



American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson

Joseph J. Ellis

Download now

[Click here](#) if your download doesn't start automatically

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson

Joseph J. Ellis

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson Joseph J. Ellis

For a man who insisted that life on the public stage was not what he had in mind, Thomas Jefferson certainly spent a great deal of time in the spotlight--and not only during his active political career. After 1809, his longed-for retirement was compromised by a steady stream of guests and tourists who made of his estate at Monticello a virtual hotel, as well as by more than one thousand letters per year, most from strangers, which he insisted on answering personally. In his twilight years Jefferson was already taking on the luster of a national icon, which was polished off by his auspicious death (on July 4, 1896); and in the subsequent seventeen decades of his celebrity--now verging, thanks to virulent revisionists and television documentaries, on notoriety--has been inflated beyond recognition of the original person.

For the historian Joseph J. Ellis, the experience of writing about Jefferson was "as if a pathologist, just about to begin an autopsy, has discovered that the body on the operating table was still breathing." In **American Sphinx**, Ellis sifts the facts shrewdly from the legends and the rumors, treading a path between vilification and hero worship in order to formulate a plausible portrait of the man who still today "hover[s] over the political scene like one of those dirigibles cruising above a crowded football stadium, flashing words of inspiration to both teams." For, at the grass roots, Jefferson is no longer liberal or conservative, agrarian or industrialist, pro- or anti-slavery, privileged or populist. He is all things to all people. His own obliviousness to incompatible convictions within himself (which left him deaf to most forms of irony) has leaked out into the world at large--a world determined to idolize him despite his foibles.

From Ellis we learn that Jefferson sang incessantly under his breath; that he delivered only two public speeches in eight years as president, while spending ten hours a day at his writing desk; that sometimes his political sensibilities collided with his domestic agenda, as when he ordered an expensive piano from London during a boycott (and pledged to "keep it in storage"). We see him relishing such projects as the nailery at Monticello that allowed him to interact with his slaves more palatably, as pseudo-employer to pseudo-employees. We grow convinced that he preferred to meet his lovers in the rarefied region of his mind rather than in the actual bedchamber. We watch him exhibiting both great depth and great shallowness, combining massive learning with extraordinary naivete, piercing insights with self-deception on the grandest scale. We understand why we should neither beatify him nor consign him to the rubbish heap of history, though we are by no means required to stop loving him. He is Thomas Jefferson, after all--our very own sphinx.

 [Download American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jeffers ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson Joseph J. Ellis

From reader reviews:

David Guyton:

Throughout other case, little persons like to read book American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson. You can choose the best book if you want reading a book. Providing we know about how is important any book American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson. You can add know-how and of course you can around the world with a book. Absolutely right, because from book you can recognize everything! From your country until foreign or abroad you will find yourself known. About simple point until wonderful thing you could know that. In this era, you can open a book or perhaps searching by internet product. It is called e-book. You may use it when you feel fed up to go to the library. Let's read.

Charles Wright:

Book will be written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can learn everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important point to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading ability was fluently. A guide American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson will make you to always be smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about every thing. But some of you think that will open or reading a book make you bored. It's not make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or suitable book with you?

Robert Ross:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also become a life style. This reading behavior give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want really feel happy read one with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. Often the American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson is kind of publication which is giving the reader unstable experience.

Salina Rodriguez:

Reading a book make you to get more knowledge from this. You can take knowledge and information from the book. Book is created or printed or highlighted from each source this filled update of news. In this modern era like currently, many ways to get information are available for an individual. From media social including newspaper, magazines, science e-book, encyclopedia, reference book, story and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Are you hip to spend your spare time to open your book? Or just looking for the American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson when you needed it?

**Download and Read Online American Sphinx: The Character of
Thomas Jefferson Joseph J. Ellis #ZPKMFCSQG8A**

Read American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis for online ebook

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis books to read online.

Online American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis ebook PDF download

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis Doc

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis Mobipocket

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson by Joseph J. Ellis EPub