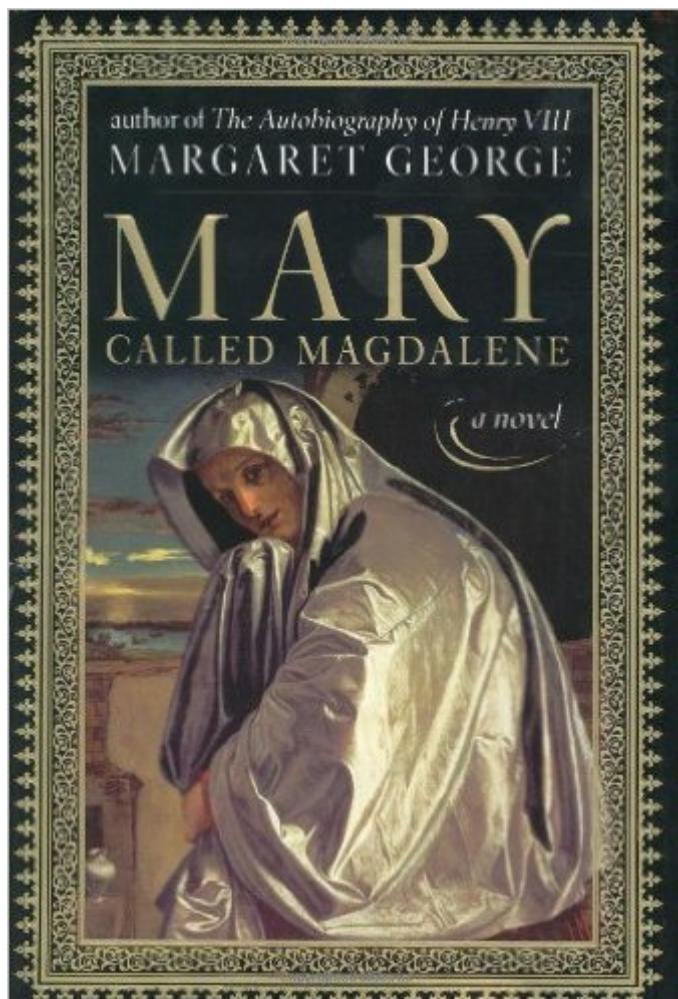


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# Mary, Called Magdalene



## **Synopsis**

Magdalene are tantalizingly brief, yet she continues to spark controversy, curiosity, and veneration. We know more about her than about many of Christ's male disciples, and her significance is enshrined in her ancient honorific "Apostle to the Apostles." But still, as a woman, she remains in shadow. Was she a prostitute, a female-divinity figure, a church leader, or all of those? Hallmarked by bestselling author Margaret George's dazzling mix of history and creativity, *Mary, Called Magdalene* is George's most ambitious work yet. Brilliantly grounded in both biblical and secular historical research, it depicts Mary of Magdala in the first hundred years of the first millennium—even as it peels away layers of legend. Testaments, letters, and narrative convincingly capture Mary's immediate and moving voice as she becomes part of the circle of disciples and comes to grips with the divine. Bridging the gap for readers of Antonia Fraser and fans of *The Red Tent*, *Mary, Called Magdalene* transcends both history and fiction to become a "diary of a soul."

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I always find it interesting when a collection of book reviews cover the entire spectrum, from "absolutely hated it" to "it was the best book I have ever read." While it is true that opinions are like belly buttons; everybody has one, it might help you decide whether to read this book if your expectations are realistic. First and foremost, this book is pure fiction. George has clearly done her research and weaves information from the bible, the apocrypha, oral tradition and history into the story. Thus, for many readers (some more than others) it "feels" historical. But, it is fiction. She has created "characters" from real historical figures. Some reviewers find them poorly developed, and

others don't like the way in which the characters were developed. The bottom line is that nobody knows what these people were really like. George has risen to the challenge of building on what little is known to create characters who are more fully developed than they are in biblical or historical accounts. In so doing some readers, especially those who have very strong feelings themselves about who these characters were, undoubtably will be disappointed. Personally, I loved the way that the character of Judas was developed. Although I had always sort of dismissed him as a disciple, other than in his role as betrayer, I found it very thought provoking to consider him more closely. On the other hand, I had more trouble with her portrayal of Jesus. Although I wouldn't describe the character of Jesus as "flaky" as another reader did, Jesus is not portrayed in the way I would have portrayed him. But, I didn't write the story and the whole point is that it IS A STORY.

You probably know the story, or at least scant details, but you don't know enough for the story to be spoiled and I won't give it away either because in this case, the delight is in the details. This isn't one of those shameless books that base a premise on a disproved hoax and play up to the conspiracy crowd for sensation and controversy just to make a quick & dirty buck. No, "Mary Called Magdalene" is based on facts consistent with the New Testament, with the Gospel according to Mary, with the Gnostic texts, and with writings of the early Church Fathers as well as with various historical secular texts. I agree with Simon Jenkins that "Facts should be taskmasters, and there is no exemption for fiction." As he wrote in "The Guardian" on May 26, 2006 and said: "Historical novelists must not manipulate an audience's veneration for the truth with their phony verisimilitude". I personally found no abuse of dramatic license in this book. The author, Margaret George is the renowned historical author of "Henry VII" and has thoroughly researched her facts then added details that would be logical consequences of those facts or plausible reasons for them. In addition to all that research, the author completed a seven year course in bible study covering 60 of the 66 books and traveled extensively both in distance and duration through the middle east. There is a great author interview in the back of the book that covers her background and the motivations for her decisions & choices. But wait, that's not all; there is also a great list of in depth questions for discussion.

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