



## Second Daughter: The Story of a Slave Girl

By Mildred Pitts Walter

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**Second Daughter: The Story of a Slave Girl** By Mildred Pitts Walter

**Set during the American Revolution and based on a true story, Elizabeth Freeman, a young slave, sues for her freedom—and wins**

Sheffield, Massachusetts. Six-year-old Aissa and her older sister, Elizabeth, work as slaves in the home of their owners—Master and Mistress Anna. Raised by Elizabeth after their mother died, and chafing under the yoke of bondage, Aissa is a natural-born rebel. Elizabeth, nicknamed Bett by her owners, is more accepting of her fate in spite of growing anti-slavery sentiment. She marries Josiah Freeman, a freed black man, and they have a child. Then on July 4, 1776, America achieves her dream of independence from England, and in 1780, Massachusetts drafts its own constitution, establishing a bill of rights. When Mistress Anna, angered by Aissa's defiance, threatens her with a hot coal shovel, Bett takes the blow instead, and is severely burned. She walks out of the house, vowing never to come back—and takes her owners to court.

*Second Daughter* is both riveting historical fiction and rousing courtroom drama about slavery, justice, courage, and the unconquerable love between two sisters.

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## **Second Daughter: The Story of a Slave Girl By Mildred Pitts Walter Bibliography**

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Walter (Mississippi Challenge) treats fiction as the handmaiden of history and politics in this fact-based story, drawing from research about Mum Bett, a Massachusetts slave who successfully sued for her freedom shortly after the Revolutionary War. For a narrator Walter chooses Mum Bett's sister, whose name and life story have gone unrecorded. The author gives her the African name Aissa, which means "Second Daughter"; a self-satisfied, capricious mistress; a strong temperament; and an indomitable will to be free. Aissa charts the injustices as she watches her more accommodating older sister, Bett, serve men who spout Revolutionary rhetoric about liberty with no thought to the humans they treat as property. Bett's husband, a free man, is killed fighting in the Revolution, but the pension Bett receives is nowhere near enough to buy their child's freedom. In common with many other heroines reclaimed from oblivion, Bett is also a skilled folk healer. It's a story of perfect political rectitude, but the agenda here is stronger than the narrative?judging from the intriguing historical note at the end of the book, its lessons might have been even more clearly delivered as nonfiction. Ages 12-up.

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6<sup>+</sup>-10. The history is dramatic: in 1781 a slave woman, Mum Bett, took her owner to court and won her freedom under the Massachusetts Constitution. Her story is told in the voice of her fictional younger sister, Aissa, who describes the events leading up to that historic trial--what it was like to be a slave, to be sold away from home, to work for someone who saw you only as property, to hide your true self. The plot meanders, and the characterization is thin: through Aissa's eyes, people are pretty much saints or villains, though the author does show that Bett holds on to a strong sense of her inner worth. What readers will respond to are the facts of Bett's life and the bitter truth of the young slave's commentary. For the powerful leaders who are fighting the Revolutionary War and hammering out the Constitution, the sisters are invisible. As the action builds to the climax of the trial, Aissa raises the elemental question: if the great new Constitution says that all men are created equal, does "men" include black men and all women? *Hazel Rochman*

Review

"Adolescent readers will easily empathize with [Martha's] predicament of feeling confused by the pull from so many different directions at this stage of life." —*Library Journal*

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Ross Adams:**

What do you in relation to book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what your own problem? How about your time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. The doctor has to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that will. It said that about publication. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this specific Second Daughter: The Story of a Slave Girl to read.

**Lowell Oliver:**

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**Tanya Wilson:**

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