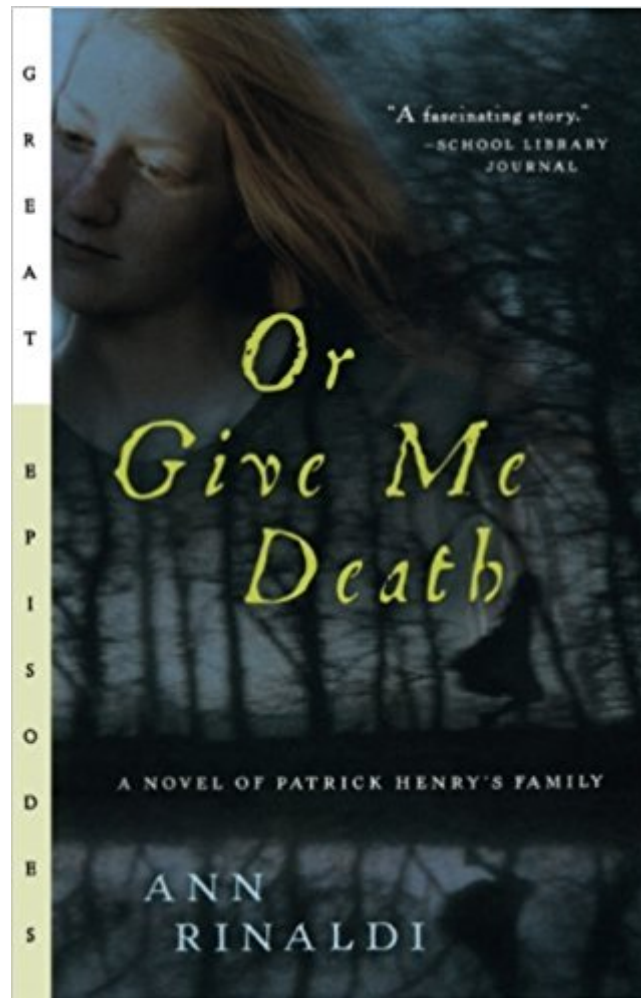




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# Or Give Me Death: A Novel Of Patrick Henry's Family (Great Episodes)



## Synopsis

Sarah Henry, wife of the famous statesman Patrick Henry, is losing her mind, and she's secretly being kept in the cellar because she is a danger to herself and her children. Daughter Anne has a secret, too. She knows which child will inherit Sarah's madness, and she'll pay any price to protect her siblings from this information. With insight and compassion, Ann Rinaldi explores the possibility that Patrick Henry's immortal cry of "Give me liberty, or give me death," which roused a nation to arms, was first spoken by his wife, Sarah, as she pleaded to be released from her confinement. Told from the point of view of Patrick Henry's children, *Or Give Me Death* eloquently depicts the secret life and tremendous burdens borne by one famous American.

## Book Information

Series: Great Episodes

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[United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods](#) #54 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up-"I was the first one in the family to know when Mama started to go insane." This introductory line sets the tone for this story about Patrick Henry's two eldest daughters struggling to grow up in revolutionary America. The first part of the book is narrated by 16-year-old Patsy, who strives to gain her siblings' respect and retain control of the family's "Negro servants" when her mother is confined to the cellar. With immature aspirations and clouded by the fear that she will inherit her mother's illness, she longs only to marry her betrothed and to live a privileged, petted life

on their Virginia plantation. Willful, provoking, and seemingly spoiled, nine-year-old Anne narrates the second part. She is surprisingly filled with insight, intelligence, and overwhelming compassion as she challenges her domineering sister. Tormented by the question, "when do you keep a secret and when do you tell a lie?" Anne takes measurable yet unrewarded risks to do what is best for those she loves. Rinaldi successfully weaves the past into a fascinating story from two unique perspectives. Although the plot unfolds slowly at the beginning, its appeal along with the pace increases. The book is an intriguing blend of historical fact and fiction within which lies the hint of embedded psychological themes such as mental disorders, precognition, and complex relationship issues. Kimberly Monaghan, Vernon Area Public Library, IL Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 7-9. One of the few novels to deal with the problem of insanity in early America, this opens in 1771, as Patrick Henry's 16-year-old daughter, Patsy, realizes that her mother is going insane. When Mrs. Henry's actions threaten the lives of her two youngest children, the family shut her away in a cellar room for the safety of all and to hide her dementia from the larger community. In 1773, Patsy's younger sister, Anne, takes over the narration, which concludes in 1778 with the breakdown of her brother. Patrick Henry appears at intervals, but for the most part the other family members, and occasionally their slaves, take center stage. Two plot elements seem a bit contrived: Mrs. Henry's anguished plea to Patrick Henry to give her freedom or death (foreshadowing and, the novel intimates, inspiring his most famous speech) and her "second sight" that allows her to predict events. Rinaldi knows how to tell a story, though, and her depiction of the effects of mental illness are true to the period, yet transcend it. The book ends with an author's note and a bibliography. Carolyn Phelan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Assigned for my 8th grader's humanities class, I purchased for Kindle for my daughter. As young adult historical fiction, it was an interesting, easy read. For further "Disney-fication" of our nation's history it is probably contemptible. As a parent, I felt the author put a too much emphasis on the importance of children hiding the truth from their parents. While learning how and when to lie are an important part of growing up, hiding mental illness is still a problem today. This book probably isn't going to encourage contemporary children to seek help for themselves or family members with mental health issues. If you want to learn about Patrick Henry, try a different book, perhaps nonfiction. If you are looking for an interesting fiction with tidbits of fact tossed in, it's fun and

engagingly written. Note: the kindle version is full of typos ie. "lie" was replaced with "die" or "HE" in multiple locations.

I generally adore her works, but being a decent of Patsey Henry and the Fontaines I did not like the context of this work. Patsey was a devoted daughter and the one child by his side when he passed away. No family records indicate that any of the children ever considered that they might go insane like their mother. While I understand that the author states that these are her conjectures, I fear that students will not truly recognize this. How sad, with all of the decedents and the society with all the information that Ms. Rinnaldi never considered being more accurate.

Killer book.

This is a good historical novel for younger readers. I enjoyed it, but didn't realize it was not written for adults. A great writer for the younger set. I did enjoy the suspense. Historically accurate.

Yes Hi you this book was ok he him limb I'm can spell beaches sees I did it you cant

I got this historical novel because my son was reading it in school and wanted to discuss it with me. I am very glad I did. This is the story of Patrick Henry's family during the time of the American Revolution; during a time of great stress for them. It's told from the viewpoint of the two oldest girls and is a fascinating read. The author has taken meager records and historical facts and woven them into a gripping story.

I didn't know too much about Patrick Henry other than his famous words. Great glimpse into his family background and into life in colonial America

This book was quite interesting. I was first reading it for a report but I became so involved in it. It really gives the insight of the time, and the way the story is built is purely fascinating. I recommend this book to all people from ages ten and up.

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