

[PDF] Galileo's Daughter: A Drama Of Science, Faith And Love

Dava Sobel - pdf download free book



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Description:

Everyone knows that Galileo Galilei dropped cannonballs off the leaning tower of Pisa, developed the first reliable telescope, and was convicted by the Inquisition for holding a heretical belief--that the earth revolved around the sun. But did you know he had a daughter? In *Galileo's Daughter*, Dava Sobel (author of the bestselling) tells the story of the famous scientist and his illegitimate daughter, Sister Maria Celeste. Sobel bases her book on 124 surviving letters to the scientist from the nun,

whom Galileo described as "a woman of exquisite mind, singular goodness, and tenderly attached to me." Their loving correspondence revealed much about their world: the agonies of the bubonic plague, the hardships of monastic life, even Galileo's occasional forgetfulness ("The little basket, which I sent you recently with several pastries, is not mine, and therefore I wish you to return it to me").

While Galileo tangled with the Church, Maria Celeste--whose adopted name was a tribute to her father's fascination with the heavens--provided moral and emotional support with her frequent letters, approving of his work because she knew the depth of his faith. As Sobel notes, "It is difficult today ... to see the Earth at the center of the Universe. Yet that is where Galileo found it." With her fluid prose and graceful turn of phrase, Sobel breathes life into Galileo, his daughter, and the earth-centered world in which they lived. --*Sunny Delaney* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Despite its title, this impressive book proves to be less the story of Galileo's elder daughter, the oldest of his three illegitimate children, and more the story of Galileo himself and his trial before the Inquisition for arguing that Earth moves around the Sun. That familiar tale is given a new slant by Sobel's translationAfor the first time into EnglishAof the 124 surviving letters to Galileo by his daughter, Suor Maria Celeste, a Clarisse nun who died at age 33; his letters to her are lost, presumably destroyed by Maria Celeste's convent after her death. Her letters may not in themselves justify a book; they are devout, full of pious love for the father she addresses as "Sire," only rarely offering information or insight. But Sobel uses them as the accompaniment to, rather than the core of, her story, sounding the element of faith and piety so often missing in other retellings of Galileo's story. For Sobel shows that, in renouncing his discoveries, Galileo acted not just to save his skin but also out of a genuine need to align himself with his church. With impressive skill and economy, she portrays the social and psychological forces at work in Galileo's trial, particularly the political pressures of the Thirty Years' War, and the passage of the plague through Italy, which cut off travel between Florence, where Galileo lived, and Rome, the seat of the Pope and the Inquisition, delaying Galileo's appearance there and giving his enemies time to conspire. In a particularly memorable way, Sobel vivifies the hard life of the "Poor Clares," who lived in such abject poverty and seclusion that many were driven mad by their confinement. It's a wholly involving tale, a worthy follow-up (after four years) to Sobel's surprise bestseller, *Longitude*. (Oct.)

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