took so many twists and turns and at times I felt I knew for sure what was going to happen but I was completely wrong. I love it when a novel shakes up my assumptions! I'm excited for the third installment to be available in the US and see how Petra Durst-Benning wraps up this tale. There is so much good stuff in this novel-- exploring relationships of all kinds, between sisters, between previously estranged family members, between lovers, between people who thought were trustworthy and good but perhaps turn out not to be so, and the transformation of a mother-daughter relationship to that of peers. Bringing to life places that I have never seen, Durst-Benning not only provides description but transports the reader to another time and place. I can't wait for the third installment!

Teresa R. says

Can not wait to read the last bk!

Christine says

I read *The Glassblower*. I didn't love it but I enjoyed reading about the glass blowing. I decided to get the second book to see what happened next. I stopped reading it. I really didn't care anymore what happened. I realized that there was not 1 character in the book that I liked. The women in this story are not strong and smart. To me they are selfish and not very nice to each other. The only one with the slightest redeeming quality is the oldest sister, Johanna. I don't know who I hated most of all, Ruth, Marie or Wanda. I will not waste my time with the third installment. I don't care about what happens to any of them.

Jazzie Jen says

The connection I formed with the characters is unlike anything I've ever experienced. It felt as though I was there with them. Celebrating their joy and sobbing at their sorrows and loss. And how I became whenever one was slighted, as though they were friends of mine to protect!

Well done, Petra. And on to book 3!

Gina Basham says**I enjoyed this more than the last book**

A good read. Some minor complaints about a few of the storylines that didn't seem to get anywhere. I will continue with the series. I would recommend. Gbash

Sandy VanDerveer says**Heartwarming**

Cannot to read the next book, Love this story of the glass blowers...very fast moving a very easy read. Filled with twists and turns. I highly recommend it...

Tara says

I didn't enjoy the first 3/4ths of this book. The last quarter, however, made me move my 2 rating to a 3. This was the 2nd book in a series, which takes up 20 years later but it leaves those years of Marie's life mostly in the dark with little explanation to the why on the info the author did disclose about those years. For a series about 3 strong woman and survival I would have thought that the plot would have been set well before the end of the book. I felt as though the first 3/4ths were just a story about someone on a long vacation which wouldn't be that bad if it didn't vary from the first book so significantly. This being said, the book ended in such a way that I'm very intrigued with the remaining saga of the Steinmann girls and will read the 3rd installment.
