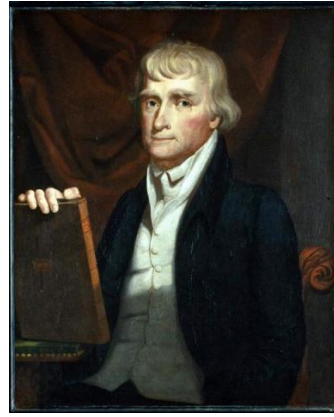




0. TIME WASTES TOO FAST - Story Preface

1. A BOY'S LIFE

2. TREASURES ... LOST and FOUND

3. EARLY INFLUENCES

4. TOM'S MOUNTAIN

5. A WRITER not a SPEAKER

6. WE ARE ALL BORN FREE

7. THE DECLARATION HOUSE

8. SLAVERY and the DECLARATION

9. WRITING the DECLARATION

10. DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE

11. IMMEDIATE IMPACT

12. TIME WASTES TOO FAST

13. A MAN of CONTRADICTIONS

14. JEFFERSONIAN QUOTES

15. A SPECIAL 4TH OF JULY

Both Thomas and "Patty" Jefferson loved to read books together. No image survives of Mrs. Jefferson, although contemporary sources describe her as very pretty. Pictured here with a book, Jefferson was grief-stricken when his wife died six years after the Declaration of Independence. Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

By the late summer of 1782, Mrs. Jefferson had suffered many miscarriages, lost three of her six children and was having difficulty recovering from the birth of her latest child, Lucy Elizabeth.

Scholars today speculate she may have had diabetes. If so, 139 more years would have had to pass before the discovery of insulin would help physicians to treat diabetic patients.

Although Mr. Jefferson's duties often separated the couple, they remained in love and totally devoted to each other. When Lucy was only four months old, her mother grew increasingly weak.

As the couple had always enjoyed making music together, so they liked to read their favorite books out loud. One of their most-loved stories was Tristram Shandy by Laurence Sterne.

In September, at Monticello, Mr. Jefferson was never far from his wife's side. While she slept, he worked on Notes on the State of Virginia. While she was awake, he sat nearby, holding her hand. This, however, was an illness from which she would not recover.

As the end drew near for Mrs. Jefferson - so the story is told - the couple read some of their favorite passages from Tristram Shandy. Then, too weak to read any more, she began to write the passage which deals with death:

*Time wastes too fast: every letter
I trace tells me with what rapidity
life follows my pen. The days and hours
of it are flying over our heads like
clouds of a windy day never to return -
more every thing presses on -*

Too weak to finish, Mrs. Jefferson could not conclude the passage. His own pen in hand, her husband (who knew the words from memory) wrote what she could not:

- and every
time I kiss thy hand to bid adieu, every absence which
follows it, are preludes to the eternal separation
which we are shortly to make!

Their last writing survives. Soon after it was finished, Mr. Jefferson's "Patty" was gone.

It is said that when his wife died, Jefferson fainted. His eldest child, Martha - then ten years old - later recalled her father had to be carried out of the room. On the day of her death - September 6, 1782 - he noted her passing in his account book:

My dear wife died this day at 11H - 45' A.M.

Two months later, Mr. Jefferson wrote to his friend, Marquis de Chastellux, that he was at least

*... a little emerging from the stupor of mind which had rendered me as dead to the world as [she]
was whose . . . loss occasioned it.*

Some of the family's servants witnessed a conversation between the Jeffersons, shortly before the end. Patty had lost her own mother and was very worried about her children being raised by a stepmother. She therefore extracted a promise from Thomas that he would never marry again - and - that he would take care of their daughters.

It was Martha, Jefferson's oldest daughter, who helped her father emerge from his "stupor." She became his constant companion, often seeing his outbursts of grief. When he finally left his room, to ride his horse, she followed to be sure he was alright. Their bond continued for the rest of Mr. Jefferson's life.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/TIME-WASTES-TOO-FAST-Thomas-Jefferson>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/TIME-WASTES-TOO-FAST-Thomas-Jefferson>

Media Stream



Laurence Sterne and Tristram Shandy

Image online, courtesy the npg.org.uk website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Laurence-Sterne-and-Tristram-Shandy>



Laurence Sterne - Grave Site

This photo was taken by Bernard Leprêtre in August, 2006. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY-SA 2.5.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Laurence-Sterne-Grave-Site>

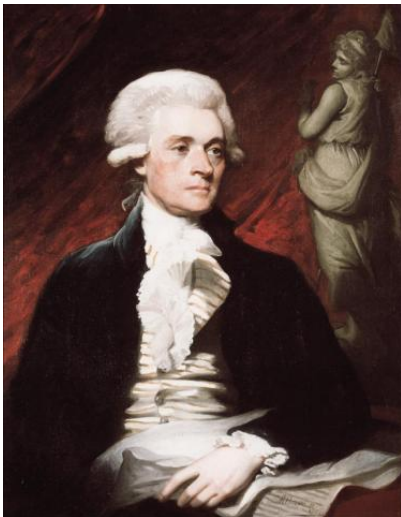


Monticello

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Monticello>



Thomas Jefferson, after 1786

This photo was taken by cliff1066 in August, 2008. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. License: CC BY 2.0.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Thomas-Jefferson-after-1786>